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OXFORD

Empowerment and Health

UCL Centre for Gender and Global Health Launch Day

Sabina Alkire, 16 February 2017

Tabita, Kenya

Rabiya, India

Stéphanie, Madagascar

Agathe, Madagascar

Dalma, Kenya

Ann-Sophie, Kenya

Valérie, Madagascar



"Greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world, and these matters are central to the process of development."

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom

"The poor person is someone brimming over with capacities and possibilities."

Gustavo Gutierrez

"A strong breeze can break branches. A whirlpool in the ocean waters can sink boats. But a strong willpower can give you courage, and even if your destination is a thousand miles away, you can be successful."

Amit, young man, Uttar Pradesh India

Key Lessons from *Moving out of Poverty*

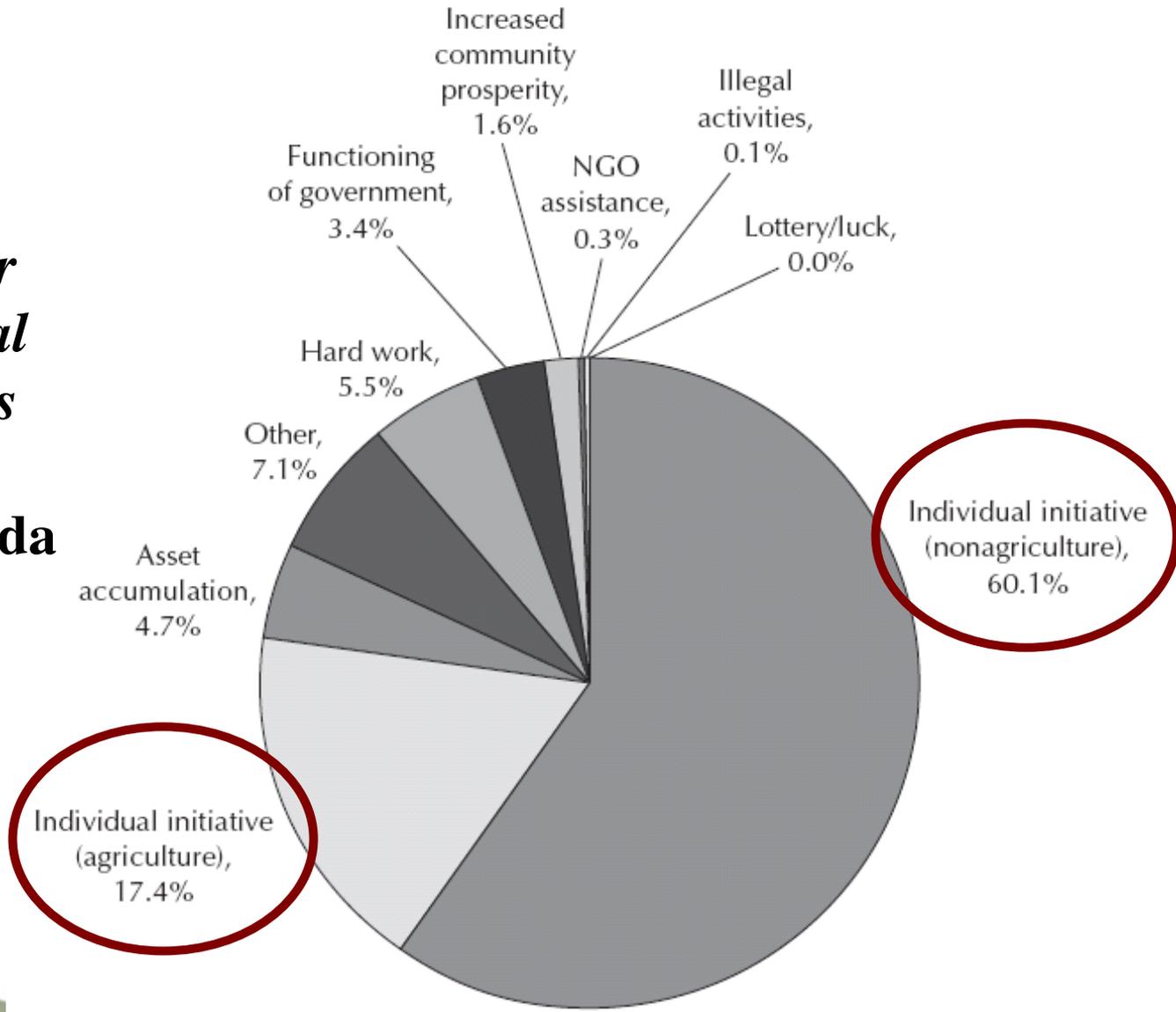
The capital of a poor person is his physical strength. He uses his strength.

Uganda



FIGURE 1.2

Movers most frequently cite initiatives as reasons for their move out of poverty



Source: Authors' analysis of household survey; all study regions; N = 3,991 movers.

Study	Definition or Concept of Empowerment
Albertyn (2001)	Effective empowerment must occur at each of 3 levels : micro (attitude, feelings and skills), interface (participation and action immediately around the individual) and macro (beliefs, action and effects)
Alkire 2005	Empowerment is an increase in certain kinds of agency that are deemed particularly instrumental to the situation at hand. Thus I am choosing to assume that empowerment is a subset of agency, and that increases in empowerment would be reflected in increased agency (but not necessarily vice versa)
Alsop 2006	Empowerment is defined as a group's or individual's capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes
Appleyard 2002	Empowering people to make their own decisions, rather than be passive objects of choices made on their behalf. It focuses on empowering all people to claim their right to opportunities and services made available through pro-poor development (Bartlett, 2004, 54)
Bartle, Phil (2003).	Having the capacity to do things that community members want to do and going beyond political or legal permission to participate in the national political system
Bennet 2002	<i>Empowerment</i> is used to characterize approaches based on <i>social mobilization</i> . A key element in most social mobilization approaches is helping poor and socially excluded individuals realize the power they gain from collective action. Often social mobilization approaches work "from below" to create voice and demand for change among diverse groups of poor and socially excluded citizens (Bartlett, 2004, 54)
Brown (2003)	Providing empowerment opportunities as necessary prerequisites to altering a person's potential reality and giving people the means to better themselves
Chambers (1993)	Empowerment means that people, especially poorer people, are enabled to take more control over their lives, and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive assets as one key element. Decentralization and empowerment enable local people to exploit the diverse complexities of their own conditions, and to adapt to rapid change. (Bartlett, 2004, 55)
Craig and Mayo 1995	Empowerment is about collective community, and ultimately class conscientization , to critically understand reality in order to use the power which even the powerless do possess, so as to challenge the powerful and ultimately to transform the reality through conscious political struggles (cited Oakley 2001, 4)

Study	Definition or Concept of Empowerment
Friedmann 1992	An alternative development involves a process of social and political empowerment whose long term objective is to rebalance the structure of power within society by make state action more accountable, strengthening the powers of civil society in the management of their own affairs and making corporate business more socially responsible (cited in Oakley 2001, 3)
Gootaert 2005	Empowerment falls in three categories: -making state institutions more responsive to poor people -removing social barriers -building social institutions and social capital
Grootaert (2003)	Expanding assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives
Jackson 1994	The process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless (a) becomes aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, (b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, (c) exercise their control without infringing upon the right of others and (d) support the empowerment of others in the community (cited in Rowlands, 1997, 15)
Kabeer (2001)	Empowerment ... refers to the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. (Bartlett, 2004, 57)
Lokshin and Ravallion (2003)	Taking actions that selectively empower those with little power to redress power inequality
Malena (2003)	Enabling or giving power to (whom) to do (what)
Malhotra (2002)	Enhancing assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence, and hold accountable the institutions that affect them
Mayoux 2000; DFID	Women's empowerment is defined as 'individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely , exercise choice, and to fulfill their potential has fallen equally to members of society'
McMillan, et al. (1995)	Gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance
Moser (2003)	Expanding assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives

Study	Definition or Concept of Empowerment
Narayan 2005	The expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives
Oppenheim Mason and Smith (2003)	Extent to which some categories of people are able to control their own destinies even when their interests are opposed by others with whom they interact
Oxaal and Baden 1997	Empowerment cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results because it involves a process whereby women can freely analyse, develop and voice their needs and interests , without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above, by planners or other social actors
Oxfam 1995	Empowerment involves challenging the forms of oppression which compel millions of people to play a part in their society on terms which are inequitable, or in ways which deny their human rights (Oxfam, 1995) in (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 2).
Rowlands 1997	‘Empowerment is more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions.’
Spreitzer (1995)	Intrapersonal empowerment as the component of psychological empowerment that deals with cognitive elements. Other components are interactional (thinking about and relating to the environment) and behavioral (taking action and engaging issues)
Strandburg	Empowerment can overall be defined as all those processes where women take control and ownership of their lives . Control and ownership requires an array of opportunities to choose among and this understanding of empowerment overlaps with the concept of human development when defined as “a process of enlarging people’s choices”. Both concepts describe processes, but where human development entails enlarging choices, empowerment is the process of acquiring the ability to choose among these enlarged choices... (Bartlett, 2004, 59)
Van Eyken 1991	Empowerment is an intentional and ongoing dynamic process centered on the local community, involving mutual dignity, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking a valid share of resources gain greater access to and control over those resources, though the exercise of an increased leverage of power (cited in Oakley 2001, 16)
WDR 2000/2001	Empowerment as the process of ‘enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision-making. And it means removing the barriers- political, legal and social- that work against particular groups and building the assets of poor people to enable them to engage effectively in markets’

What is Empowerment?

Over 33 definitions.

Able to act on behalf of goals that matter.

'I believe I can'

Moving out of Poverty



Sen's agency is wider than most definitions of empowerment

- i) agency is exercised with respect to **multiple goals**;
- ii) agency includes **effective power** as well as direct control;
- iii) agency may advance own wellbeing or may address **other-regarding** goals;
- iv) recognizing agency entails an **assessment of the value** of the agency objectives;
- v) agency introduces the need to incorporate the agents' own **responsibility** for a state of affairs into their evaluation of it.

Alkire 2008 in *Arguments for a better world*, Basu & Kanbur

Agency

“what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important.”

Sen “Well-being Agency and Freedom” *J of Philosophy* 1985: 203

“**someone who acts and brings about change**, and whose achievements can be judged **in terms of her own values** and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some **external criteria** as well”

Sen *Development as Freedom*. 1999: 19

agency is **the person’s ability to act on what they value and have reason to value.**

Drèze & Sen 2002

“The approach ... is essentially a ‘people-centered’ approach, which **puts human agency** (rather than organizations such as markets or governments) **at the centre of the stage**. The crucial role of social opportunities is to expand the realm of human agency and freedom, both as an end in itself and as a means of further expansion of freedom. The word ‘social’ in the expression ‘social opportunity’ (...) is a useful reminder not to view individuals and their opportunities in isolated terms. **The options that a person has depend greatly on relations with others and on what the state and other institutions do**. We shall be particularly concerned with those opportunities that are strongly influenced by social circumstances and public policy...” (p 6).

Drèze & Sen 2013 *Uncertain Glory*

Instrumental value of agency

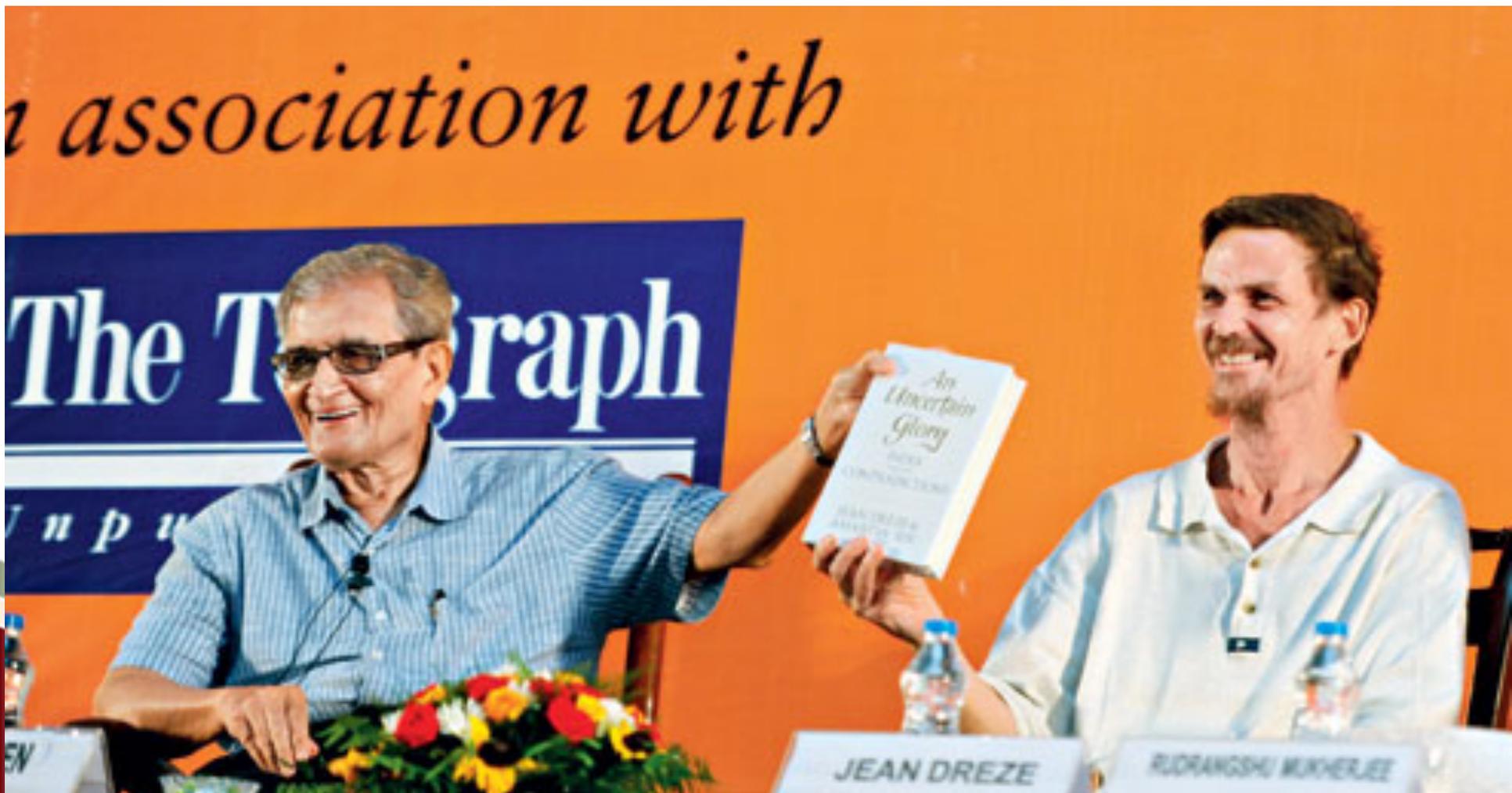
Given the extent and forms of gender disparity in India, there is an urgent need to focus not only on **what can be done for Indian women** (important as it is), but also on **what Indian women can do for India** – helping to make it a very different country.

Some Empirical Observations

- Track **deprivations & gendered inequities**
- Moving Out of Poverty: A **longitudinal** study of families who moved into and out of poverty over 10-25 years.
- Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI): a **measurement** tool
 - That can be analysed – N Ghana
 - A health index?
- **Data Gaps** hamper empowerment analysis
 - **Relative Autonomy Index**: sharply focused.

Dreze and Sen: *An Uncertain Glory* 2013

India: strong economic growth since 1980s.



Uneven progress in social deprivations:

Table 1.1 Comparison of India's Performance with Bangladesh and Nepal

	Year	India	Bangladesh	Nepal
GDP per capita (PPP, constant 2005 international \$)	1990	1,193	741	716
	2011	3,203	1,569	1,106
	Growth (p.a.)	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%
Under-5 Mortality Rate	1990	114	139	135
	2011	61	46	48
	Change	-53	-93	-87
Maternal Mortality Ratio	1990	600	800	770
	2010	200	240	170
	Change	-400	-560	-600
Infant Immunization (DPT) (%)	1990	59	64	44
	2011	72	96	92
	Change	13	32	48
Female Literacy Rate, Age 15-24 Years (%)	1990	49	38	33
	2010	74	78	78
	Change	25	40	45

Source: Drèze and Sen (2013) and World Bank Data Online accessed at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>

Drèze & Sen 2013

“Bangladesh’s progress and the role of women” p 58-65

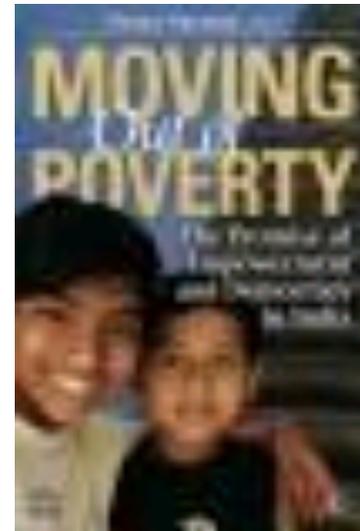
Despite conceptual nuance, simple measures can illuminate.

- Deprivations of both men and women
- Gender inequities
- Women’s empowerment priority for NGOs (GR, BR)
- Family planning
- Social norms (and their evolution)
- Role of grass-roots agents of change

Moving Out of Poverty in India

Vol 3

- 4 states: AP, Assam, UP, West Bengal
- 1995-2005
- 300 villages
- 2 movements:
 - moving out of poverty
 - falling into poverty



Health-related Findings

- **Falling into poverty is primarily a story of health and social shocks**
- **Aspirations** are a powerful force for moving out of poverty, and **Poor people's self-confidence and empowerment** drives change (**internal empowerment**)
- Among institutions, **family** matters most



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Piloting and Development of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Health?



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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Purpose

- Design, develop, and test an index to measure the greater **inclusion of women** in agricultural sector growth that has occurred as a result of US Government intervention under the Feed the Future Initiative
 - What is “greater inclusion”? The concept of Inclusive Agricultural Sector Growth is broad and multi-dimensional
 - Feed the Future defines it as: “the **empowerment of women** in their roles and engagement throughout the various areas of the **agriculture** sector, as it grows, in both quantity and quality”
- Could this be done for health?? Should it?**



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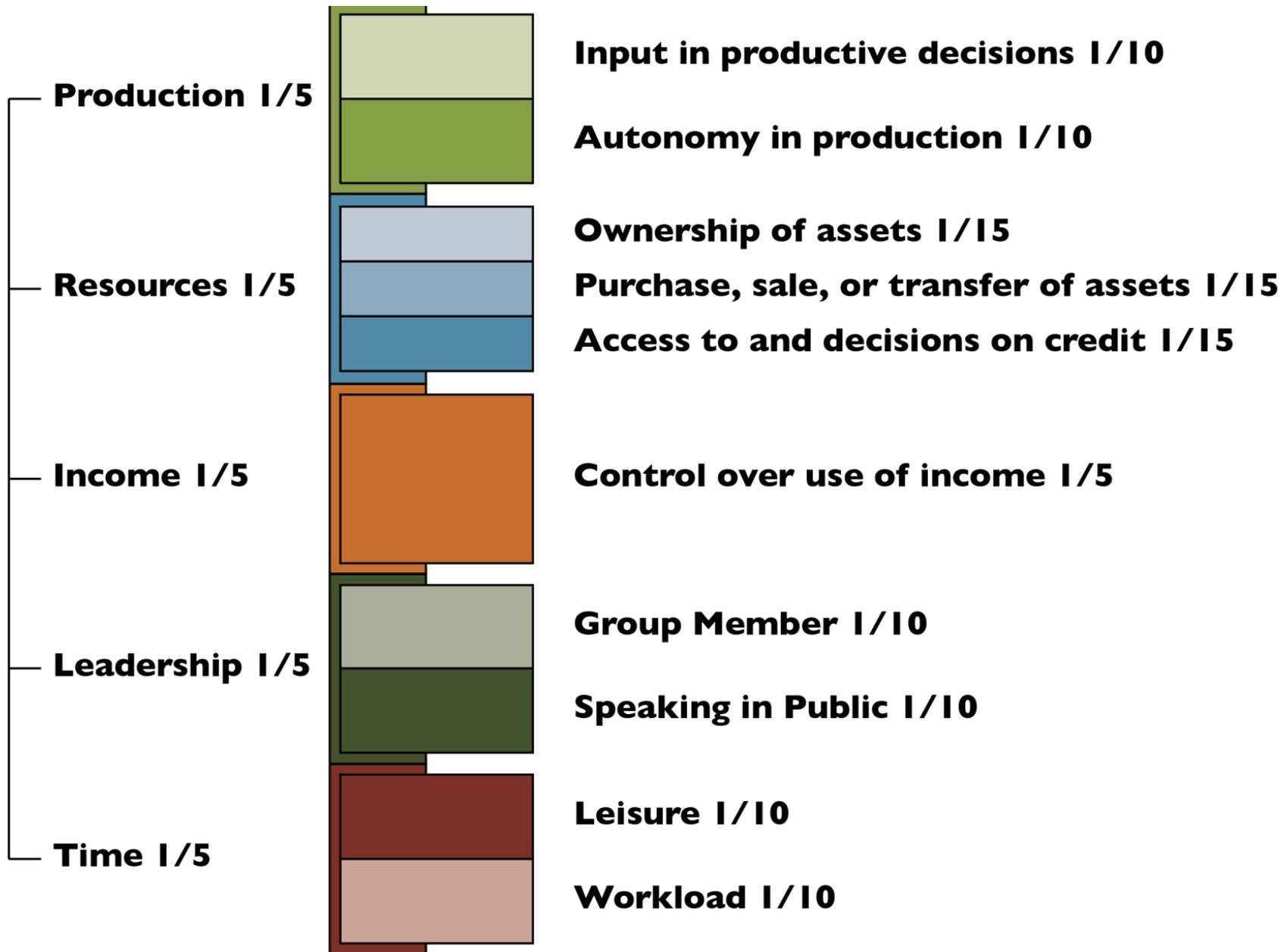
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A woman's empowerment score shows her own achievements

Five domains of empowerment





What is the WEAI?

- An aggregate index in two parts:
 - **Five domains of empowerment (5DE)**: assesses whether women are empowered in the 5 domains of empowerment in agriculture
 - **Gender Parity Index (GPI)**: reflects the percentage of women who are as empowered as the men in their households
- It is a **survey-based** index, not based on aggregate statistics or secondary data, constructed using interviews of the primary male and primary female adults in the same household





How is the Index constructed?

WEAI is made up of two sub indices

$$5DE = (1 - M_0)$$

Five domains of empowerment (5DE)

A direct measure of women's empowerment in 5 dimensions

$$GPI = (1 - P_1)$$

Gender parity Index (GPI)

Women's achievement's relative to the primary male in hh

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

All range from zero to one;
higher values = greater empowerment

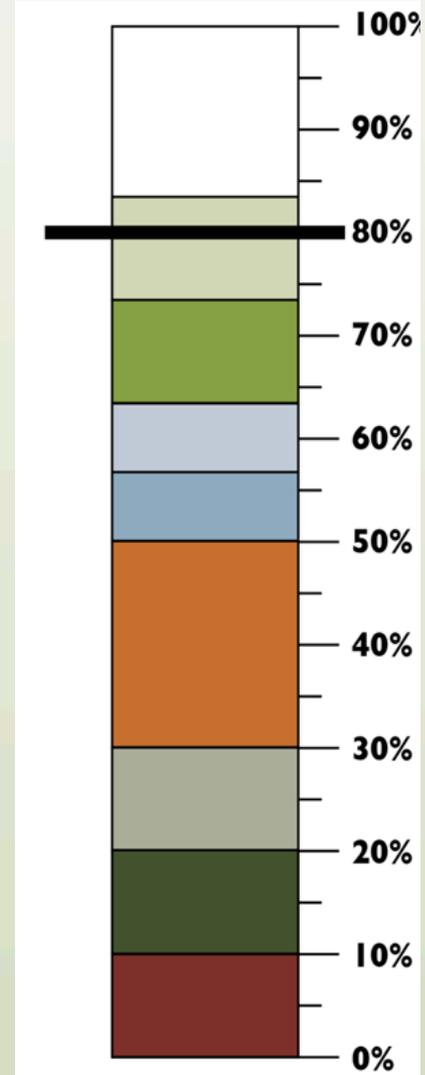


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Who is empowered?

A woman who has achieved 'adequacy' in 80% or more of the weighted indicators is empowered



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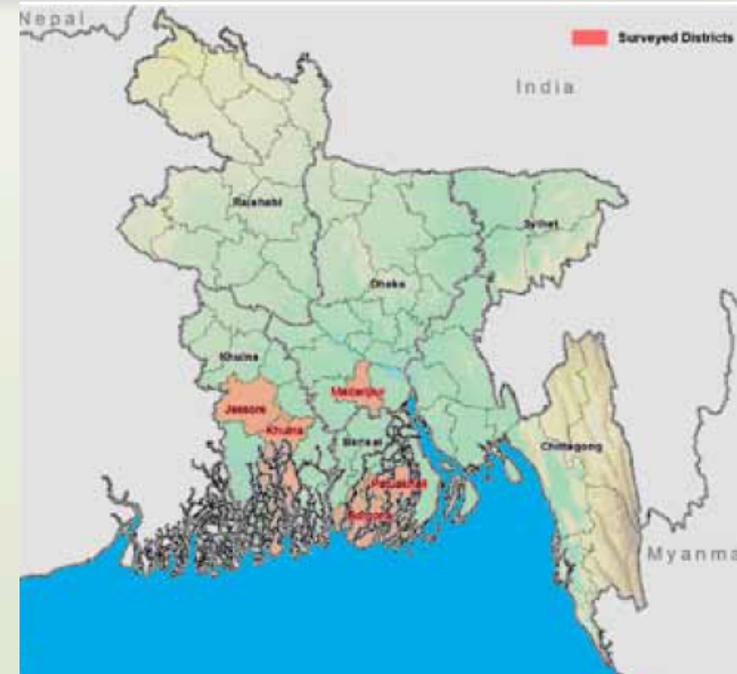


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Bangladesh Pilot results

- **31.9%** of women are empowered
- Disempowered women have adequate achievements in **60.7%** of domains
- **59.8%** of women enjoy gender parity
- Households without gender parity have a **25.2% empowerment gap** between the woman and man



Overall, the WEAI score is **0.749**



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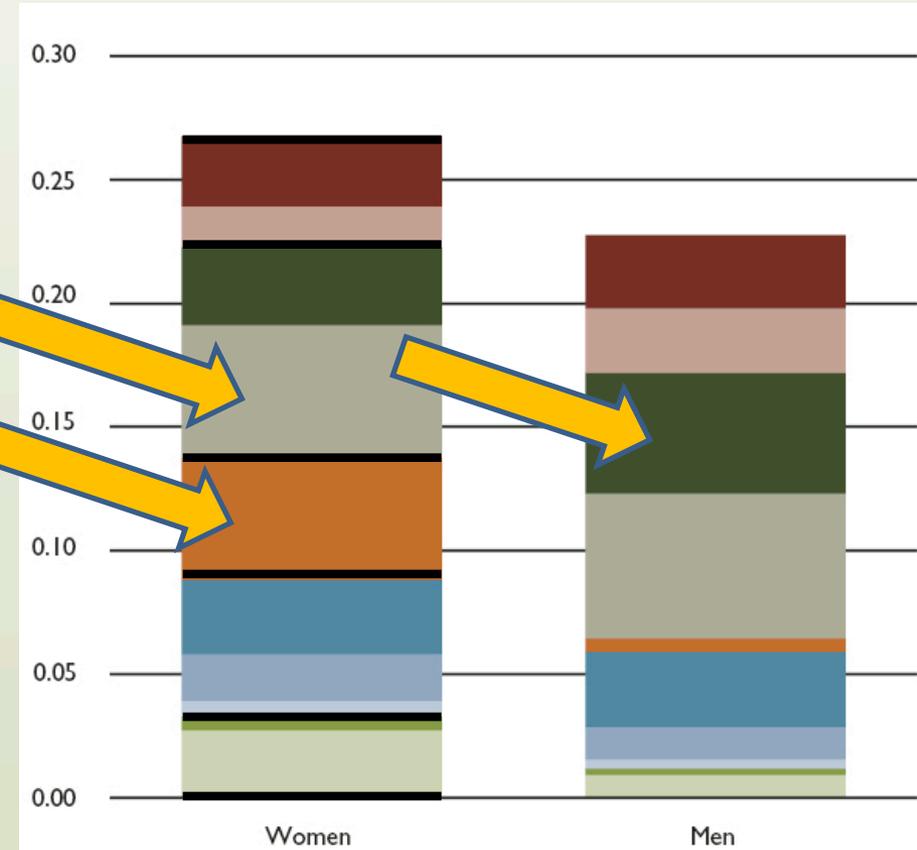




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Bangladesh: How to increase empowerment?



- Leisure
- Workload
- Speaking in public
- Group member
- Control over use of income
- Access to and decisions on credit
- Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets
- Ownership of assets
- Autonomy in production
- Input in productive decisions

Contribution of each indicator to disempowerment of women and men



Empowerment, wealth and education

- **Wealth** – clear association with empowerment in Uganda, but an imperfect proxy in Bangladesh and Guatemala:
 - 76% in top three quintiles are disempowered in Guatemala
- **Education** – significant influence in Guatemala and Uganda but insignificant for men and women in Bangladesh:
 - In Uganda, 35% of women with less than primary schooling are empowered vs. 45% with primary education
 - 31% of women with less than primary education were empowered in Bangladesh vs. 33% with primary schooling



Relevance for policymaking

1) Captures empowerment directly:

- Using new data, not proxies
- Shows how to empower women in each context

2) Three ways to change it:

- Empower women
- Increase scores among disempowered women
- Increase gender parity & reduce gap

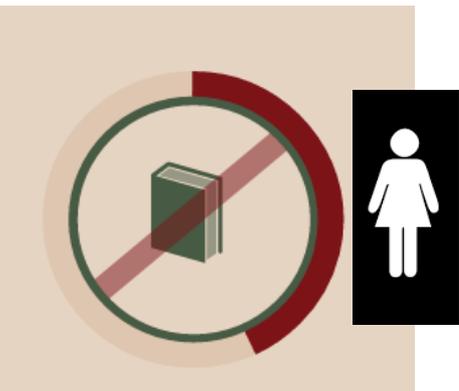


Health and WEAI in N Ghana:

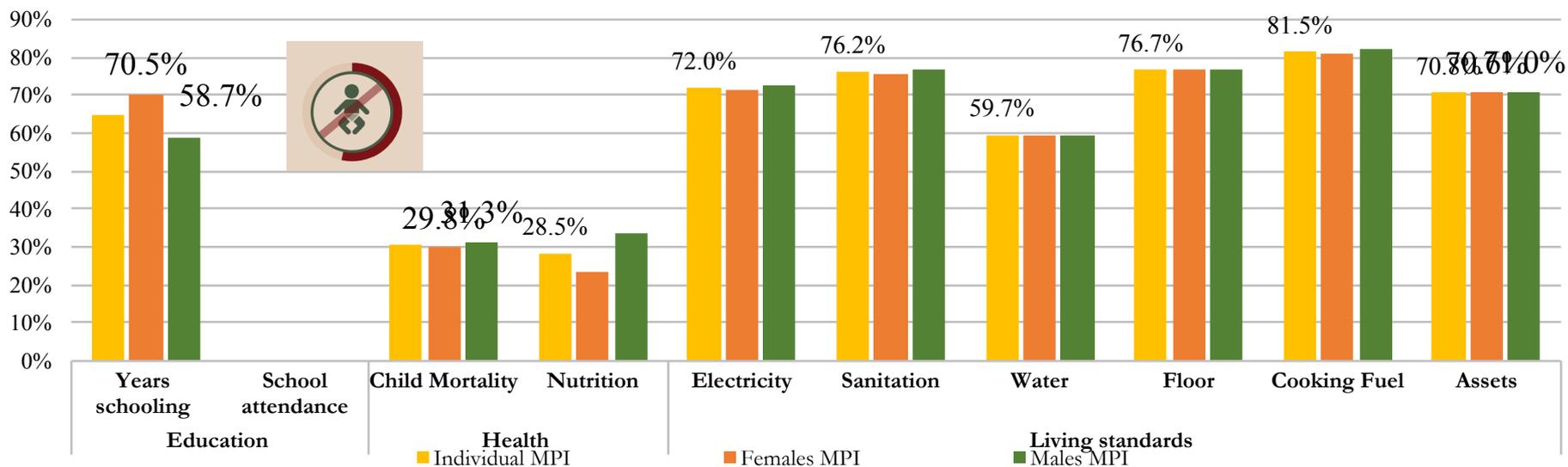
Ross and Zereyesus et al *IFAMA* 2015

- Investigated the extent to which empowerment affects nutrition (BMI and DDS) using MIMIC modelling
- 72% of women were disempowered by the WEAI.
- The WEAI overall is not associated with higher health.
- Yet five WEAI indicators exhibit a statistically significant relationship with women's health status:
 1. access to and decisions on **credit**,
 2. ownership of **assets**,
 3. autonomy in **production**,
 4. **group** membership, and
 5. **leisure** time

Gendered analysis of the global MPI: work in progress with Robles.



Individual Censored Headcounts
Proportion of people who are MPI poor and deprived in each indicator



Note: in some indicators men's health achievements may be lower.



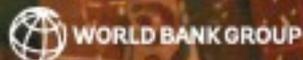
*"Women's equal, full participation—their voice and agency—
is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing."*

– Hillary Rodham Clinton

Voice and Agency

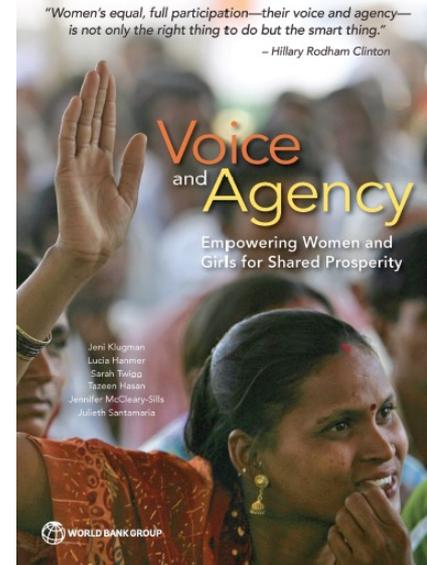
Empowering Women and
Girls for Shared Prosperity

Jeni Klugman
Lucia Hanmer
Sarah Twigg
Tazeen Hasan
Jennifer McCleary-Sills
Julieth Santamaria



Some findings from the literature reviewed:

- Gender-based violence is a global phenomenon – 1 in 3.
- Many women lack sexual and reproductive rights: IPV
- Each year, almost one in five girls under 18 in developing countries gives birth
- Poverty increases gender gaps
- Women's groups and collective action play a pivotal role in building momentum for progressive reform.
- **Data are insufficient to analyse voice and agency.**



“Measuring Women’s Autonomy in Chad using the Relative Autonomy Index”

Vaz, Pratley, & Alkire *Feminist Economics* 2016

- Validated the Relative Autonomy Index statistically
- Demonstrated domains of autonomy are distinct
- Women are less autonomous than men in each domain
- Correlations with subjective well-being, other agency and decision-making questions, and satisfaction are low.
- Regression analysis shows that autonomy information is *not* replicated by standard proxies for women’s empowerment such as level of education or income poverty status.
- **Data on autonomy should be gathered as they may unlock new relationships between agency & outcomes.**