

An Assessment of Changing Perspectives on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment Over the Last Two Decades: A Chronological Content Analysis

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Abstract:

Problem: Over the past few decades, the concept of women's empowerment has gained significant prominence in both academic discourse and government-level initiatives. Scholars and government organizations have put forth various definitions of women's empowerment to facilitate its analysis. Consequently, numerous research papers and policy documents have been published by researchers, governments, and organizations, both nationally and internationally. However, there is often a lack of synchronization between these definitions in policy documents and the content of research papers, and vice versa. This study aims to examine the various definitions of women's empowerment and assess the alignment between these definitions and the content of policy documents. **Approach:** This study employs a content analysis approach to examine definitions and policy documents published by scholars, academicians, practitioners, organizations, and governments from 1992 to 2022. Data was gathered from reputable sources including Dimension, Scopus, Web of Science, as well as official government and organizational websites **Findings:** The study results reveal that perspective of women empowerment has really changed during the last two decades, but the growth has been really slow and after analyzing the various perspective we found a logical sequence among the definition's content i.e., Resources – Capabilities – Decision making over choices – Freedom of choices – Power in all spheres of life. Further we also found that there was less synchronization between the research outputs and its placement in policy formulations. **Conclusion:** Women empowerments have received substantial research attention, but many definitions lack precision and are often arbitrarily constructed. Academics have contributed various definitions without a strong scientific foundation for selecting components. Over time, the number of clustered definitions has decreased, and new ones have emerged without clear scientific justification for variable selection. A more logical and systematic approach to defining women's empowerment is needed to facilitate focused and cumulative research in the future.

Keywords: women, empowerment, women empowerment, content analysis, policy document.

1. Introduction

The concept of women empowerment found its root back to feminism as a political debate in European and American society. There are different waves of feminism where political rights such as: rights to votes, gender equality in political participation became as prominent issue in the society in general due to their status in the society continuously degraded. Over the years the issue of women empowerment emancipated as multifaceted challenge which demands multiple approach and domain of women empowerment in more segmented manner to support specialized support system for overall empowerment of women in this way as comprehensive sectorial approach was adopted to achieve women empowerment in different field of empowerment challenges such as political, social, economic, psychological, legal, and cultural. Later on apart from national level sanity intervention in this matter, united nation in its 3rd world conference on women conducted in Nairobi in 1985 and took the lead to coordinate affords for women

empowerment at international level, which defined it as a redistribution of social and economic power and control of resources in favor of women. The concept of women's empowerment, as delineated by the United Nations Development Fund for Women, encompasses various dimensions such as the acquisition of knowledge about gender relations and the potential for altering these dynamics. It involves the cultivation of a sense of self-worth and the belief in one's capacity to bring about desired changes, as well as the assertion of the right to control one's own life. This theme has garnered significant attention from scholars, researchers, organizations, and practitioners, each contributing unique perspectives to define women's empowerment.

Within academic circles, a prevailing agreement emerges regarding the concept of women's empowerment, characterizing it as a profound and transformative change in a woman's life. This metamorphosis not only amplifies her ability to navigate a meaningful human existence but also finds expression in outward facets such as well-being, mobility, educational attainment, awareness, familial standing, and involvement in decision-making processes. Concurrently, it extends into the realm of internal attributes, encompassing the development of self-awareness and fortified self-confidence (Human Development in South Asia, 2000). Aspy and Sindhu (1999) articulate women's empowerment as a dynamic process involving the gaining of control over one's life, coupled with a commitment to supporting and facilitating others in achieving autonomy. Sen (1999) extends the definition by emphasizing unconditional freedom of choice and action, allowing individuals to shape the trajectory of their lives and influence decisions that impact them. Lastly, Kabeer (1999) underscores the importance of resources, agencies, and achievements in the context of women's empowerment. Despite the diversity in these definitions, a common thread runs through them: women's empowerment is a multifaceted concept comprising various components. The essence lies in the transformative journey "from being disempowered to becoming empowered," highlighting the dynamic and evolving nature of the empowerment process.

After seeing the degrading status of women in the society, various governments, and organizations have been taken various steps such as launching various schemes on women, creating awareness and publish various reports time to time so that the status of women can be improved along with this various researchers, practitioners, and academicians have been published various studies on various components of women empowerment such as economic, social, political, psychological, legal, socio-economic, and socio-psychological which is which is mostly based on the government policies and reports.

This study contributes in several ways: firstly this study presents the changes in the definition and policies of women empowerment over the period in chronological order. Secondly, this study will be the base paper for those readers who wanted to know and do something in the area of women empowerment. Thirdly, this study will provide the seminal authors and organization name, through which new researchers, and academician can collaborate with the seminal authors and can work with specific organization. Fourth, this study will provide some future direction as well so that upcoming researchers can do some new work.

The main objective of this paper is to ascertain the chronological changes in perspective of the women empowerment during the last two decades and second one is to identify if there is any synchronization between research outputs, policy formulation and implementational challenges or vice-versa on this subject.

The paper is organized into sections as follows: Section 2 presents the reviews of the literature, Section 3 outlines the research methodology, Section 4 shows the results and discussion, and the final section concludes the paper, highlighting future research directions.

2. Survey of Literature

2.1 Definitions of Empowerment and Women Empowerment:

Empowerment is a complex and contentious concept within academia, with numerous definitions put forth by scholars over time. These definitions have evolved to encompass various dimensions and perspectives on empowerment. In this concise overview, we will discuss major definitions and core propositions presented by researchers, highlighting key shifts in the understanding of empowerment.

A significant group of scholars initially framed empowerment as rooted in political power and power relations. They viewed power as the source of empowerment, expressed through access to resources, perception, relationships, and agency (Friedman, 1992; Sharma, 1992; Chen, 1992; Batliwala, 1993; Moser, 1993; Riger, 1993; Kabeer, 1994; UNDP, 1995; Phillip, 1995; Rowland, 1997; Batliwala, 1999; Rajput, 2001; UNDP, 2004; Franceschat and Piscopo, 2014).

Freedom as Empowerment: Some studies later shifted the focus to freedom as a central element of empowerment. These scholars emphasized the importance of freedom in expressing desires, pursuing goals, and attaining sustained autonomy (Wallerstein, 1992; Kate, 1993; Kerr, 1993; Mehra, 1996; Sen, 1999; Kabeer, 1999). Others viewed disempowerment as a consequence of injustice and highlighted the creation of pathways to power as indicators of empowerment (Batliwala, 1994; Chandra, 1996; Jhabvala, 2001).

Sen (1999) emphasized that empowerment requires both autonomy and capability. He argued that empowering the marginalized entails enhancing their capabilities (Aspy and Sandhu, 1999; Narayan, 2002; Prasad, 2002; Pathak, 2003). The role of media in protecting human rights and shaping public opinion in favor of empowerment, particularly women's empowerment, was highlighted (Hashemi and Schuler, 1993; Manohar, 2001; Klasan and Schuler, 2011). Simon (1994) introduced the idea that women's participation in decision-making processes, especially when their self-interest is at stake, is a fundamental aspect of women's empowerment (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995; Mohanty, 1999; Malhotra, 2002; Mayoux, 2003).

Some researchers adopted a multidimensional approach, viewing empowerment as a complex phenomenon with various dimensions (Sahay, 1998; Chattopadhyay, 2005; Antony, 2006; Varghese, 2014). Kabeer (1999) emphasized the expansion of individuals' abilities to make strategic life choices, involving resources, agency, and achievements. Various definitions of women's empowerment emerged over time. It included social, economic, and political dimensions, access to fundamental rights, safe workplaces, and holistic development (Srivastava, 2001; Rajput, 2001). Kabeer (2004) focuses on the acquisition of choice-making abilities gained prominence. Sundstrom et al. (2017) emphasized political empowerment as a process involving exposure to opportunities, participation in decision-making, and marking presence.

2.2 Policies of Women Empowerment:

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS), overseen by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with institutions like the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), is a vital initiative in India. This extensive survey, conducted at national, state, and district levels, spans both rural and urban areas. As of September 2021, there have been five rounds of NFHS surveys: NFHS-1 (1992-93), NFHS-2 (1998-99), NFHS-3 (2005-06), NFHS-4 (2015-16), and NFHS-5 (2019-20). The surveys delve into various health-related subjects, including fertility, maternal and child health, and nutrition, among others. The NFHS findings are instrumental in shaping health policies and programs, reflecting progress in areas

such as fertility rates, contraceptive usage, and child mortality. However, they also shed light on persistent regional disparities and challenges, including malnutrition and inadequate healthcare access.

Women for Women International, since its inception in 1993, have been unwavering in its commitment to empower women, particularly those who often remain unnoticed—survivors of war and conflict. The organization equips these women with essential skills to rebuild their families and communities. Their ultimate vision is a world where all women have the autonomy to shape their destinies and fulfill their potential. Over the years, Women for Women International has produced nine reports from 2014 to 2022, covering various critical topics. They take pride in offering extensive support and educational resources to women in eight conflict-affected countries across the globe. Their approach transcends traditional charity, emphasizing innovation and acting as a dynamic learning organization that listens to data, their on-the-ground teams, and the women they serve, continuously evolving and improving their methods.

The International Women Development Agency (IWDA), based in Australia, has dedicated over 35 years to supporting diverse women's rights organizations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, while contributing to global feminist movements to advance gender equality universally. Their approach blends elements of women's funds and international development NGOs, guided by core values of feminism, accountability, collaboration, and transformation.

The Global Fund for Women, founded in 1987, has been a driving force for women's human rights globally. Over the past three decades, they have provided support to feminist movements and grassroots organizers, playing a significant role in resolving civil conflicts, electing female Presidents, and enacting laws that offer new protections to millions. Their mission centers on funding ambitious gender justice movements aimed at creating substantial and enduring change. Their work goes beyond their lifetimes, benefiting humanity as a whole.

UN Women, established in July 2010 under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, serves as a committed global champion for the rights of women and girls. At the forefront of its mission is the acceleration of global strides in addressing the diverse needs of women and girls. UN Women actively aids UN Member States in establishing international benchmarks for gender equality, forging collaborations with governments and civil society to devise and implement laws, policies, programs, and services that genuinely empower women and girls. In addition, the organization takes on the role of coordinating and amplifying the efforts of the UN system in advancing gender equality, positioning it as a foundational element of the Sustainable Development Goals and a catalyst for a more inclusive global community.

In a similar vein, the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India, emerged as a separate Ministry in January 2006, after operating as a department under the Ministry of Human Resources Development since 1985. This transformation aimed to bridge gaps in state initiatives for women and children by fostering collaboration across ministries and sectors. Their objective is to create legislation, policies, and programs that promote gender equity and prioritize children's well-being.

The Ministry's vision entails a future where women are empowered, living with dignity, and actively engaged as equal partners in development, all within a context devoid of violence and discrimination. Their dedication extends to providing children with the best opportunities for growth and development in a secure and protective environment.

3 Research methodology:

In this research paper, we used chronological content analysis for the analysis of the data and derived from the literature review including reports and definitions of women empowerment.

We have adopted proper process to conduct a content analysis. In which firstly, we have searched various papers and reports of women empowerment in various databases such as Dimension, Web of Science and Scopus) and Government and organizational websites. Secondly, after getting various papers and reports, we have selected only those papers and reports in which various definition, concept and content are given.

Thirdly, after selection of the papers and reports, now we arranged various definitions and contents in a chronological order from the period of 1992 to 2019. Fourth, after arranging the definitions and report's content, we noted down only key aspects of every definitions and report's content.

4. Results and Discussion:

In this research paper we used chronological content analysis for data analysis and built a frequency table from the definitions included in different research papers on "women empowerment" and tried to find the changing spectrum of ideas and emphasis related components of women empowerment (see table 1) along with this we simultaneously analyze the content report with the content of definitions and see the synchronization between these two.

4.1 Interpretation of the Frequency Table:

Given frequency table contains data recorded on the subject is placed under the headings: rows contain crux of various definition and columns include year, chronologically (see table 1).

4.1.1 Observation on Rows:

The table provides an overview of the sustainability of definitions over the years, indicating their acceptability. The final cell in each row represents the endurance of a particular definition, while the column total aggregates the definitions offered in a specific year.

Table 1 presents various components and their occurrence year by year. In 1992, the following components were prevalent: Power relations (1), Social changes (1), and Psychological empowerment (1), Power Relations in terms of resource acquisition, Goal Achievement (3), and Economic empowerment (3). Moving on to 1993, the focus shifted to: Control of their own lives and setting their own agenda (5), Redistribution of Power (2), Autonomy in decision-making (2), and Media agenda (1). In 1994, the emphasis was on: Preconception for sustainable economic and social development (1), Own well-being/right to participate in decision-making (2), and Gaining control over the sources of power (2). In 1995, the key aspects included: Progress from powerlessness to greater equity in the exercise of power (1), Socialization and life experience (1), Women's equal participation in decision-making (1), and Greater access to and control over their life's democratic participation (1).

Continuing to the next set of definitions, 1996 featured: Collective efficacy or perceived efficacy of collective action (1), Progress enough to emerge overtly (1), Participation in politics (1). In 1997, the focus shifted to: Women's access to decision-making in political, social, and economic spheres (2), Understanding power as both emanating from within and being exerted over others (1) and the increase in women's ability to exercise choice (1).

In 1998, the emphasis returned to broader notions of power: Power in all spheres of life (1), Embracing both the attainment of power over others and the empowerment that comes from within (1), and Social changes enabling impact on organizations and institutions (1). In 1999, researchers primarily concentrated on Political empowerment achieving a proper balance (2), Participation in grassroots politics and becoming partners in the decision-making process (1), People's ability to make strategic life choices (1), and the general ability to make choices (1).

Moving forward, the subsequent years included the following aspects: Increasing the power of the lower group (1), Opportunities and freedom to develop oneself (1), Holistic development (1), Women's human rights (1), Control over resource material, Human and Intellectual (1), Expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices (1), Multifaceted considerations such as rights, resources, and voice (1), Social, educational, and psychological empowerment of women (1), and Increasing the power of low-power groups (1).

In the early 2000s, the definitions touched on: Greater decision-making (1), Awareness and capacity building (1), and the expansion of assets and capabilities (1). Further definitions in the 2000s included: Educational opportunities (1), Women's access to decision-making in political, social, and economic resources (2). In another year, the focus shifted to: Economic participation, political participation, and power over economic resources (1). Other years emphasized: Freedom of choice and action in all spheres of one's life (1), the consensus that poverty alleviation can bring about (1), and capacity building through education, training, and development (1).

In the later years, the definitions incorporated: Enabling the individual or group to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life (1), Equal opportunity for women and the removal of obstacles (1), and the notion of the power to become the "breadwinner," achieve self-reliance, generate income from projects, and fight poverty (1). Additionally, there was a focus on: Decreasing economic reliance on men (1), addressing gender inequality (1), recognizing the government's duty in developing social, political, and economic programs that empower women (1), and decision-making over choice (1).

Further definitions included: Acquiring the ability to make choices (1), participation in decision-making in social spheres (1), and the imperative to choose in the light of one's wisdom (1) and to empower women (1).

In summarizing the entries and their sustainability in research, the following components had the highest frequency: Power relations (resources, acquisition, goal achievement, etc.) (3), Economic Empowerment (3), Control of their own lives and setting their own agenda (5), Redistribution of power (2), Autonomy in decision-making (2), Own well-being/right to participate in decision-making (2), Gaining control over the sources of power (2), Women's access to decision-making in political, social, and economic spheres (2), Political empowerment achieving a proper balance (2), and Women's access to decision-making in political, social, and economic spheres of life (2).

4.1.2 Observation on Columns:

Now we are taking information recorded in columns for analyzing the intensity and concentration of research done by the researchers over the period. During 1992-2003 we find heavy concentration on research components in the frequency distribution column. It shows the largest numbers of research done with the help diverse components of women empowerment. From 2003 onwards number of research component lessened, and components selected for research are noble and new one. It shows the emerging clarity and refinement on the issues of the factors of women empowerment which addresses the question of empowerment having greater potential to explain the phenomenon. This skewed distribution of component of research in the field of women empowerment accumulative and progressive in nature. The total of row and column are equal to each other i.e., 74.

Table 1. Frequency table of the contents of the definitions

Years	Contents of the definitions	Frequency of the row	Frequency of the column
1992	1. Social changes	1	6
	2. Political power	1	
	3. Psychological empowerment	1	
	4. Power relation	3	
	5. Economic empowerment	1	
	6. Freedom and power	3	
1993	1. Control of their own lives and own agenda	5	6
	2. Redistribution of power	2	
	3. Autonomy in decision making	2	
	4. Media agenda	1	

1994	1. Sustainable economic and social development 2. Own well-being 3. Gaining power control	1 2 2	5
1995	1. Exercise of power 2. Socialization and life experience 3. Women's equal participation in decision making 4. Increase democratic participation	1 1 1 1	6
1996	1. Collective efficacy 2. Enough number to emerge in overt 3. Participation in politics	1 1 1	3
1997	1. Increase women's political, social, and economic spheres 2. Power to, power from within, power over and power with 3. Increasing women's ability to exercise choice	2 1 1	4
1998	1. Power in All Spheres of Life 2. Moving into position of power over and power to with from within 3. Social changes	1 1 1	3
1999	1. Political empowerment 2. Participation in grassroots politics 3. Strategic life choices 4. Ability to make choices	2 1 1 1	6
2001	1. Increasing the Power of the Low Power Group 2. Opportunities and Freedom to Develop Herself 3. Holistic development 4. Women human rights 5. To control over resources material, human and intellectual 6. To expansion of strategic life choices 7. Multifaceted terms: Right, Resources and Voice 8. Social, educational and psychological empowerment of women 9. Increasing the Power of the Low Power Group	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	12
2002	1. Greater decision making 2. Awareness and capability building 3. Expansion of assets and capabilities	1 1 1	4
2003	1. Educational opportunities 2. Women Access to Decision Making in Political, Social and Economic Spheres of Life	1 2	3
2004	1. Economic participation, political participation and power over economic resources	1	1

2005	1. Freedom of Choice and Action 2. Poverty Alleviation 3. Capacity Building through Education, Training and Development	1 1 1	4
2006	1. Powers in All Spheres of Life	1	1
2007	1. Women Equity of Opportunities and Removing Obstacles	1	1
2008	1. Power to become Self-reliant and Fight Poverty	1	1
2010	1. Decreasing Economic Reliance on Men	1	1
2013	1. Gender inequalities 2. Developing social, political, and economic programs	1 1	2
2014	1. Decision Making Over Choice	1	1
2015	1. Ability to Make Choices Acquire such an Ability	1	1
2017	1. Participation in decision making in social spheres	1	1
2018	1. Make your own choice 2. Race is to empower women	1 1	2
Total		74	74

4.2. Interpretation of the Various Policies:

The primary objective of our analysis is to assess the alignment between academic research and government policies concerning women's empowerment on a global scale, with a specific focus on India. To facilitate this comparison, we have selected six key reports from various organizations actively involved in women's empowerment efforts.

These reports include the National Family and Health Survey, Women for Women International, International Women Development Agency, Global Fund for Women, United Nations Women, and the Report of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Among these reports, three specifically highlight critical aspects of women's empowerment in India, while the other three address broader aspects of women's empowerment worldwide.

In order to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the subject, we have presented the primary objectives and key components of each of these government policies related to women's empowerment, followed by a similar analysis of the foreign reports. This approach will help researchers gain insights into the commonalities and disparities between academic research and government policy in the realm of women's empowerment.

The first report, the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS), has been conducted over four iterations from 1992 to 2020. Initially, it emphasized Health and Education, and then expanded to encompass Reproductive health, Asset ownership, Employment, Autonomy, and Domestic Violence in NFHS-2. NFHS-3 introduced a significant shift towards women's empowerment, alongside prior components like Freedom of movement, Gender roles, Access to money and credit, Education, Health, Household Decision-Making, Economic Empowerment, and Domestic Violence. NFHS-4 and NFHS-5 retained these variables.

In contrast, "Women for Women International" has issued nine reports spanning 2014-2022. These reports consistently focus on Social and Economic Empowerment, measuring progress through parameters such

as Income, Financial Decision-Making, Family Planning, Gender Equality and Rights, Skill Development, Knowledge and Resources, and Health. Their objective is to empower marginalized women to enhance their financial stability, health, decision-making influence within their households and communities, ultimately fostering sustainable positive change.

The "International Women Development Agency" has released six reports between 2013 and 2019, primarily focusing on empowering women and advancing gender equality and women's rights. Their reports consistently emphasize Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihood, Safety and Security, and Civil and Political Participation.

The "Global Fund for Women" published reports in 2019-2022 with a core objective of women's empowerment in the context of financial independence. These reports address critical areas such as Media and Technology, Leadership, Freedom from Violence, Economic Justice, and Social and Reproductive Health and Rights.

UN Women, through ten reports spanning 2010-2020, remains steadfast in its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Their reports address critical aspects, including promoting women's leadership, advancing economic empowerment, eliminating violence against women and girls, engaging women in peace and security efforts, and ensuring gender-responsive budgeting.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has issued 16 reports from 2002 to 2018, focusing on holistic women's development. They implement three distinct programs aimed at grassroots empowerment, fostering self-confidence within families and communities. These programs enable women to access resources from a variety of sources. Additionally, the ministry has launched various schemes between 2002-2018, such as Swayamsidha (2001), Swa-Shakti Project (1997), Swawlamban Scheme (1982-83), Swadhar (2001-02), Stree-Shakti Puraskar (1999), STEP (1986), and Short Stay Homes (SSHs), all contributing to women's holistic development.

4.3 Comparison between Work of Academia and Government Policies:

In our comprehensive examination of women's empowerment, we've discerned a notable interconnection between academic research and the crafting of government policies, particularly in the context of India. Our analytical approach involved segmenting the study into distinct transmission periods spanning several years, facilitating a detailed juxtaposition of research outcomes and their integration into policy frameworks. This method allowed us to unveil the dynamic evolution of women's empowerment and the discernible influence of research in shaping policies.

During the initial transmission period (1992-1996), researchers probed various facets of women's empowerment, covering social changes, political influence, psychological well-being, and economic autonomy. These aspects formed a fundamental groundwork for comprehending the intricate nature of women's empowerment. However, our analysis unveiled a lack of synchronization between research findings and government policies, particularly evident in reports such as the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS).

Transitioning to the second transmission period (1997-2001), researchers explored women's decision-making access in political, social, and economic spheres, addressing power dynamics and poverty alleviation. While organizations like the Global Fund for Women and Women for Women International emphasized economic empowerment, there remained significant gaps in integrating research outcomes into policy documents.

The third transmission period (2002-2006) underscored a focus on augmented decision-making, awareness, capacity building, asset expansion, educational opportunities, and holistic development. Researchers

advocated for gender equity and the removal of obstacles to women's empowerment. Despite a consistent emphasis on political participation and economic empowerment, the policies of the International Women Development Agency did not fully encompass these dimensions.

Entering the subsequent transmission period (2007-2012), research sustained its emphasis on political participation and economic empowerment, emphasizing equity of opportunities and obstacle removal. Notably, there was a favorable alignment between research findings and the policies of the International Women Development Agency during this phase. In the ensuing transmission periods (2007-2011 and 2012-2018), the spotlight endured on economic empowerment, underscoring its pivotal role in women's empowerment. Researchers continued to advocate for political participation and economic empowerment, mirrored in the policies of the Global Fund for Women. This alignment underscored the tangible impact of research findings on policy formulation.

In the case of the United Nations Women, the third transmission period from 2002-2009 saw a focus on gender equality and women's equal participation in various aspects of life. While researchers emphasized social, political, and economic empowerment, the UN Women's policies did not fully integrate these parameters. However, there was greater synchronization between research and policy in subsequent years.

The analysis of NFHS reports revealed that researchers and the government diverged in their focus during different transmission periods. For instance, in NFHS-2, researchers emphasized autonomy and economic empowerment, while NFHS-3 introduced additional components like education and health. Despite these variations, the NFHS reports did not fully align with the parameters addressed in academic research.

As we went across all the research papers and reports, we found that there are lots of components which need to be taken care of as per the research paper, but they have not been implemented in actual report by the policy making bodies. This invites concerns that there should be more synchronized and coordinated efforts to coordinate the findings of research and its due adoption in policy formulation of different policy making bodies. It is also required that any issue raised by policy makers as policy input or implementation challenges should also be part of agenda of researchers for the betterment of both the parties.

5. Conclusion

Women empowerment is a highly researched area but most of the people defined this term in very lenient way. Various literature and definitions are presented by the academicians on this subject, but the components were not selected by them scientifically. They took random components and did their work. It is also found that the volumes of cluster of definitions have been decreasing and new definitions have been offered, however, the random choices taken as variable had no scientific explanation. Thus, it requires some logical sequencing for the purpose of more directional and accumulative research in future.

Thus, as per our study, the definitions and perspectives of women empowerment has really changed during the last two decades, but the growth has been really slow. After analyzing the various perspective or definitions of women empowerment as of now, we can provide the logical sequence of the growth in the definition of women empowerment i.e., Resources – Capabilities – Decision Making over Choices – Freedom of Choices – Power in all Spheres of Life but so many researchers didn't follow this sequence in a proper way. They took some random components and did their work, which fail to give direction to research in definitive and accumulative nature. It was also found that there was less synchronization between the research outputs and its placement in policy formulations. Further we see that concerned policies were also not taken immediately for research on priority basis in many of the researches conducted during and after the policy formulations were made public as reported were also not taken as research topics.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, in some years, we could not find relevant definitions due to the unavailability of sources. Secondly, we have focused exclusively on six reports, and those not included in our analysis may have contributed to the findings of this study. Thirdly, we limited our data collection for definitions to journal articles and new papers.

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