

# **ROLE OF MICRO AND SMALL SCALE ENTERPRISES IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

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By

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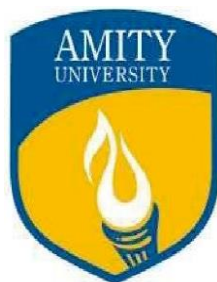
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## Chapter 6

### 6.1 Conclusion:

In the present study, an attempt has been made to study the role of micro and small scale enterprises in women empowerment. A significant role played by formal/organised Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs) is that, it creates employment opportunities and generates income for a larger section of the society, especially the poor and disadvantaged section. In addition to this, the formal/organised MSEs also indulge in skill development activities, to broaden up the skill manpower base of the nation. However, another fundamental yet less researched role of organised MSEs is, that it also empowers its employees. The current study has made an attempt to fill this gap. Hence, the present study, conducts a primary survey to analyse the role of MSEs in empowering its women employees through various socio-economic and on the job related factors.

The empowerment status of women employees is assessed through four parameters namely, decision making power of women employees at family level; decision making power of women employees at workplace; freedom to express ideas at workplace and absence of competitive envy at workplace. The study employs various socio-economic and job related factors to measure the empowerment of women at workplace.

The effects of each and every indicator viz, age of the respondent; marital status; income level; educational level; years of work experience; on-the-job training facility; possession and use of ATM facilities; access to information and income more than husband, is seen on parameters of women empowerment individually.

The findings of the present study reveal that elder women are more empowered in making decisions at family level and at workplace. They are also more empowered in having expressing their ideas at workplace and face less competitive envy at workplace from younger women employees. The odds ratio range from 0.354 to 15.425. Marital status shows similar finding and is positive and significant in all the parameters of women empowerment.

Education levels of women employees shows interesting results, it is seen that only at higher education levels, especially at senior secondary and above women employees are empowered in all the parameters of empowerment. That is, women employees with primary and secondary level education show no signs of empowerment. The odds ratio range from

2.614 to 15.990. However, it is found out that senior secondary and above level education has its robust effects on decision making power at workplace. The women employees are 16 times more likely to have decision making power at workplace with education level of senior secondary and above as compared to women employees who have educational qualification lesser than this. Out of the four parameters of women empowerment, education level particularly, senior secondary and above have considerable effects on participation in decision making at workplace. The result of the present study that higher education promotes women empowerment is similar to that of studies by other scholars (Mehra 1997, Longwe 1998, Kabeer 1999, Malik & Courtney 2011, Das 2016, Hanmer & Klugman 2016, Mehrotra & Sinha 2017) Hence, investing in senior secondary & above level education will have considerable effects in all the parameters of women empowerment. Higher level of education will give the women employees the capacity to absorb new technologies, which will make them technically empowered. This increased educational level will also help women employees to fetch better returns of their labour in the market. This directly impact her empowerment status at workplace.

Another important and significant determinant of women empowerment which the study found out is years of work experience. It is found out that women employees with an experience level between 10-15 years are more empowered to make decisions and express ideas at workplace by odds ratio 1.614 – 5.376. The higher the experience level of women employees in years higher will be their empowerment status. The findings of analysis reveal that women employees with more than 15 years of work experience are better empowered to make decisions at family level and at workplace level. They also have more freedom to express ideas at workplace as compared to women employees with lesser experience levels. The findings of the present study are supported by previous literature which shows a positive relationship between years of work experience and empowerment status. The odds ratio of women employees having 15 years and beyond experience level are in the range of 2.464 to 11.336. The most profound effect of this determinant is seen on the parameter; decision making at family level. That is, women employees are 11 times more likely to make decisions at their family level when they have work experience of 15 years or more as compared to women employees who have lesser experience levels. Therefore, bestowing women with employment opportunity will not only lead to income generation, but in the long run, will help her gain better bargaining position in terms of participation in decision making at family level.

On-the-job-training facilities determinant is positively significant for all the parameters of women empowerment. It is seen through the odds ratio that, those women employees who have received on-the-job-training facilities are 4 times more likely to make decisions at workplace, as compared to women employees who have not received any training facility at their job. The odds ratio for the other parameters range from 1.321 to 2.149. It is found through the present study, that on-the-job training has led to increased knowledge of women employees relative to their job profile. It is also found out that, through proper training facilities, an employee is able to upgrade her knowledge and skills towards the works she does in an organisation. Numerous studies are of the view that the most substantial offering an organisation can give its women employees, is to invest in supporting them for on-the-job training and development (Piterman 2008; Noe and Tews 2009; Coleman 2010; Ellison 2011, Thornton 2013 and Annual report 2017-18, Ministry of Labour and Employment) Therefore, investing in on-the-job training must be ensured by MSEs as their extensive policy measures.

Another major determinant of women empowerment is income level of the respondent. It is found in the present study that at all the three levels of income women employees are empowered, except for the parameter absence of competitive envy. A stark finding of the present study is that, at all the levels of income, women employees do not enjoy absence of competitive envy. Instead, it is found with higher levels of income women employees face higher envy (normally related to back-bitching, bullying etc.) at workplace by other women employees. A woman employee in senior position of service sector has reported higher degrees of back-bitching, as she was unable to help in monetary increment of some of the women employees from lower hierarchy. Women employees in corporates, in order to climb up the hierarchy, face cut throat competition. It is recorded that 8.5% of women employees face competitive envy at workplace (MSE) and out of them 47.05% of women employees have income level of more than Rs. 30,000 and above

Apart from absence of competitive envy, all the parameters show a positive relation with the dependent variable. The odds ratio of women employees at an income level Rs. 30,000 and above range from 7.279 to 13.183. Women employees with this income level are 9 times more empowered to make decisions at family level and 14 times more empowered to make decisions at workplace level. The present study, thus, finds out that, with increase in income levels, the decision making ability of the women employees also gets enhanced,

supplementing her autonomy both at workplace and at household. The results of the present study which relates to direct effects of income level on empowerment status is supported by other studies also (Mehra 1997; Mayoux 1998; Charmes et. al 2003; Beaman et. al 2009; Hitchmen & Fong 2011; Varghese 2011 and Duflo 2012)

The importance of financial literacy which stimulates financial inclusive growth cannot be neglected. The study adopts two determinants relating to financial independence of women. These determinants are positively linked to women empowerment. The two indicators of this determinant are possession and use of ATM card facilities. The odds ratio of the indicators ranges from 1.067 to 3.287. It is seen through the present study that those women employees who possess and use ATM card facilities are 2 times more empowered to express ideas and are 3 times more empowered to make decisions at workplace; as compared to women employees who do not possess and use ATM card facilities. It is found out from the study that only 12.5% of women employees do not have ATM cards and only 17.5% do not use ATM cards. Those who do not use ATM cards have low income level, that is, below Rs. 10,000. These women employees get their salary in by the way of cash payment, hence, their usage is also low. Apart from this, the women employees who are not literate or those who have below primary level education do not how to use ATM cards and are also getting their salary in cash. Therefore, Use of ATM cards is directly linked to income and educational levels of women employees, and hence, to their empowerment status.

Therefore, investing or imparting digital education to women employees at workplace(MSEs) can promote financial digital literacy which is the main aim of Digital India Programme. MSEs should impart knowledge regarding digital literacy to its women employees with primary and secondary level education, because Digital India is also promoting financial digital literacy. An example of one move in this direction is taken by L&T financial services. Eg.The Digital Sakhi Programme launched in Maharashtra by L&T Financial Services in partnership with the NGO Action for Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra.

Access to information through various channels of media is a current buzz in the economy which affects women empowerment. It is found out through the present study that those women employees who are better equipped with information via different channels of media such as newspapers, internet, television are 18 times more likely to express ideas at

workplace as compared to women employees who do not have access to information. It is observed that access to information by these media channels enlarges the knowledge base of the women employees; such that they are aware of their surroundings. (Batliwala 1994; Mayoux 1999; Kabeer 1999; Nath 2001; Malhotra and Schuler 2005; Kantor 2005; Hafkin and Huyer 2006; Shirazi 2012; Potnis 2015; Nirmala 2015 and Verma 2018) are the studies which support the present analysis that access to information provides women with opportunities to improve and make them aware about their rights, making them empowered.

Henceforth, to make the women employees better equipped with information, investment in ICT projects should be made, such as providing low cost tablets or smartphones with low cost internet access must be taken as an important policy measure. This could be done through public private partnership via mix of traditional and new technology medias such as radio and internet. Baduria ICT centre in West Bengal and The Senegalese telephone company Sonatel & Manobi with web access protocol with extended access to internet are two investments that have been made around the globe to strengthen the knowledge base of their workforce.

The present study, hence, shows that to enhance empowerment status priority must be given to a mix of indicators which affect the parameters of women empowerment significantly. It is examined through the current research work that; emphasis should be laid on different indicators which are essential. This will bring a holistic improvement in empowerment status of women, which is the need of the hour. It is analysed that income generation, educational attainment and on-the-job training are robust variables impacting decision making power of women employees at workplace.

Years of experience play a significant role in upgrading decision making power of women employees at their family level and access to information significantly affects freedom to express ideas and absence of at workplace. Possession and use of ATM card facilities has an impact, though low, but significant on these three parameters of women empowerment. Therefore, it is found out that micro and small enterprises are significant drivers in empowering its women employees through its on-the-job related factors. These factors are on-the-job training facilities, zero balance bank account and monetary returns. These factors enhance the income level of employees which in turn directly impacts their empowerment status.

## **6.2 Policy Implications:**

The major suggestions and policy implications for improving the empowerment status of women employees of MSE sector are as follows:

1. Investing in senior secondary & above level education will empower women to participate more in decision making at organisational level (MSE) and also at family level. Higher level of education will give the women employees the capacity to absorb new technologies, which will make them technically empowered. This increased educational level will also help women employees to fetch better returns of their labour in the market. This will directly impact her empowerment status at workplace.
2. Providing On-The-Job training to women employees should be ensured by MSEs as their extensive policy measures as it helps women to get empowered in all the parameters.
3. Investing or imparting digital education to women employees at workplace (MSEs) with primary and secondary level education could promote financial digital literacy, which is the main aim of Digital India Programme. As Digital India is also promoting financial digital literacy, therefore, MSEs in lieu with this aim can promote the same.
4. In manufacturing sector of MSEs, incentive based programmes could be started which will lead to skill enhancement of the women employees in this sector. As this sector is a hard skilled sector and the current survey finds out that women to men in this sector are in the ratio of 1:10. Therefore, incentive based skill development programmes can enhance the empowerment status of women employees of MSEs.
5. Investing in ICT projects, such as providing low cost tablets or smartphones with low cost internet access can be taken as an important policy measure of MSEs. This can be done through public private partnership via mix of traditional and new technology medias such as radios, internet.
6. Support for tele-education programme can be extended to organisational level for women employees by the government for enhancing women empowerment

### **6.3 Future Agenda:**

There is a need to study the role of micro and small scale sector in empowering its women employees in a more comprehensive manner. The research can be extended to different industries apart from textile/garment and ITES industry in the MSE sector. There is scope to study the women empowerment with large sample taken from the sector. Empowerment status of working women from different communities, religion, caste and region can also be studied in order to have a holistic view of this concept and policy formation, thereof.