

EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL POOR – THE NEW PERSPECTIVE

**A STUDY OF SRIKAKULAM, VISAKHAPATNAM AND
VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICTS**

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CHAPTER IX



Summary, Suggestions & Conclusion



Empowering women is a pre requisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Women empowerment is a pre requisite for creating a good nation.

If women get developed in any place

there will be righteousness in the hearts

If there is righteousness in the heart's of people

there will be beauty in the character

If there is beauty in the character,

there will be harmony in the home.

If there is harmony in the home,

there will be order in the nation.

When there is order in the nation,

there will be peace in the world.

The status of any given section of population in a society is intimately connected with its economic position which depends on rights, rules and opportunities for participation in economic activity. The economic status of women is now accepted as indicator of a society's stage of development and therefore it becomes imperative for the go government to frame policies providing these roles, rights and opportunities to women for their betterment in particular and society in general.

Entrepreneurial promotional measures:

Women in India at many times enjoyed more rights than their counterparts in other nations. The government has also taken the lead role of directing the women into various avenues of economic activity like employment in



organized sector and entrepreneurship by framing certain special policies for them.

The government considers the small industry sector as priority sector of the economy as it ensures a balanced regional development, massive employment generation and equitable distribution of wealth. Women entrepreneurs were recognized by the government as needing further assistance in lieu of their socio-economic status and hence the general promotional policies of small industry were further liberalized for them.

The government is assisting the women entrepreneurs by providing financial assistance in the form of term-loans, interest subsidy, unsecured loans etc., and concessions in the form of subsidies in the capital, self-employment loans etc.

The government also provides training facilities for women entrepreneurial development through various institutions like Small Industries Development Organization, District Industrial Centre, Entrepreneurship Development Institute for Entrepreneurship on small business, National Institute of Small Industries extension training, Small Industries Development Bank of India, State Finance Corporation, Women's Cooperative Finance Corporation, commercial banks etc.

Women's economic empowerment is an inevitable part of development discourse. Excluding women from the mainstream development program, institutionalization of a sustainable development process is just unthinkable. People's long lasting thrust for a participatory democracy in Rural India especially in Andhra Pradesh also requires a sustainable



economic growth. Nevertheless, this growth would always be untouchable without active and meaningful participation of the country's women folks. Keep the issues in mind, the researcher has taken-up the study of women entrepreneurship development in the region of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagaram Districts. As part of its unbroken enlightened visions towards a gender friendly environment, especially in the rural sector, the researcher took the help of Social Service workers in the rural areas who are striving hard for the Rural Development. Having proper information is always a power. Lack of this power has made women entrepreneurs unable to claim their rights in a justified and structured way.

By nature, it is an explorative study aiming at having an overview of the situation of women entrepreneurs in Rural Andhrapradesh especially in the region of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagaram Districts. The main thematic issues covered by this study are socio-demographic profile of women entrepreneurs, types of women-owned enterprises, regulatory procedures training and capacity buildings and human resources. The study also focused women's access to finance, business management, product and design development, marketing and the issues related to business promotion. The study tried to explore the social perspectives of women entrepreneurs, their conditions and position in family. Overall perception of women entrepreneurs about existing business environment were also tried to discover through this study.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods adopting participatory data collection processes were applied to explore information from 320 women entrepreneurs of 3 districts in Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, this study reached as many as 5114 rural women. A semi-structured questionnaire



survey was conducted from May 2009 to December 2010. The qualitative information was collected from March 2006 to May 2009. Data were analyzed using various statistical techniques and multivariate analysis. MS Word and Excel were extensively used along with graphic generation programmes.

Despite existence of diversified barriers, capital growth of women entrepreneurs were also found to very momentous indicating that women are potential to extend their business and contribute to the national economic development. The survey findings also show that women entrepreneurs, particularly the local women, lack the capacity of business management. They are in need of building capacity in marketing, business promotion, accounting and bookkeeping, product and design development, ICT, e-commerce and regulatory process, etc. The opportunity of training was found to be very limited. The roles of public training providing agencies were not satisfactory. NGOs are providing some training with limited scales. Participation in trade fairs significantly contributed to strengthening capacity of women entrepreneurs as 85% of the respondents, who had the opportunity to participate in trade fairs, mentioned that it had positive impact on their business development. Regarding overall business environment for women entrepreneurs, most of the women entrepreneurs were found to be satisfied and they mentioned that, despite traditional negative attitudes, the overall business atmosphere is becoming favorable for women. It is also observed that the involvement of women in business does not emancipate them from the traditional roles in family. As a result, being involvement in business creates double burden and increase working times for women. In terms of marginalization, the local and rural women were found to be more vulnerable as most of them lack access to necessary



information. They also do not have access to public and private institutions. Respondents also expressed their dissatisfaction about the roles of the local chamber of commerce; even some respondents mentioned that they did not know anything about the activities of the chamber of commerce in their localities.

Appraisal of Entrepreneurship for Women

Though the government had formulated policies and set up institutions to render necessary assistance for development of women entrepreneurs, it is necessary to evaluate the needs of women entrepreneurs and ascertain how far these needs are being met by the existing institutions.

The study covered the various aspects of women entrepreneurs such as the socio-economic back ground and motivational factors of women entrepreneurs their major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, their attitudes, aspirations and achievements and performances as well as problems of the women entrepreneurs for analysis.

Socio-Economic Status of Women entrepreneurs

The Socio-economic profile of a small industry entrepreneur is considered very important as small enterprises enjoy very few specialists and operate with less formality and reflect to greater degree the personality and attitude of the entrepreneurs.

The Socio-economic profile of the Women entrepreneur in Visakhapatnam is therefore multi-culture. The majority of women entrepreneurs were from



Hindu forward communities and are Telugu speaking and from other communities. Women preferred to start enterprises based on their educational background.

Factors motivating and facilitating women entrepreneurs

Ambitions motivate people to achieve, and for entrepreneurship where one is indulging in an unknown area risking one's money and status, strong motivations are needed. Women are motivated towards entrepreneurial activity by their education and the education, occupation and economic status of husband/ fathers. At the same time the entrepreneurial activity of women is also limited by these factors i.e., the choice of location of enterprise, line of activity of enterprise, size and type of enterprise are limited by internal factors like skills, occupation and economic status of women entrepreneur and husband/father rather than the opportunities available in the environment like raw materials, marketing opportunities depending on the need or the supporting facilities of the government and financial institutions.

SWOT Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Attitudes, aspirations and achievements of women entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs needed to be economically independent and as entrepreneurial status gave them satisfaction. Women entrepreneurs desiring independence and entrepreneurial status shouldered more responsibility to contribute to the economic growth of the nation; inspite of being discriminated against in sectors other than service. They aspired to



use their talents when possible and make money to expand and run their enterprises successfully, as they perceived their sector to the best.

The study revealed that the major aspiration of women entrepreneurs before setting up the enterprises was to do something independently followed by using their skills and talents. After setting up the enterprises the aspiration of the women entrepreneurs was to run successfully followed by expansion of the enterprise. The women entrepreneurs achieved their aspirations well.

Performance of women entrepreneurs

The performance of women-run enterprises was appraised by analyzing the performance and practices followed in the major fields of entrepreneurial activities.

Problems and Prospects

Change is the spice of life but can create varied problems for which the entrepreneurs need to be prepared. Fast decision making and an attitude to seek opportunity to achieve goals can reduce the problems and further the prospects of the entrepreneur.

1. Recruitment of trained and skilled people was their major problem.
2. Training the personnel was their next problem
3. Availability of raw materials was another problem
4. Requiring a shop for their enterprise, close to their home was also a major problem



5. Finance facility through a bank or any financial institution was also a major problem
6. Procedural delays and paper work deterred them from seeking the help of financial institutions and banks.
7. The major mistakes committed were in the location of enterprise which could be corrected in most cases
8. Majority agreed that there was no proper business or social network and there was a need for women entrepreneurial association, which they were keen to start
9. Some dominant characteristics required for the success of an enterprise by women were self confidence, drive and energy taking initiative and seeking personal responsibility and long term involvement and use of resources in that order.

Tapping more women

There is a lot of scope for entrepreneurial development among women by initiating and organizing special entrepreneurship development program for prospective entrepreneurs at district, mandal and village levels.

Motivating women entrepreneurs' families

The study revealed that husband/father is the main motivator for the women to take up entrepreneurship. The reason for becoming an entrepreneur could be multifarious but establishing their creative idea along with a sense of economic independence was perceptible. However, women still need a pull and push because they were still hesitant to put forth their ideas. Women entrepreneurship should be put in right perspective to their



men folk and they should be made to understand the benefits that they would derive. Men should also be made to understand the enormous amount of work-home role conflict that women entrepreneurs undergo. This will enable the women entrepreneurs and their family members to alter their personal and family roles, expectations and behaviors so that areas of conflict can be accepted and more effectively handled.

Role model used for eral development program

Positive images of women as producers, manager and entrepreneurs need to be projected force fully by the government to create a need within women to better their status through education and employment and entrepreneurship. Use of role model appears to be an important means of learning for women going into business. Notable exceptions of women in the different fields should be used as role models. The role models should be projected through books, magazines or televisions.

Mentoring programs

Role models can become mentors for the potential entrepreneurs, by the intervention of either the development officers or the women entrepreneurial association. Mentoring programs in which successful women entrepreneurs would help demonstrating to the protégé how to overcome the perceived environmental barriers.

Women eral development programs should be drafted to deal with the definite problems of women courses and programs should be not only to create awareness and promote new women enterprises only but they should



deal with potential problems of operating in a traditionally male dominated society and the chances of success for a new firm. Programs should deal with problems of the pre-entry state and the skills required, the problems of running a business under the skill of time management negotiation etc which are important.

Commitment by Institutions, developing and assisting women entrepreneurs

There is a need for greater commitment and involvement of financial and other supportive agencies to promote entrepreneurship among women. Concrete action plan has to be defined at the initial stage itself by training institutions. There is a strong need for reservation of certain minimum percentage in granting supportive inputs. Awareness and education about policy and program for women are essential features to develop entrepreneurship.

There should be specific target for various women entrepreneurial activities which are measurable. There should be specified time frame for sanctioning of assistance to entrepreneurs from the time they seek the assistance. The developing agencies because of their interaction with the small entrepreneur would know whether the woman is actually an entrepreneur or she is only a cover for a male entrepreneur.

Now a days there are many programs for the benefit of women entrepreneurs both at state and central level. Emphasis has to be placed on more effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of the existing programs through a result oriented mechanism operating at different levels.



Women in Society throughout History

Throughout history, women have been seen in many different lights. From a woman's perspective she is strong, smart, helpful and equal to men. In the eyes of men, she is seen as the weaker being, the housewife, and the caretaker. Women are seen as less human than men, who have the right to abuse them. On the other hand, in the developed world, many women are taking on positions of power, and looked upon with the same amount of respect as is usually conferred by men. We can even see a trend of women surpassing men in certain arenas.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources - material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money - and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society and nation, and to gain 'power'. According to the Country Report of Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power"

EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Education to women is the most powerful instrument of changing their position in the society. Education also brings about reduction in inequalities and also acts as a means to improve their status within the family. In order to encourage education of women at all levels and to dilute gender bias in



the provision and acquaintance of education, schools, colleges and even universities were established exclusively for women in the State. To bring more girl children, especially from marginalized BPL families, into the main stream of education, Government has been providing a package of concessions in the form of free supply of books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing for hostilities, mid-day meals, scholarships, free by-cycles and so on. As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. In 1971 only 22% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001 54.16% female were literate.

The growth of female literacy rate is 14.87% as compared to 11.72 % of that of male literacy rate.

Women and environment conservation

Women can play a major role in conservation and restoration of the environment. Rural women use unconventional and nature friendly source of energy in the form of animal dung, crop waste and fuel wood. Using of solar energy, biogas, and smokeless stoves can really help the rural women as they can act as environmental friendly tools.

Self-help & enterprise

Women have gone into the making and marketing of a range of cottage products – pickles, dried fish, organic manure, spices, agarbattis, tailoring, embroidery, etc. Backed by ITC's marketing support, cottage products like agarbattis and chikan embroidery are emerging as profitable rural



industries. Many of the micro enterprise opportunities are simple and can be started with little capital, such as broom making, basket making. Other enterprises need more capital and micro financing. The women meet together weekly to learn ways to get their new business started and successful.

WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

When women have access and secure rights to land, they are better able to improve the lives of their families and themselves. Unfortunately, women in many poor countries do not have access to land or lack secure property rights to the land they do possess. Land rights confer direct economic benefits as a source of income, status, nutrition, and collateral for credit. Access to agricultural land can mean higher household calories and consumption. However, women may not fully participate in these benefits as members of a household if they do not share formal rights to land. Most women have access/possession of land but do not legally own it. Unmarried women they do not own major forms of property in their own right. Few women have land registered in their names. women's ownership of property is governed by statutory law, customary laws and religious law. The marital status of women is also critical to owning or accessing property.

Health and well-being

Health and well-being is a concept related to the substantial differences between women and men in their access to sufficient nutrition, healthcare and reproductive facilities, and to issues of fundamental safety and integrity



of person. According to the World Health Organization, 585,000 women die every year, over 1,600 every day, from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. The complexity of the social and cultural issues, combined with the stigma and fear of disclosure lead to a situation where only a small proportion of the crimes of sexual assault, child abuse, wife battering and gun related violence are ever reported, making accurate data extremely difficult to obtain.

EFFORTS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Sustainability flow of additional monthly incomes to the DW CRA families is motivating the groups to work as a cohesive entity. Regular meetings of the members, effective leadership, democratic and transparent functioning, efficient Financial Management and recovery of revolving fund and loans, accessing institutional credit by providing their credit worthiness, improved skills and technologies through training and capacity building exercise is taken up for sustaining the groups interests. A Training and Technology Development Centre (TTDC) is also planned in each districts to study the existing potential of skills, assess the need for new technologies and to train the youth to acquire new skills.

There is a need to expose women to modern food processing and packaging technology. Improving designs and making raw material available providing marketing support to promote women's income generating activities is recognized. Training for capacity building of the women is taken up by organizing training in Mahila Pranganams and other local institutions. The members of a group are usually neighbours, friends and fellow workers should form into various groups. The Savings Groups



provide an opportunity for social interaction. Under new Cooperative Societies Act, 1995, name Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Co-operative Societies Act, local groups promoted by Voluntary Agencies came together to pool their funds and their expertise and to facilitate intermediation between Savers and Borrowers and beyond the local communities.

With the support from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, the rural women have now transformed their lives into full time and active entrepreneurs with lot of hope and are able to lead a life with self-esteem. Once they were passive recipients of Government's doles, but now they are active participants and stakeholders in the programmes. They have risen to the levels of 'self-management'. They have realized the importance of their numbers and have become capable of asking for their rights/entitlements like equal wages, better working condition, health, education, nutrition for their children etc. Thus DWCRA has become a powerful tool in bringing rural women together, in the remote rural areas and thus helped to emancipate the once mute sufferers in silence, to march forward towards collective community progress/development, on a substantial basis.

Women constitute half of the population of the country, and to sustain and maintain the expected economic boom, the country needs to fully mobilize and utilize all its resources including human resource. The participation of women in the economic activities is necessary not only from a human resource point of view but is essential even from the objective of raising the status of women in society.

The economic status of the women is now accepted as an indicator of a society's stage of development and therefore it becomes imperative for the



Government to frame policies providing these rights, roles and opportunities to women for their betterment in particular and society in general.

Entrepreneurial Promotional Measures:

The Government considering the small industry sector as a priority sector of the economy as it ensures balanced regional development, massive employment generation and equitable distribution of wealth. Accordingly policies were framed to encourage and promote small scale and tiny industries and institutions were set up to oversee the implementation of the policies. Women entrepreneurs were recognized by the Government as needing further assistance in view of their socio-economic status and hence the general promotional policies of small industry were further liberalized from them. The Government is assisting the women entrepreneurs by providing financial assistance in the form of term loans, interest subsidy unsecured loans etc., and concessions in the form of subsidies in the capital, self-employment loans, etc.,. The Government also provides training facilities for women entrepreneurial development and assist in marketing their products.

Appraisal of Entrepreneurship for Women:

Though the Government had formulated policies and set up institutions to render the necessary assistance to the development of women entrepreneurs, it is necessary to evaluate the needs of women entrepreneurs and to ascertain how far these needs are being met by the existing institutions and identifying gaps.



A lot of data is available on entrepreneurial characteristics and motivating of Men but very little data is available regarding women entrepreneurs.

Suggestions:

The economic status of the women is now accepted as an indicator of a society's stage of development and therefore it becomes imperative for the Government to frame policies providing these rights, roles and opportunities to women for their betterment in particular and society in general.

Some suggestions regarding the development of women entrepreneur programmes are as follows:-

1. To overcome the resistance from husband and members of the family at the time of establishing the venture, prospective women entrepreneurs are advised to maintain their cool and persistently convince them, without confronting them, regarding the benefits of setting up an enterprise. The women require to have a strong will power under these circumstances. The sufficient financial resources will solve this problem.
2. A women entrepreneur through better time management can effectively undertake the various responsibilities. The members of the family can also be involved in the business, which will help in sharing the burden of entrepreneurial work.



3. Women can set up a home-based business by operating her business from home, a women can better coordinate her household and business responsibilities.
4. Women can start her business when her children are grown up enough to take care of their own small needs. This gives the women enough time to manage her enterprise.
5. Women must acquire education and go through confidence-building training to get rid of the traditional feeling that they are inferior to men and are dependent on men.
6. For meeting her products, a women entrepreneur must establish her credibility in terms of quality and competitiveness of product or service. She should acquire relevant techniques and skills to win customer's loyalty. E-Commerce business will also help greatly in this regard. For publicity and advertisement, the women entrepreneur can work on alternative like cable T.V, pamphlets, leaflets, slides in cinema halls, banners at strategic locations, and so on.
7. Effective and efficient use of information technology like the Internet can help in assimilating information about the variety, range and quality of say competing products and publicity and marketing of products and services.
8. Workshop and seminars should be organized frequently for the officials of financial and support agencies and for women entrepreneurs to make their relations more cordial.



9. Procedures for financial assistance by banks and Government organizations must be simplified women inspectors, if available should be asked to inspect women entrepreneurs.
10. To submit a feasible project report to the Bank managers the women entrepreneurs need to take proper training and guidance through the training institutes. Hence there is a necessity to develop women entrepreneur training centres at various levels.
11. It is very difficult to borrow loans from a Banking organization or Government Agency because of its lengthy procedure. To avoid this entrepreneur can also depends on private money lenders or friends and relatives.
12. Banks and financial institutions must maintain a minimum target of loan to be disbursed to women entrepreneurs. Margin money for projects to be undertaken by women entrepreneurs should not exceed 10 percent. Subsidies should also be given to women entrepreneurs at the initial stage.
13. Women entrepreneurs must upgrade their knowledge through proper training programmes. They should be more assertive with their employees. They should employ more women workers in their enterprise.
14. Group entrepreneurship is a viable option for the weaker sections of the society and it helps women to overcome their poverty. It empowers women and provides the necessary confidence for



entrepreneurship. Woman's organizations, women's co-operatives and NCO's should be promoted to assist self-employment for poor women.

Different women had different attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The growth, profitability and survival of the enterprise depended on this attitude or view towards entrepreneurship.

Opportunities to women for development from their sub-ordinate status and their individual strengths give them confidence some extent to become entrepreneurial. Business satisfaction and perceived success of the business reduce to some extent the level of work-home role conflict a woman faces. Education and experience helped women to choose lesser gestation projects and earn more profits.

Approach at micro level

At the micro level women entrepreneurs in specific cities, towns and villages would be facing specific problems, which have to be dealt with specifically. Women entrepreneurs in Srikakulam Vijayanagaram and Visakhapatnam Districts are bound to grow by leaps and bounds in the next few years. These rural areas have been acknowledged as one of the fastest growing Mandals of the Districts and would see the day in future. Many new migrant women entrepreneurs with newer skills and ideas are bound to come with the migration of their family which would in turn kindle the women of the region also to some extent towards economic activity is expected.



Single window approach

A separate cell or body may be formed operating under the District Industries Centre preferably manned by a woman who should co-ordinate all the requirements of women enterprise. The women entrepreneurs may be guided in filling necessary information on different applications and a meeting should be arranged between women entrepreneurs and the representative of assisting institutes at this cell in the presence of the women entrepreneurial development officer.

Allotment of business areas:

Industrial estates have been planned, created and promoted by the government to boost entrepreneurial activity in the country. The Greater Visakha is constructing many shopping complexes in the important areas of the city. Therefore, what is required is:-

- a) Earmarking of a minimum number of shops for women entrepreneurs
- b) Allotting the shops to women on priority basis

The women entrepreneurial development officers should co-ordinate with the corporation and municipal authorities and convince them of the need for specific reservations for women entrepreneurs.

Women Entrepreneurs Association

A women entrepreneurial association can be formed at Visakhapatnam. Many of the woman entrepreneurs in the city are not aware of other co-entrepreneurs. Hence such an association would develop in the beginning,



but can be more active later on. A formal association would also encourage other potential entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial development programs or other training programs can also be easily arranged through the association.

Support activities by women

The support in women entrepreneurs and the general increase in the number of employed women will in turn create opportunities for employment or entrepreneurial activity for other women. This is because, the increase in the number of women, working away from home will mean, these women will be requiring certain support facilities. The support facilities required may be child care centers or preparatory schools, home delivery stores, services.

Conclusion

Different women had different attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The growth, profitability and survival of the enterprise depended on this attitude or view towards entrepreneurship.

With more and more young, highly educated and ambitious women starting businesses, women entrepreneurs will all be considering business as a career and as a challenge, which will help the growth, profitability and survival of the enterprise.

Opportunities to women for development from their subordinate status and their individual strengths give them confidence to some extent to become entrepreneurs. Education and experience helped women to choose lesser gestation projects and earn more profits.



Women were restricting their scale of operations to a level where they could meet the finances themselves and also to a level at which the work-home role conflict was at levels compatible to them.

To conclude finally women entrepreneurs in spite of their travails and hardships are a satisfied and confident lot in the society and a model to other women.

