

Entrepreneurship and Women Empowerment: Evidence from Pune City

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Abstract. Women from the lower strata of the society though educated, are unable to find employment in urban India. It is entrepreneurship that paves the path of development of these women in particular and society in general. The study considers women from such lower strata of society turning into entrepreneurs in city of Pune, Maharashtra India. The study portrays a picture of transformation in the personality, economic and social status of women from the lower strata of the society. The present paper makes an attempt to profile the same with the development of an index. The study concludes that there is a marked change in the personality, the economic and the social status of these women. The results are found to be statistically significant. However, the fact remains that skills, earnings, honour, work efficiency and even the elevated economic status of women entrepreneurs need not necessarily change the approach of society towards women. The male dominance in society is reluctant to change their attitude towards women.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Empowerment, Training, Social impact.

1. Introduction

"You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women"- Jawaharlal Nehru.

Women empowerment can be viewed as a process in which women challenge the existing norms and culture, to effectively improve their personality, their status in the family as well as in the society. Entrepreneurship on small scale is very often the solution to empower women especially who cannot seek the jobs for many such reasons. In urban area of India, women from the lower strata of the society though educated, also find it difficult to get the jobs. It is here the the SHGs have paved the path through entrepreneurship. The magnifying effect of entrepreneurship development is seen not only in elevating economic status of women but for personality and social status of women.

Using the above interpretation, the paper investigates the impact of SHGs/Microfinance on women entrepreneurs in the lower strata of Pune City in Maharashtra, India. The present paper is a study of

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changing personality, economic and social status of small urban women entrepreneurs who are the members of SHGs and started their entrepreneurial activity with help of mentor NGO. Enthusiastic women having potential to start an enterprise have grabbed the opportunities extended by mentor NGOs for vocational training, finance, marketing etc. and developed themselves as an entrepreneur.

The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as ‘an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of employment.’

Another definition Sanjka Mishra, is ‘the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise’.¹

She presents the following categories of Women Entrepreneurs in Practice in India.

Table 1. Categories Of Women Entrepreneurs In Practice In India.

FIRST CATEGORY	SECOND CATEGORY	THIRD CATEGORY
Established in big cities	Established in cities and towns	Illiterate women
Having higher level of technical & professional qualification , Sound financial positions	Having sufficient education Involvement in both traditional and non-traditional items	Financially weak
Involvement in non-traditional item	Undertaking women services – kindergarten, crèches, beauty parlors, health clinics, etc.	Involved in family occupations – agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy farming, fisheries, agro-forestry, handloom, etc

The present paper considers the second category of women entrepreneurs.

1.2 Objectives And Methodology

1.2.1 Objectives

- To study the profile and nature of SHG sponsored enterprises managed by woman entrepreneurs from lower income groups in urban areas with reference to the Pune city (Maharashtra, India).
- To evaluate Personal, Economical and Social status of these small women entrepreneurs in Pune city.

1.2.2 Hypothesis

- Empowerment through Entrepreneurship has an influence on the personal, economic and social status of women.

1.3 Data & Methodology

Being exploratory in nature, the study was carried out through a field survey and interviews of women entrepreneurs in urban of the city of Pune, these women started their enterprise with the help of SHGs and respective NGO in the field.

The sample is from the beneficiaries of various level schemes of entrepreneurship development and carrying out business on a tiny or small scale like, eatables making, primary food processing, canning, bags making, handicraft, weaving, beauty parlours, small shops etc. The sample is collected from the various parts of Pune city.

The sample was selected with the help of the concerned NGOs in the field and the SHGs sponsored by the Pune Municipal Corporation. These women have been members of these NGOs / SHGs.

The basic criteria selecting the sample -

- Women who underwent an initial vocational training programme.
- Women in businesses for minimum of three years.

- Women entrepreneurs who have maintained accounts, sells records, correspondence, photographs etc.
- Women entrepreneurs who have maintained a record of growth of the business.

Based on the above mentioned criteria, a sample of 247 women entrepreneurs engaged in tiny or small business was selected.

1.4 Data Collection

The present study is carried out with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was made in local language, i.e. Marathi. The questionnaire was developed with the help of people associated / involved with NGOs / SHGs along with the review of related local level studies in the field. The questionnaire aimed at creating (i) a basic profile (personal) and (ii) a economic and social profile of the respondents. The questionnaire was circulated among the respondents with the help of NGOs working in this field.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts i.e. 1) general information about respondents like, family background, Education, type of enterprise, training, income from enterprise etc. 2) Information pertaining to personality, Economical and Social status before and after starting enterprise. The information was sought on following parameters -

- **Personality Status** - Mental satisfaction, Self confidence, Personality Change, Outlook, Domestic Violence, Resistance to domestic violence, Family Security, Place in the family, Decision making capacity, Drudgery Reduction, Household responsibility, Sharing of household work.
- **Economic Status**- Economic independence, Economic power in the family, Participation in children education, Custody of money in the family, Freedom to help own parents, Saving of money, SHG Membership, Bank A/C for oneself, life insurance, Mediclaim policy for oneself, Other Investments, Opinion sought towards important household & other spending.
- **Social Status** - Respect in society, Social work participation, Freedom to work for society, Social Leadership, Advice sought by others, Called as a mediator to solve problems in the locality they live, Participation in political canvassing, Elections fought for cooperatives, federations, corporations etc., Social responsibility, Appreciation from neighbours, Social Awards, Called as a resource person in programmes.

Based on the information collected on above parameters for before and after starting an enterprise by respondents, an attempt is made to analyze the data to form an index – the Personal, Economic and Social Status of women before and after their entrepreneurial venture.

- The index is a simple calculation of scores given to questions by the respondents on the personal, economic and social aspects of their lives. This is to make an assessment of the changing profile of respondents who are women entrepreneurs.
- Each question carried a total score of five points for the parameter mentioned above before and then for the situation after starting enterprise. This was to make a note of the change in the personality, economic and social status of the respondents as a result of the training and support received through government programmes, the encouragement and guidance of NGOs / SHGs.
- The following weights were allotted to each question, i.e.1 as 20%, 2 as 40%, 3 as 60%, 4 as 80% and 5 as 100. The respondents had to assign points on the personality, economic and social status as the situation before they received training to set up and manage a business enterprise and the change undergone after starting the enterprise.

- For each status, twelve questions were asked. A sum total is done out of 60 points (12 Q. X 5 points each) for retro as well as the answers for the contemporary situation. The same method was followed to determine personal, economic and social status of women entrepreneurs.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

- The study covers women entrepreneurs who are members of SHG and successful in their small entrepreneurial ventures in the Pune city.
- The answers sought for the personal, economical and social status before starting business is retrospective in nature, and hence the limitations of retrospective answer that are likely to reflect the analysis.

2. Observations And Findings

The analysis of the data for the sample selected of 247 respondents is as follows-

- **Age** – Almost 70% sample is of more than 30 years age.
- **Marital Status** – 85% of the respondents are married women, out of which 5% were widows.
- **Type of Family**– About 60% of the sample stay in a joint family.
- **Family occupational background** - 60 entrepreneurs had agriculture as family occupation, 08 entrepreneurs had some small business as family occupation, no entrepreneurs had earnings through some type of jobs in or outside village basically for agro based activities.
- **Type of business** – The table shows the distribution of sample on various entrepreneurial activities

Table 2. Types of Enterprise in Sample Selected

Sr. No	Type of Enterprise	Frequency	Sample Selected (%)
1	Processed Food Items	65	26.31%
2	Ready to eat items (Fresh)	23	09.37%
3	Fashion Designing	37	14.96%
4	Purses and Bags Making	28	11.33%
5	Handicraft	30	12.14%
6	Sweaters weaving	18	07.28%
7	Beauty Parlour	13	05.26%
8	Shop	15	06.07%
9	Other	18	07.28%
	Total	247	100%

- **Level of education**– 70% of the sample has only education more than S.S.C. and hence the sample represents a moderate level of literacy.
- **Computer Literacy** – About 60 % women from the sample are computer literate.
- **Type of Training Received** - All respondents had undergone some or other type of training.
- **Monthly earning through entrepreneurial activity** – 40% of the sample made a monthly income of upto `10,000; 55% of the sample made a monthly income between `10,000-`20,000 and 5% of the sample made a monthly income of `20,000 – `25,000; there were no observation above `25000
- **Employment Generated** – About 80% of the sample did generate employment –min. 1 and max. 9

3. Personality, Economic and Social Profile

Table 3. Personal, Economic & Social Profile

	PERSONALITY STATUS		ECONOMIC STATUS		SOCIAL STATUS	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Minimum	12	43	11	36	12	36
Maximum	22	54	17	53	22	53
Mean	18.41	41.42	13.52	45.38	15.94	47.11
Stdev	2.71	3.16	1.17	5.65	2.95	4.15
C. V.	0.11	0.66	0.08	0.12	0.18	0.08

- **Personality Status** – Respondents were of the opinion that there was a marked difference in their personality with the success of the small entrepreneurial venture; confidence in taking up and finishing tasks, self-confidence in handling risks, and more importantly confidence in oneself to do more.
- **Economic Status**- Respondents were of the opinion that the entrepreneurial venture gave the much required economic independence, self-reliance and autonomy to a certain extent over resources. It gave them the opportunity to satisfy the petite needs of the family, education needs of the children, etc.
- **Social Status** - Respondents were of the opinion that the entrepreneurial venture gave them opportunity towards a more open social life and social recognition. Some of them were of the opinion that it also gave them an opportunity to participate in the local self government. However, the respondents accepted the fact that there is little change in their social status.

3.1 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis of the present study is ‘Empowerment through Entrepreneurship has an influence on the personal, economic and social status of women.’

A test of significance (t-test) was carried out to test whether there is a difference in the personal, economic and social status of these women between the two periods, i.e. before and after these women acquired basic training and set up a small business venture. The results are found to be statistically significant at 0 . 01 level of significance.

Table 4. Personal, Economic & Social Profile

	Personality Status	Economic Status	Social Status
t-statistic	-139.84	-107.72	-108.58
Level of significance	0.01	0.01	0.01

There is a difference found in the personality, economic and social status of these women entrepreneurs. Training, encouragement and support have made a difference to the lives of these women.

The hypothesis (H_1) is accepted for the present study.

4. Conclusion

Malhotra et al. (2002) identified methodological approach in measuring and analyzing the empowerment of women. The study made use of the following parameters: domestic decision-making, finance and resource allocation, social and domestic matters, child related issues, access to or control over resources, freedom of movement, and so on.² Stine and Karina (2003) explains that empowerment is the gain of power to control their lives and the ability to make strategic life choices.³ Dr. Thresiamma Varghese, (2011) further identified income, education, employment, media exposure and acquisition of assets, knowledge of legal rights, political rights and land ownership etc. as parameters to judge the empowerment of women.⁴ The present study is much similar in its findings as stated in the above studies. The following conclusions are made:

- In the personality status, especially the self confidence and the psychological satisfaction gained by respondents is very important; it enabled them to shoulder further entrepreneurial activity or face any problem in the family.

- However the respondents were of the opinion that the efficiency, skills, earnings, honour received and the even elevated economic status of women entrepreneurs cannot change the attitude of society towards women in general. Male dominance in society is reluctant to change their attitude towards women.
- The systematic and wholehearted role of the mentor NGO/s in the transformation of these women from lower strata of the society.
- Backward and forward support from agencies to these women entrepreneurs is the important factor to sustain them in their business ventures.
- Power over economic resources and participation in decision-making is making them more confident and that is the women empowerment in true sense.

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