

The Effect of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)'s Approaches on Women's Empowerment in Shiraz, Iran

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ABSTRACT The paper attempts to determine the impact of Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) approaches on the empowerment of women in Shiraz, Iran. Through empowerment, women become able to organize themselves, to increase self-reliance and to assert their independent right to make choices and control resources. In this study, empowerment is conceptually defined and analyzed at two levels, that is, 'individual' and 'community'. The study based on 195 women participants in NGO's activities showed that their level of empowerment is moderate. This means they are neither disempowered nor empowered sufficiently. Various approaches were adopted by the local NGOs such as top-down, partnership and bottom-up to help women to achieve the empowerment. The result indicated the bottom-up approach is the most effective approach on the empowerment of women.

INTRODUCTION

The most recent United Nations conferences have advocated that women's empowerment is central to development (Oxaal and Bade 1997). Moreover, the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) called for the recognition that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is the main objective of development (UN 1995). Therefore, all developmental sectors in the mainstream like to incorporate women's participation in development. However, there are many factors which keep the women far away from such development and cause women's powerlessness. The common factor is that, they are all constrained by the norms, beliefs, customs and values through which societies differentiate between women and men (Kabeer 1999). The specific ways in which this operates vary culturally and over time.

In Iran, like many other developing countries, women's access to positions of influence and power is restricted, their occupational choices are narrower and they must struggle to conciliate activities outside the home with their husband and traditional roles. Men are placed in higher position of society, such as in decision-making, the executive and judiciary, and they consider daily issues of women as petty, unimportant and natural. Consequently, women's issues and experiences are neither taken into account legally nor in social norms, customs and, in some cases, the law plays an opposition role

to women forcing them to accept their problems. The statistics shows that in Iran, there are small numbers of women who constitute members of parliament (4%), members of town councils (2.66%), holding post of higher management (1.2%), in managerial positions (5.2%), and employed in government, private and public sectors (11.8%) (Tahmasebifar 2005). This is an indication of a minimal participation of women at power and decision-making levels. Bearing in mind that women constitute 80% of all acceptances in institutions of higher education and their important role in realizing the Islamic Revolution in Iran, they have been subjected to extreme inequality in distribution of power. The reason for such inequality is gender discrimination, legal and judicial inequality which poses as a serious obstacle for progress in women participation in power and decision-making. Consequently, their role in higher institutions of power has been non-existent. At governmental level and public and private sectors, statistics prove that there is a minimal participation by women. It is clear that in Iran, the structure of power is entirely male dominated, placing women at the very lowest levels of decision-making. Although there has been some improvement in women's presence in town councils, nevertheless, the position of women in the political institutions of the country is extremely poor (Tahmasebifar 2005).

Thus, the issue of low participation of women in the position of decision-making has become one of the focuses of several Non-Gov-

ernment Organizations (NGOs). Iranian NGO's can be broadly categorized into two groups. The first group encompasses new and modern so-called "developmental" NGOs. The second group includes the traditional "relief" CBOs and charity societies. However, most of the women's NGOs set up are under modern and developmental NGOs. Moreover, there are outstanding examples of modern NGOs in Iran that have been successful in addressing social issues, conducting advocacy efforts, raising public awareness and conducting educational activities and tackling tough social issues, with extensive community participation. So, the question to be asked is that, what is the most effective approach to empower women?

Based on the three approaches namely, top-down, partnership and bottom-up, this study examines which approach used by the NGOs contributes the most to empower the women. Based on the top-down approach, the main activity of the development programme is initiated by government or authority. The top-down approach emphasizes central planning practices. The development agency schedules the work and determines how the work should be done. The community has no control over what is happening to them. In the partnership approach the development organizations seek to understand local problems and conditions. To solve a community's problems, decisions and plans are made together. Both the community and the agency contribute resources needed for a development activity. The bottom-up approach emphasizes community participation, grassroots movements and local decision-making (Finger 1994). In terms of awareness building as an indicator of bottom-up, the community is aware of its problems and shares the responsibility for the benefit of community and locality. As Fonjong (2001) mentioned, women's successful drive towards equality and empowerment is very much dependent on their level of awareness of the extent of the discrimination they suffer as a group. With regard to this idea, this study tries to show if there are any significant differences between approaches used by NGOs and empowerment of the women?

A large and growing body of literature (Rowlands 1995; Oxaal and Baden 1997; Hainard and Verschuur 2001) has documented that woman empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a top-down strategy. Also, a consid-

erable amount of literature has been published about the role of NGOs in women's empowerment. So far, however, there has been little discussion related to the NGOs' approaches (top-down, partnership and bottom-up) and empowerment of women. Even if theories and literatures state that the bottom-up approach can lead to empowerment, it remains questionable whether it is true for Iran. This study first aims to examine which of the approaches is more effective in achieving women's empowerment in certain areas with different cultures and traditions. In other words, which NGO and approach has a high impact on the empowerment of women. The paper is based on a study carried out in Shiraz, Iran. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the level of women's empowerment and to determine which NGOs' approaches have the high impact on women empowerment of women.

Theoretical Underpinning

Today, it is impossible to disregard the role of women in development studies. In this relation, there are many theories which emphasize on the expansion of women's role in society. The major theories are 1) Women in Development (WID), 2) Women and Development (WAD), and 3) Gender and Development (GAD). This study emphasizes on Gender and Development (GAD) approach since it is appropriate to objective of the study.

In the 1980s, the approach of Gender and Development (GAD) had emerged as it focuses explicitly on improving women's status (Burn 2005). The approach focuses on gender roles while criticizing the gender with regard to structure (Rathgeber 1990). The GAD approach takes into account lives of women and labour, both inside and outside their home. In addition, it emphasizes on a bottom-up approach, where the approach argues that women are not as much integrated into development, as they are the architects of their own development. Projects based on a GAD approach would be to encourage women to make positive change through women's organizations and activism. GAD emphasizes on empowerment of women to work to change and transform the structures that have contributed to their subordination (Burn 2005). Therefore, the empowerment approach arose from the gender and development debate and

has become a central element of development programme for the new millennium. Empowerment approaches to finding effective ways to support women and enable them to mobilize for change comes from within them, not from outside (Rowlands 1997).

Empowerment is a concept that has been much used and discussed for a number of years. However, it is not always explicitly clarified what its central meaning is. According to Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988), empowerment is the ability of individuals to gain control socially, politically, economically, and psychologically through (1) access to information, knowledge, and skills; (2) decision making; and (3) individual self-efficacy, community participation, and perceived control. However, particularly in women's studies, Mosedale (2003) defined women's empowerment as the process by which women redefine and extend what is possible for them to be and do in situations where they have been restricted, compared to men, from being and doing. Meanwhile, Vijayanthi (2002) has mentioned that empowerment should give women freedom of choice, equal access to domestic and community resources, opportunities and powers.

This study was to find out the suitable model of empowerment, which focused on the models of Schulz et al. (1993) and Rowlands (1997). Rowlands (1997) in her study in Honduras recognized three levels for empowerment: personal empowerment, close relationships, and collective empowerment. Personal empowerment refers to developing a sense of self-confidence, capacity and undoing the effects of internalized oppression. Close relationships refer to the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of one's relationships and the decisions made within them. Collective empowerment involves individuals working together to achieve a greater impact than they could have achieved alone. The entire process involves some degree of personal development and involves moving from insight to action. Meanwhile, Schulz et al. (1993) have pointed out that empowerment has different levels of analysis and practice such as individual, organizational and community.

Individual or psychological empowerment refers to an individual's ability to make decisions and have control over his or her personal life. It is similar to other constructs such as self-efficacy and self-esteem in its emphasis on the development of a positive self-concept or personal

competence. Organizational empowerment; empowering organizations are democratically managed, in which members share information and power, utilize cooperative decision-making process and are involved in the design, implementation, and control of efforts toward mutually defined goals. Consequently, they empower individuals as part of the organizational process. Community empowerment is an empowered community in which individuals and organizations apply their skills and resources in collective efforts to meet their respective needs. Through such participation, individuals and organizations within an empowered community provide enhanced support to each other, address conflicts within the community, and again increased influence and control over the quality of life in their community (Schulz et al. 1993).

This study emphasized on two levels of empowerment, namely, individual (personal) empowerment and community (collective) empowerment. Individual empowerment in this study views empowerment as focused on individual strength and self-esteem to gain control over resources and exercise their right to improve the quality of life for themselves and their family (Moyle et al. 2006). In other words, individual or psychological empowerment refers to the ability of an individual to make decisions and have control over his or her personal life. In this study, individual empowerment includes following elements: self-esteem, decision-making ability, and control over life (Rowlands 1998). Self-esteem refers to an individual's judgment of self-worth which result from self-evaluations based on competence or on attributes that are culturally invested with a certain value (Bandura 1997). Decision-making ability refers to the ability of people to define their own goals, to act on them, and make choices through critical thinking (Kabeer 1999). Meanwhile, control over life refers to the influence on the situations and whether one can produce desired events, or avoid to others, through their actions (Bandura 1997).

An empowered community is one in which individuals apply their skills and resources in collective efforts to meet their respective needs. Through such participation, individuals provide enhanced support for each other, address conflicts within the community, and gain increased influence and control over the quality of life in their community (Schulz et al. 1993).

As Rowlands (1997) pointed out, collective empowerment involves individuals working together to achieve a greater impact than they could have achieved alone. In fact, the collective empowerment is very closely related to the personal level since without empowerment at a personal level it is very hard for an individual to be active collectively. Community empowerment includes some elements such as working together, participation in NGO's programmes and community awareness. The concept of working together refers to individuals who are interested to work with the other people in different context, to share their skill and knowledge. The concept of participation in NGO's programme is related to involvement in programmes that are organized by NGOs to improve the community situation. Meanwhile, community awareness refers to awareness of women about their role and situation in household, community and society.

Many agencies such as government agencies and local and international NGOs and World Bank can assist the women to improve their lives and empower them. Scholars have expressed that NGOs can have a role in facilitating empowerment process (Korten 1990; Calman 1992; Tandon 1995; Purushothaman 1998; Page and Czuba 1999; Ahsan Ullah 2003). NGOs are private, voluntary, non-profit organizations independent of any government and funded through individual and corporate donations, levies imposed on members, grants from international agencies and governments (Agbola 1994). They have been particularly determined to empower the poor, the weak, and the marginalized, to encourage people to take decisions themselves, to become agents, rather than treating them as target groups or passive recipients of benefits (Streeten 1997). According to Haider and Akhtar (1999), the central goal of the NGOs is empowering the powerless women to discover their potentialities in order to help them to participate in the socio-economic development to improve their situation in society (Islam and Sultana 2005).

There are many approaches to community development, whereby NGOs can apply these as grassroots approach (bottom-up) to top-down approach, and from conflict to technical help, self-help and empowerment approach. However, Conyers (1986) classified community development into three types based on the approach – 'top-down', 'bottom-up' and 'partnership'.

In top-down approach, main activity of development is initiated by the government or authority. In fact, in this approach everything is managed by government, and the community members are passive. In the top-down approach, the development agency has the upper hand and controls the community in its development efforts. When people lack the ability and capacity to make decisions and take action in the development of their community, government and agency concerned should take over the development process in a certain period of time in order to improve their awareness, knowledge and skills necessary for self reliance. This is also the rationale of top-down approach employed by the government or government agencies.

However, some development practitioners have introduced the bottom-up approach to diminish the high-handed top-down approach and to increase community participation. The bottom-up approach emphasizes community participation, grassroots movements and local decision-making (Finger 1994). This facilitates the participation of target groups in the implementation of development activities, thus promoting participatory development. The bottom-up approach has been defined and operationalised in terms of a set of indicators such as (a) awareness building efforts of NGOs, (b) people's participation in projects and (c) NGOs' efforts in creating people's institutions. In terms of awareness building, the wider contention among grassroots NGOs is that the people should be aware of their problems and share the responsibility for the benefit of their community and locality (Panda 2007). Mobilizing people to participate in projects is another important strategy adopted by NGOs. They not only encourage people to participate in the activities and programmes carried out by them, but also to mobilize resources both in cash and kind. They have convinced people about the need and importance of popular support (Panda 2007).

In partnership approach, the development organizations seek to understand the local problems and conditions. In the solution of community problems, decisions and plans are made together. Both the community and the agency contribute resources needed for a development activity. The partnership approach could be liable for any attempt by the government authority and NGOs together to promote a better life for the whole community with active participation of community members.

Empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a strategy from top-down. Understanding empowerment in this way means that development agencies cannot claim the empowerment of women. Women must empower themselves. Developmental agencies such as NGOs may in certain circumstances, play a role in enabling or facilitating them. They can ensure that their programmes work to support the empowerment of women by encouraging women's participation, skills development, decision-making capacity, and control over resources (Oxaal and Baden 1997).

Hainard and Verschuur (2001) emphasized that empowerment should be a process of negotiation skills development from the bottom-up with the ultimate aim of bringing about a more equitable distribution of power. In other words, women's empowerment is an attempt to redress unequal power relations and produce new development paradigms". Rowlands (1997) defines empowerment as a bottom-up process which cannot be bestowed from the top-down; a process that seeks to engage the poor marginalized and powerless that cannot effectively be involved if the methodology of 'top-down' is applied. Empowerment cannot be imposed by outsiders - although appropriate external support and intervention can speed up and encourage it. It calls for a facilitative approach and an attitude of complete respect for and confidence in the people being worked with, or accompanied by the development agent-community worker, community developer or external agent. It, therefore, makes great demands on the change-agents, and may require (and feed into) their own empowerment (Rowlands 1995).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Methodology

Basically, this study was approached quantitatively using a survey design. It used structured questionnaires to measure women's empowerment. The study was conducted in Shiraz, Iran.

To determine the proportion of each NGO in sample size, it used sampling ratio. In this study since the population had 1950 women and the sample based on G*power was 195, so the sampling ratio is $195/1950=0.1$ or 10 percent. Then, the researcher draws the proportion of each NGO based on sample size.

Finally, with using the random number table given by Cooper and Schindler (2003), respondents selected from the each NGO and finally 195 women were selected from the list of 1950 population of all women NGOs in Shiraz.

As mentioned earlier, empowerment in this study was constituted of two types, namely individual and community. Personal (individual) empowerment views empowerment as focused on individual strength and self-esteem to gain control over available resources and to exercise their right to obtain quality of life for themselves and their family (Moyle et al. 2006). Individual empowerment includes following elements: self-esteem, decision-making ability, and control over life (Rowlands 1998). These elements are assessed based on five point Likert scale to indicate 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with a value of 1 for 'strongly disagree' to a value of 5 for 'strongly agree'. Some of the items were asked in a reverse order, so that the scores would have to be adjusted accordingly. To measure the self-esteem, the study used 11 items which ranged from 11 to 55.

Decision-making ability refers to the ability of people to define their own goals, act upon them, and make choices through critical thinking (Kabeer 1999). Scores of the scale formed by the combination of all the ten (10) items ranged from 10 to 50. Meanwhile, control refers to influence over situations and whether one can produce desired events, or avoid to others, through their actions (Bandura 1997). It was measured by 11 items assessed by five point Likert scale. Like the other indicators, some of the questions were asked in a reverse manner, so that the scores would have to be adjusted accordingly. The scores of the scale computed by the combination of all the eleven (11) items ranged from 11 to 55.

Finally, all the 32 items were combined to form the individual empowerment scale. Scores of the scale ranged from 32 to 160. The Cronbach's alpha value (Cronbach 1951) of the scale was .832, suggesting that the scale had a very high degree of reliability or internal consistency.

As Rowlands (1997) pointed out, collective empowerment involves individuals working together to achieve a greater impact than they could have done alone. The collective empowerment dimension is very closely related to the personal dimension since without empower-

ment at a personal level it is very hard for individuals to be active collectively. Community empowerment included three elements such as working together, participation in NGO's programme and community awareness. Working together is not just the sum of individual beliefs within a group, but it is a collective attribute achieved through interactive dynamics. It was measured by 10 items and scores of the scale computed by the combination of all the ten items ranged from 10 to 50. Community awareness also was measured by 10 items that ranged from 10 to 50. And the last element, Participation in NGO's programme was measured by five items from 5 to 25.

Finally, all the three indicators with 25 items were computed to form the community (collective) empowerment scale. The scores of the scale ranged from 25 to 125. The scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of .804, indicating that it had a high degree of reliability or internal consistency.

NGO's Functions

This part discusses the function of NGOs which was acquired after interviews with principals of NGOs, review the activities of NGOs and study of vision and mission. In this study, four functions were discovered for NGOs. However, it is not possible exclusively to clarify the function of each NGO due to some of these functions may be similar to each other. These functions include, developing individual ability, educational functions, awareness building and mobilizing women to participate in projects.

Developing individual ability stresses on the need for development of women's abilities and potential. NGOs assign some roles and activities such as increasing women's self-esteem and making decisions about themselves and their family that shape the personality of women. Two NGOs were classified under this function namely, *Kimiyaye Salamate Pars* (Pars Prosperity Alchemy), and *Anjoman Omid* (Esperance Association). These NGOs emphasized on developing individual abilities.

Another NGOs' function that was discovered in this study was educational functions. It was related to projects and programs that were organized by the NGOs to empower women. In this sense, many roles and activities such as educational programs and teaching of skills in differ-

ent context were held by NGOs. According to interview with leaderships of these NGOs and after study of their programs and activities, five NGOs have been placed under this function. They are, *Alzahra's Rahpooyan Charity*, *Anjoman Hami Khorshid* (Association of Sun Sponsor), *Mosharakate zenan nikokare Ryhane* (Reyhane Association) and *Hamayaran Selamat Ravan Ejtemaee (Iand 2)* (Helpers of Mental Health 1 and 2).

Community building awareness is related to increase in the knowledge of women about their situation in the community and society. NGOs, by conducting many activities, help the women to raise consciousness and more information about themselves, their problems and finding solutions to their problems. Two NGOs in Shiraz laid their emphasis on awareness building of community. They were *Anjomane Sibe Kal* (Un-ripe Apple Community) and *Naranan*.

The last NGOs' function in this study was mobilizing of women. Mobilizing of women encourages women to take part of the projects that are organized by the community. Women, through involvement in project, will be active in community and then they can play important roles in society. NGOs by conducting some activities mobilize women to be more active and participate in projects since they initiate projects, implement and maintain the projects. Two NGOs were involved in mobilizing women to participate in NGO's programs. They are, *Mosharakat Ejtemaee Banovane fars*, (Association of Women Participation) and *Moassesse Atiye (CBO)* (Atiye Community Based Organization).

According to Table 1, NGOs are categorized into four functions. About 23.1% of NGOs were placed under 'developing individual ability', while 28.2% of NGOs were categorized in second group that was called the 'educational functions' group. As Table 1 shows, 17.9% of NGOs were classified under 'awareness building' group and finally, 30.8% are categorized under 'mobilizing women to participate in projects'.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier in this study, women empowerment is categorized into two levels - individual and community. Individual level of empowerment was calculated and then divided into three dimensions. Similarly, the community or collective empowerment levels were calcu-

Table 1: Distribution of NGOs based on their functions

Functions	Number of NGOs	Number of respondents	%
Developing individual ability	2	25	12.8
Educational functions	3	55	28.2
Awareness building	3	55	28.2
Mobilizing women	3	60	30.8

lated consisting of three items. Finally, these two levels were computed, and the results noted overall empowerment of women. Table 2 shows that the score of women's empowerment ranges from 168 to 261, with mean score of 222.94, and standard deviation 14.31. The skewness shows that the distribution of dependent variable (women's empowerment) was normal.

Table 2: The mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score of women's empowerment

Variable	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Skewness
Women's empowerment	222.94	14.31	186	261	.01

Table 3 depicts the levels of women's empowerment. Majority of the respondents (59.5%) were in moderate level of empowerment, whereas 21.5% were in the high level of empowerment and 19% in the low level of empowerment. These findings indicate that the majority of women in this study had the moderate level of empowerment.

Table 3: Level of women's empowerment

Level	Frequency	%
Low (186-210)	37	19.0
Moderate (211-235)	116	59.5
High (236-261)	42	21.5

To determine the mean differences of women's empowerment among different approaches, one-way ANOVA test was applied and results are presented in Table 4. The test reveals that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean for women's empowerment among

three approaches ($F=5.98$, $P=.003$). The effect size of 0.059 (eta-squared) based on Cohen (1988) suggests that the mean score difference of approaches was a moderate effect, as perceived by respondents. This means that the effect size of three approaches (independent variables) towards the women's empowerment as the dependent variable indicates that the mean difference between items is moderate. Analysis of the means indicates that the 'bottom-up approach' is consistently higher than the other approaches.

The post hoc multiple comparisons were selected to evaluate pair wise differences among mean score in women's empowerment. The results of the test (Table 5) confirmed that there was a statistically significant difference in means of empowerment between bottom-up and partnership approach based on the $p<0.05$. Tukey test indicates that the mean scores of empowerment at the bottom-up approach ($M=226.32$, $SD=13.68$) was significantly higher than mean score of empowerment at the partnership approach ($M=219.05$, $SD=13.57$). It shows that the bottom-up approach is most important approach to empower the women compared to the other approaches.

These differences might be due to the bottom-up approach that was initiated and managed by the community itself. Here, members (women) are able to define their own problems and have the ability and capacity to solve them through organizing and participating together in the activities promoted by the NGOs. Government (development agent) and service providers merely play a supportive role as facilitators and consultants. In other words, the active role in the process of development is played or initiated by the community itself. This is supported by previous literatures. For example, Fonjong (2001) examined case studies of NGOs and women's empowerment in Cameroon and argued that the grassroots' approach (bottom-up) of NGOs has been effective toward women's empowerment. Similarly, Oxaal and Baden (1997) observed that empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a top-down strategy. This finding is also

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA summary table of approaches and its scores

Approach	No of NGO	N=195	Mean	SD	F	P	η^2
Top-down	2	25	224.68	5.15	5.98	.003	.059
Partnership	5	85	219.05	13.57			
Bottom-up	4	85	226.32	13.86			

Table 5: Post hoc multiple comparisons of three approaches and women empowerment

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Mean difference</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Women Empowerment	Top-down approach	Partnership	5.63	0.18
		Bottom-up	-1.63	0.86
	Partnership approach	Top-down	-5.63	0.18
		Bottom-up	-7.27*	0.002
	Bottom-up approach	Top-down	1.63	0.86
		Partnership	7.27*	0.002

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

supported by Hainard and Verschuur (2001) who emphasize that empowerment should be a process of developing negotiating skills from the bottom up. Therefore, this study revealed that like the previous research in different countries, in Iran, the best approach used by NGOs toward the empowerment of women is bottom-up. In fact, in the bottom-up approach the participation is active, dynamic and self-mobilization and thus the high empowerment can be achieved (Asnarulkhadi 2005). Indeed, this approach is the best to achieve women's empowerment in Iran.

CONCLUSION

The present study was designed to determine the effect of NGO's approaches on the empowerment of women. Basically, the study revealed that the NGOs contribute to the empowerment of women in Shiraz, Iran. The NGOs played an important role to assist the community for improving their lives and situation where they use approaches such as top-down, partnership and bottom-up. It is believed that the women's empowerment is a key strategy to development process. The empowerment of women and the improvement of their status, particularly in respect of education, health and economic opportunities, are highly important ends in themselves. It also enhances their decision-making ability, knowledge, skills and self confidence to be full partners in the developmental process (Vijayanthi 2002). This study has identified three approaches employed by the women NGO's in Iran, namely 'top-down' (2 NGOs), 'partnership' (3NGOs), and 'bottom-up' (3NGOs). In recent years, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has increased in most developing countries, including Iran. Although NGOs are often identified with powerless groups, they themselves have become powerful and influential functions. In Iran, NGOs, particularly women's NGOs is a new phenomenon in working

to improve the situation of women. In this regard, NGOs are using the various approaches to help women. The findings of the study indicated that the mean score of women's empowerment in the bottom-up approach is higher than the other two approaches. This means that among the approaches undertaken by NGOs, bottom-up approach is the most effective to help the women to achieve the empowerment individually and collectively.

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