

A STUDY ON THE FACTORS GOVERNING RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract: *The empowerment of women indicates women gaining control over their own lives. It involves building self confidence, raising awareness, expanding choices, increasing access to and control over resources. So empowering rural women, who are the backbone of our agrarian economy, is a sure path to achieve major economic gains. The rural women have a much greater, positive influence in factors governing sustainable development of the country. The present study is made to find out the role of family in encouraging rural women entrepreneurs, the problems faced by rural women entrepreneurs in promoting their venture and the measure they take to overcome difficulties. The study is based on primary data collected from 75 rural women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore. Simple random sampling technique was applied and the data have been analyzed using the statistical tools like simple percentage analysis and Kendall's coefficient of concordance to reveal the results of the study. The rural women entrepreneurs have lack of family support as their major problem, and they have opined that when they could raise loans from banks and if they get family support in all their endeavours they will be able to overcome their difficulties and achieve great heights in their career.*

Key Words: *entrepreneurship, rural women, and women entrepreneurship.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Since independence, India has made strong strides on the path of its development and also achieved remarkable success in various fields. However, it has yet to go a long way to make the life better in many areas particularly in the sphere of women empowerment through various socio-economic interventions and development activities. The empowerment of women concerns women gaining control over their own lives. It involves building self confidence, raising awareness, expanding choices, increasing access to and control over resources. Empowerment should come from within, women should empower themselves. In India women entrepreneurs face several challenges and problems, internal as well as external, in managing their units. Despite the measures taken by the government and others, the problems persist. It is necessary to take realistic view and consider how best entrepreneurship of women can be fostered.

In spite of urbanization and industrialization, our economy is predominantly agrarian and rural based. So empowering rural women, who are the backbone of our agrarian economy, is a sure path to achieve major economic gains. The rural women have a much greater, positive influence in factors governing sustainable development of the country. The Government of India has recognised this fact and is encouraging women to undertake industrial activity through various entrepreneurship development schemes. Women can venture into any area of business, industry and service sector depending on their interest and area of specialization. This depends upon their educational background, family support, income level, nature of training, technical knowledge and so on. Women can undertake entrepreneurial activities by getting trained in related areas. In this context the government and allied agencies are providing training facilities through various Entrepreneurship Development Programmes. Financial institutions are also directed to provide financial and managerial assistance to women entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs have to be appreciated for their increased utilisation of modern technology, increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, creating sizable employment for others and setting the trend for other women in the organised sector. But since Indian women give more emphasis to family ties and relationship women have to balance between business and home. Moreover the business success depends on the support the family members extend to women in business process and management. The interest of the family members is a determinant factor in the realization of women folk's business aspirations.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the role of family in encouraging rural women entrepreneurs.
- To examine the hindrances faced by rural women entrepreneurs in promoting their venture and the measure they take to overcome the difficulties.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The study focuses on the factors governing rural women entrepreneurship. In India, women constitute 60 per cent of the rural unemployed and 56 per cent of the total unemployed. It indicates that a very substantial portion of women are unemployed even though they have the ability to undertake varied activities including industrial activity. In this context it is essential to develop women entrepreneurship in order to expose them to various employment and profit generating avenues. And it is a fact that in some parts of our country, women have proved and established their talents as successful entrepreneurs which has been experienced mostly in cities. But rural women as they are caught in the cobs of poverty, social traditions and restricting customs, it is very necessary to emancipate them and bring them into the hold of entrepreneurship.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

*Punitha M, Sangeetha and Padmavathi S (1999)*¹ in their study on “Women entrepreneurs their problems and constraints” have examined the problems and constraints faced by self-employed women in the Pondicherry region. A sample of 120 self-employed women has been personally interviewed during the period from June to July 1999 of which 42 respondents were from rural areas and 78 were from urban areas. The major problems faced by the rural self-employed women were competition, better quality products and marketing. And the major problems faced by urban women entrepreneurs were competition and better quality products. They also faced difficulty while availing loans. The least problems faced by both the rural and urban self-employed women were ignorance about the schemes offered by the banks, distance from markets and ignorance about the agencies and institutions helping women entrepreneurs.

*Singh (2008)*² identifies the reasons & influencing factors behind entry of women into entrepreneurship. He has explained the characteristics of their businesses in Indian context and also the various obstacles & challenges faced by women as entrepreneurs. The obstacles in the growth of women entrepreneurship are lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs, social un-acceptance as women entrepreneurs, family responsibility, gender discrimination, missing networks and low priority given by bankers to provide loan to women entrepreneurs. He has suggested few remedial measures like promoting micro enterprises, unlocking institutional frame work, projecting and pulling to grow and supporting the successful women entrepreneurs. The study advocates for ensuring synergy among women related ministry, economic ministry and Social and Welfare Development Ministry of the Government of India.

*Suvarna Sable (2012)*³ has made an attempt to assess and understand the concept of rural entrepreneur and entrepreneurship, business opportunities available for rural women entrepreneurs and the challenges or constraints faced by rural women entrepreneurs. The study is based on primary data collected by administering questionnaire to 10 rural women entrepreneurs from each of the 10 villages of Osmanabad district, Maharashtra. The study shows that there exists multiple business opportunities for rural women entrepreneurs in rural India. Out of all the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneur, social challenge is the key challenge faced by rural women entrepreneurs.

5. METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on primary data collected from 75 rural women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore. A structured interview schedule has been used to collect the data. Simple random sampling technique was applied and statistical tools like Simple Percentage Analysis and Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance have been carried out to analyse the data. The interpretations and findings are given in the following paragraphs.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

The percentage analysis is carried out for the personal data collected through the interview schedule and also for the data relating to the support of the family/role of family and to identify what is the best preferred solution to overcome the problems faced by the rural women entrepreneurs. This analysis describes the classification of the respondents falling under each category. The percentage analysis is used mainly for standardization and comparison. Mean ranking analysis is used to find out the order of priority for the factors listed. Kendall’s Coefficient of concordance (W) has been applied to find the extent of similarity among the respondents in assigning the ranks to the given items.

7. PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS:

Table: 1
Personal Data

		No.	%
Age	Less than 20years	12	16.0

	20-30years	24	32.0
	31-40 years	22	29.3
	Above 40years	17	22.7
Educational Qualification	No formal education	2	2.7
	School level	43	57.3
	Graduate	25	33.3
	Post Graduate	5	6.7
Marital status	Married	58	77.3
	Unmarried	16	21.3
	Separated	1	1.4
Monthly income of the family	Less than Rs.10, 000	14	18.7
	Rs.10, 001 –Rs.20,000	31	41.3
	Rs.20,001 –Rs.30,000	12	16.0
	Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	15	20.0
	Above Rs.40,000	3	4.0
Kind of family structure	Nuclear Family	68	90.7
	Joint Family	7	9.3
Number of members in the family	1-3	21	28.0
	4-6	52	69.3
	Above 6	2	2.7
Age of entering the business	Less than 20years	14	18.7
	20-30years	36	48.0
	31-40 years	16	21.3
	Above 40years	9	12.0
Total		75	100.0

Source: Primary Data

It can be found from the above table showing personal details of the rural entrepreneurs that, 32 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 – 30 years, 29.3 per cent of the respondents are in the age group 31 – 40 years, there are 22.7 per cent of them in the age group above 40 years and the age of 16 per cent of the respondents is less than 20 years.

Majority (57.3 per cent) of the respondents have been educated up to school level. 33.3 per cent of the respondents are graduates, 6.7 per cent of the respondents are post graduates and 2.7 per cent of the respondents had no formal education.

It can be inferred from the table that majority (77.3 per cent) of the respondents are married, 21.3 per cent of them are unmarried and 1.4 per cent of the respondents are separated.

Women entrepreneurs having Rs.10,001 to Rs.20,000 as their monthly family income constitutes 41.3 per cent of the total. 20 per cent of the respondents' monthly family income falls under the group of Rs.30,001 to Rs.40,000, 18.7 per cent of the respondents have monthly family income of less than Rs.10,000, income of 16 per cent of the respondents is Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000 and 4 per cent of the respondents have more than Rs.40,000 as their monthly family income.

90.7 per cent of the respondents live in nuclear family structure and 9.3 per cent of them belong to joint family.

There are 4 to 6 members in the family of majority (69.3 per cent) of the respondents, 28 per cent of the respondents' family consists of 1 to 3 members and 2.7 per cent of the respondents' families have more than 6 members.

Most (48 per cent) of women entrepreneurs have entered the business when they were 20 to 30 years of age. 21.3 per cent of the respondent belonged to the age group of 31 to 40 years when they entered into the business, 18.7 per cent of the respondents were less than 20 years when they started their business and the age of entering the business for 12 per cent of the respondents was above 40 years.

Table: 2
Family Support/ Role of Family

		No.	%
First woman member in the family to start business	Yes	71	94.7
	No	4	5.3
Response from family when entered into this business	Very supportive	48	64.0
	Supportive	18	24.0
	Indifferent	3	4.0

	Non-supportive	3	4.0
	Reacted badly	3	4.0
Family members help in trade	Yes	70	93.3
	No	5	6.7
Total		75	100.0

Source: Primary Data

From the table 2 showing the family support/ role of family it is evident that 94.7 per cent of the women entrepreneurs are the first women from their family to start business and 5.3 per cent of the respondents were from the families where entrepreneurship was a new task for women.

64 per cent of the women entrepreneurs have had a very supportive response from their family when they entered in to business, 24 per cent of the respondents' families have been supportive in their venture. The responses of 4 per cent of the respondents' families were indifferent, non-supportive and reacted badly.

93.3 per cent of the respondents' families help them in trading and 16 per cent of them do not have family members' support in trading activities.

8. MEAN RANKING:

Table: 3
Opinion about the Problems Faced in General by Rural Women Entrepreneurs

S. No.	Problems Faced	Mean Rank	Final Rank
1	Lack of family support	4.75	I
2	Difficulty due to dual role	4.90	II
3	Indifferent attitude of the society	5.39	IV
4	Discrimination with women entrepreneur	5.95	X
5	Insufficient funds	5.15	III
6	Non-availability of raw materials	5.67	VI
7	Long distance to the market	5.84	VII
8	Delayed payments by customers	5.57	V
9	Inadequate publicity	5.86	VIII
10	Competition with cheaper goods and services	5.92	IX

Source: Primary Data

From the above mean rank table it is understood that the majority of the women entrepreneurs have faced the 'problem of lack of family support' and hence they have ranked it as number one (mean rank 4.75), followed by 'difficulty due to dual role' for the women entrepreneurs (mean rank 4.90) and 'insufficient funds' to meet day to day expenses involved in business operations (mean 5.15). 'Indifferent attitude of the society' is given fourth rank (mean 5.39), followed by 'delayed payments by customers' (mean 5.57) and 'non-availability of raw materials' for the production purpose (mean 5.67). 'Long distance to the market' (mean 5.84) is assigned seventh rank, followed by 'inadequate publicity' for the products produced by the women entrepreneurs (mean 5.86) and 'competition with cheaper goods and services' in selling the products (mean 5.92). Tenth rank is assigned to 'Discrimination with women entrepreneur' (mean 5.95).

9. KENDALL'S COEFFICIENT OF CONCORDANCE:

Kendall's Coefficient of concordance (W) has been applied to find the extent of similarity among the respondents in assigning the ranks to the items listed in the above table 3. 'W' ranges between 0 and 1. Higher the value of W, more will be the similarity among the respondents.

Test Statistics - Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

Kendall's W	.021
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The calculated value of W for the given items is 0.021. Hence, there is less similarity among the women entrepreneurs in assigning ranks for the problems faced by them.

10. PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS:

Table: 4
Solutions Preferred by Rural Women Entrepreneurs in order to overcoming the Problems faced – Multiple Response

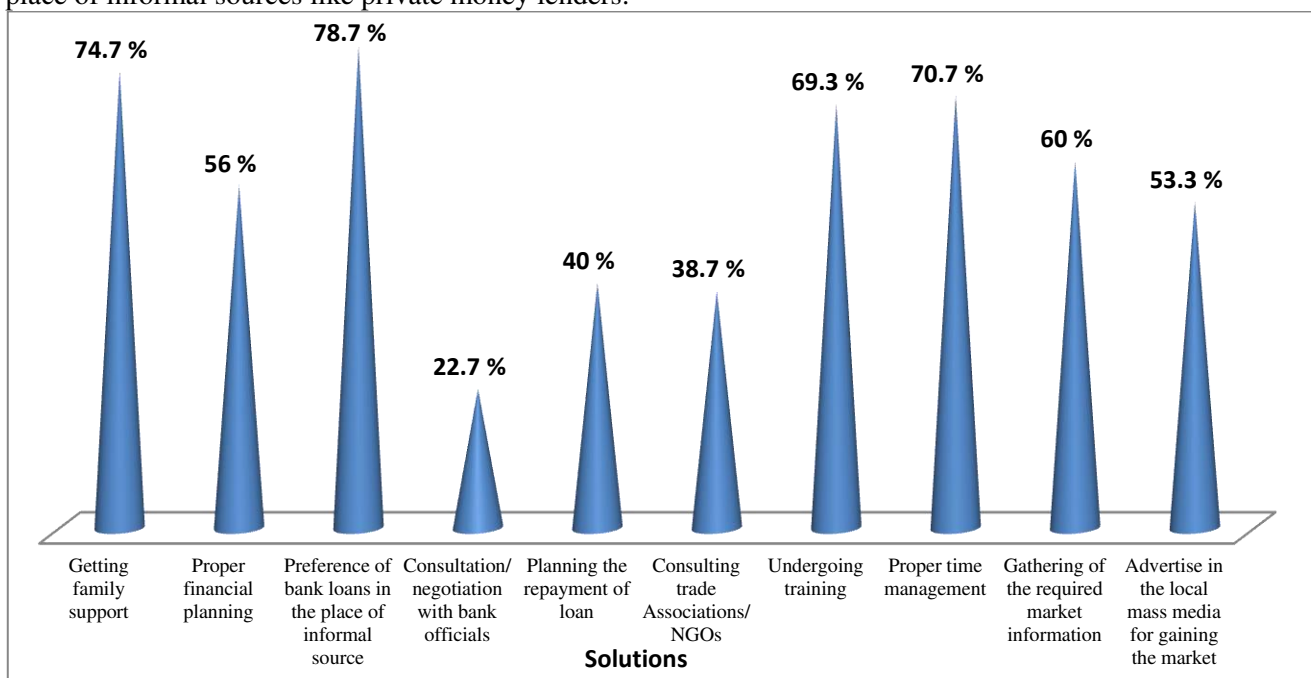
S. No.	Solutions	No.	%
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1	Getting family support	56	74.7
2	Proper financial planning	42	56.0
3	Preference of bank loans in the place of informal source	59	78.7
4	Consultation/ negotiation with bank officials	17	22.7
5	Planning the repayment of loan	30	40.0
6	Consulting trade Associations/ NGOs	29	38.7
7	Undergoing training	52	69.3
8	Proper time management	53	70.7
9	Gathering of the required market information	45	60.0
10	Advertise in the local mass media for gaining the market	40	53.3

Source: Primary Data

From the above table depicting the factors which the women entrepreneurs choose to overcome their problems, 78.7 per cent of them have opined that they prefer raising loans from banks in the place of informal sources like private money lenders, 74.7 per cent of them have said that family support is the best solution to overcome their problems and 70.7 per cent them are of the opinion that when there is proper time management they could easily manage all their obstacles. In the view of 69.3 per cent respondents, undergoing training with respect to their business would help them to shine in business, for 60 per cent of the women entrepreneurs gathering required market information is the preferred solution. Proper financial planning and advertisement in the local mass media for gaining the market are the solutions preferred by 56 per cent and 53.3 per cent of the women entrepreneur respondents. 40 per cent of the women entrepreneurs have decided that planning the repayment of loan would help them solve their problem. Consulting trade Associations/ NGOs and consultation/ negotiation with bank officials are the solutions preferred by 38.7 per cent and 22.7 per cent of the respondents.

Majority (78.7 per cent) of the women entrepreneurs have opined that they prefer raising loans from banks in the place of informal sources like private money lenders.



11. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The following are the important findings of the study on the topic “An Empirical Analysis on the Factors Governing Rural Women Entrepreneurship”.

Simple percentage analysis:

- Most (32 per cent) of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 – 30 years
- Majority (57.3 per cent) of the respondents have been educated up to school level
- Majority (77.3 per cent) of the respondents are married
- Women entrepreneurs having Rs.10,001 to Rs.20,000 as their monthly family income constitutes 41.3 per cent of the total
- 90.7 per cent of the respondents live in nuclear family structure
- There are 4 to 6 members in the family of majority (69.3 per cent) of the respondents.
- Most (48 per cent) of women entrepreneurs have entered the business when they were 20 to 30 years of age

- 94.7 per cent of the women entrepreneurs are the first women from their family to start business
- 64 per cent of the women entrepreneurs have had a very supportive response from their family when they entered in to business
- Majority (93.3) per cent of the respondents' families help them in trading
- 78.7 per cent of the women entrepreneurs have opined that they prefer raising loans from banks in the place of informal sources like private money lenders

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W)

- There is less similarity among the women entrepreneurs in assigning ranks for the problems faced by them.

12. SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the study undertaken the following suggestions could be made:

- Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged by their own families and by the society as well
- Government has to bring in more number of special Acts which would especially motivate rural women to come out and run their business successfully
- Women themselves should be confident in facing the obstacles and shine as successful entrepreneurs which would motivate many women to enter the field of business
- Financial institutions may encourage rural women entrepreneurs by sanctioning those loans which will be of great support for them.

13. CONCLUSION:

Independence brought promise of equality of opportunity in all sphere to the Indian women. But unfortunately, the government sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women. The present study on the factors governing rural women entrepreneurship, conducted in Coimbatore helped in identifying the problems faced by rural women entrepreneurs and what are the measures they consider in solving the problems encountered in the course of their business. The major problems of the respondents were lack of support from their families, overburdening due to dual role which they have to play at home and at work and insufficient funds for their business operations. To overcome the hurdles they require loans from banks in place of informal sources of finance and the support from their families is more important as women in India are more concerned about the well being of their family. Hence, the interest of the family members is a determinant factor in the realization of women's business aspirations. Thus a clear vision is needed to remove the obstacles to the path of women's emancipation from government, family, society and women themselves. Efforts should be directed towards all round development of each and every section of Indian women by giving them their due share. And in pursuit of making India a great nation, let us work towards by giving women their much deserved status.

“That country and that nation which does not respect women will never become great now and nor will ever in future”

- Swami Vivekanandha

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