

SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KATWA SUBDIVISION, BURDWAN, WEST BENGAL- A STUDY

Arnab Kumar Samanta

Lecturer - Netaji Mahavidyalaya, Arambagh, Dist: Hooghly, W.B

Uttar Phatak, B.C.Road , P.O- Rajbati, Burdwan- 713104, W.B

Phone No- 9434546437

Email- a_samanata@yahoo.co.in

ABSTRACT

Women have been successful in breaking their confinement within the limits boundary wall of their homes by entering into different kinds of professionals and services women entrepreneurs have proved to be at par with their men complements in business acumen and developing as smart and dynamic entrepreneurs. For sustained economic growth and social justice, socio-economic status of women should be upgraded along with that of the men folk. Socio economic liberty gives women the right to control the development of their lives. Entrepreneurship enhances the social standing of women. Entrepreneurial activity is dependent on several multifarious social, economic and psychological aspects. Thus, for any attempt made to understand the entrepreneurial activity among women, an analysis of their socio-economic status or condition is necessary. The present study had been undertaken to assess a field based picture of women entrepreneurs of Katwa subdivision, Burdwan district of West Bengal is presented analyzing their various socio-economic conditions through structured questionnaire. The study revealed that the women entrepreneurs in Katwa subdivision were similar in the following aspects viz. decision-making power, power exercised in the business, degree of involvement in social activities, and reason for involvement in social activities, etc.

KEYWORDS

Socioeconomic, women, entrepreneurs, Katwa

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value, devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the risk and reward. People who perform function of establishing women enterprises by the women entrepreneurs. In this dynamic world, women entrepreneurs are an important part of the global sustained economic development and social progress. With the development of education among women it gave rise to the women employment. As a result of which steps were taken to enhance the capabilities of women to be entrepreneurs. According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) 1980 : Women constitute the 50% of world's population, do the two third of world's work hours, receive 10% of world's income and own less than 1% of the total property. Indian was reported to be the second most entrepreneurial country

after Thailand. The role of women entrepreneurs in the process of economic development has been recognized from 90s in various parts of the world. Today, in the world of business, women entrepreneurship has become an essential movement in many countries and has been accepted in all areas of working. Accordingly in the, last two decades, increasing numbers of Indian Women have entered the field of entrepreneurship and also they are gradually changing the face of business of today. Women's entrepreneurship needs to be studied on various levels as it can play a unique role in breaking down the barriers to women in the society and increasing the full participation of women in business.

Concept of Women Entrepreneurs

The origin of the basic word "entrepreneurship" is from a French word "Entree" „To enter" and "Prendre" "to take" and in general sense applies to any person starting a new project or trying a new opportunity. Women entrepreneurs may be defined as a "Woman or a group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise". Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, a woman run a enterprise is defined 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 the employment generated in the enterprise to women". A woman entrepreneur can be defined as a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving self economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life. "Women Entrepreneurship" we mean, an act of business ownership and business creation that empowers women economically, increases their economic strength as well as position in society. Hence women-entrepreneurs have been making a considerable impact in all most all the segments of the economy which is more than 25% of all kinds of business.

After the introduction of the policy of privatization, liberalization and globalization the women started responding to the changes in the environment and their entry in the entrepreneurial activities was noticed. The process of computerization also was an aid for women in their way. The beginning period marked the existence of women in the businesses related to home made products like pickles and papads. But later the focus was shifted towards the entrepreneurial activities related to the small and medium enterprises related to the manufacturing, trading and service sector.

About the study Area

Katwa is a subdivision of the district of Burdwan, West Bengal. It consist of Katwa Municipality, Dainhat Municipality and five community development blocks- Katwa I, Katwa II, Ketugram I, Ketugram II and Mongolkot. The five block contains 46 gram panchayats and one census town. Katwa is the headquarter of the said subdivision and Panuhat is the only Census town. The subdivision is drained by the river Bhagirathi and Ajay.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study by Rani (1996) found that the availability of leisure time motivated women entrepreneurs from higher income classes. Contrary to the above, women entrepreneurs are forced to take entrepreneurship in the absence of any other means of contributing to family income (D'Cruz, 2003). Women's reasons for starting business are not always often driven by positive factors but also due to negative circumstances such as low family income, lack of

employment opportunities, dissatisfaction with a current job or the need for flexible work (Robinson, 2001). These factors tend to be most predominant among women within developing economies (Dhaliwal, 1998). Darrene, Harpel and Mayer, (2008) performed a study on finding the relationship between elements of human capital and self employment among women. Lalitha Iyer's study (1991) on "Women Entrepreneurs Challenges and Strategies" analyses major constraints faced by women entrepreneurs and reflects upon specific policies and programmes for women entrepreneurship development. Winn (2004) examines some of the decision making factors and socio-personal constraints that affect women entrepreneurship globally. Jamali (2009) examines the reciprocation of constraints and opportunities affecting female entrepreneurship in developing countries. Sarbapriya and Ishita (2011) focus on woman entrepreneur in India and also they talk about the status of woman entrepreneurs and the problems faced by them when they set up and manage their own businesses in the competitive world of business environment. Goyal and Parkash (2011) endeavour to study the concept of women entrepreneur, reasons because of which women become entrepreneurs, reasons for slow progress of women entrepreneurs in developing nation like India, suggestions for the growth of women entrepreneurs schemes for promoting women & development of women entrepreneurship in India. Mehta and Mehta (2011) discuss various challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs and some suggestions for effective development of women entrepreneurs. Choudhary and Rayalwar (2011) intend to highlight some issues with reference to the strategic challenges and opportunities from a gender focus to analyse the prospects of rural small and medium entrepreneurship for women. Behara and Niranjana (2012) intended to find out various Problems, motivating and de-motivating factors of women entrepreneurship. They also suggest the way of eliminating and reducing hurdles of the women entrepreneurship development in Indian Context. Bhardwaj, Parashar, Pandey and Sahu (2012) intended to find out various motivating and de-motivating internal and external factors of women entrepreneurship. They attempt to quantify some for nonparametric factors to give the sense of ranking these factors.

Objective of the study

- a) To study the socio economic background of the women entrepreneur in the subdivision of Katwa, Burdwan, W.B
- b) To analyse the motivational factors and other factors that influence women to become entrepreneurs
- c) To find out the expectations of women entrepreneurs from the society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Basically the study has been designed under the frame work of both the primary and secondary source. Women entrepreneurs who are the main source of primary data are collected from the women entrepreneurs through a well-structured questionnaire. As the area of study is limited in mainly in Katwa subdivision Burdwan district of West Bengal and as the total population of women population is numerable, the researcher has proposed the sampling techniques for the selection of respondents. The sampling method chosen for the above research design is random sampling method considering the extensiveness of the study, cost and time factors; it is decided to select 100 women entrepreneurs. The secondary information have been collected from different scholars' and researchers' published books, articles published in different journals, periodicals, conference paper, working paper and websites.

Socio-economic Condition of Women Entrepreneurs at KATWA

Age distribution of women entrepreneurs

The study of age distribution of entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship study has significance in determining the growth of entrepreneurs of the total population. The growth of women entrepreneurs generally fall within the age group of 15-60 years. The age group distribution of entrepreneurs in the study area is shown in the table 1. A large number of constraints like illiteracy, religions bindings, household bindings, superstition, pardah-pratha, capital deficiency, lack of training are responsible for low level of women entrepreneurs in the economic development process in Katwa, Burdwan district.

TABLE 1.1 Age distribution of Respondents

SL. No	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Below 25	15	15.00
2	26-45	71	71.00
3	46-60	14	14.00

Source: Field Survey

According to the above table 1, the highest percentage 71% of women entrepreneurs are recorded in the age group of 26-45 years while the lowest percentage 14% are recorded in the age group of 46-60 years. The main factors responsible for the emergence of women entrepreneurs in Katwa, Burdwan district are lack of government jobs, limited sources of family income, motive of self-dependency etc.

Caste-wise distribution of entrepreneurs

The population of Katwa comprises scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, other backward class A (OBC-A), other backward class B (OBC-B) and general caste. It has been found in field survey that 45% of women entrepreneurs belong to OBC- A. The lowest percentage of women entrepreneurs i.e 6% among OBC-B are religions binding, pardah-patha, low literacy rate, deficiency of capital and household burden, only 14% of the women of general caste prefer to take business avenues owing to better economic position, possession of land assets and jobs. Moreover, the general class of women enjoys high value in the society and therefore they are reluctant to take up business enterprises. In the study area, OBC- A is dominating due to a number of reasons like family support, financial need of the household, growth of literacy rate etc. The caste-wise distribution of entrepreneurs in the study region is shown in the Table-1.2.

TABLE 1.2 Caste-wise distribution of entrepreneurs

SL. No	Name of the Caste	Frequency	Percentage
1	General	19	14.00
2	OBC- A	45	45.00
3	OBC- B	6	06.00
4	Scheduled Caste	17	17.00
5	Scheduled Tribe	13	13.00

Source: Field Survey

Religion-wise distribution of entrepreneurs:

Religion-wise distribution of women entrepreneurs is a very important indicator in entrepreneurship study to analyze the quality women resources in a particular region. It has been found in field survey that 91% of women entrepreneurs belong to Hindu religion while 9% belonged to Muslim religion. It has been observed that Hindu women are more free and literate in comparison to Muslim women in setting up business ventures in the Subdivision. The religion wise distribution of women entrepreneurs in the study region is depicted in the Table 1.3

TABLE 1.3 Religion-wise distribution of women entrepreneurs

SL. NO	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Hindu	94	94.00
2	Muslim	06	06.00

Source: Field Survey

Educational qualification of entrepreneurs

Education is an important aspect of entrepreneurial development programmed. It develops basic skills and abilities and promotes application of new knowledge, innovative ideas to production units of enterprises. It is an asset in accelerating entrepreneurial growth and in ensuring social change in desired directions. It helps to acquire market information purchase of raw-materials, bank finance and quality production. Table1.4 shows the educational qualification of women entrepreneurs in Katwa subdivision of Burdwan district.

TABLE 1.4 Educational qualifications of the responds

SL. No	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	illiterate	12	12.00
2	Primary	17	17.00
3	Secondary	10	10.00
4	Higher Secondary	38	38.00
5	Under Graduate	06	06.00
6	Graduate	14	14.00
7	Post Graduate	03	03.00

Source: Field Survey

Among the entrepreneurs 12% are illiterate, 38% up to high school and 3% up to post graduate level. It is found in field survey that most of the women entrepreneurs prefer to undertake business activities rather to pursue higher education probably due to poor economic condition of the rural families on the subdivision.

Level of income of the head of the sample family

Survey of women entrepreneurs in the district brings out the existence of sharp inequalities in income distribution of the head of the sample family. The following finds are significant in this regard. It is found that 18% of the total sample households earn less than Rs. 10,000 – 15,000 per month. The highest amount of income Rs. 40,000 and above 4% is earned by the head of the family. Inequalities in land asset distribution, job availability, educational qualification and family size are main causes of unequal distribution of income in the study area. The level of income of the head of the family is depicted in the table 1.5

TABLE 1.5 Level of income of the head of the sample family (per month)

SL. No	Level of income	Frequency	Percentage
1	10000 - 15000	18	18.00
2	15000 – 20000	25	25.00
3	20000 - 25000	35	35.00
4	25000 - 30000	12	12.00
5	30000 - 40000	06	06.00
6	40000 and above	04	04.00

Source: Field Survey

Decision makers of the respondents:

Decision makers of the respondents play pivotal role in starting business makers are their husbands. The reason behind this may be attributed to liberal attitudes of husbands towards their wife's in setting up business establishment to support family source of income. The lowest percentage 8% of women entrepreneurs decision makers are others. This proves that others may be a source of inspiration for women to start business activities.

TABLE 1.6 Decision makers of the respondents

SL. No	Decision Makers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Parents	17	17.00
2	Husbands	20	20.00
3	Friends	09	09.00
4	Relatives	09	09.00
5	Training centre	15	15.00
6	DIC	10	10.00
7	Bank	12	12.00
8	others	08	08.00

Source: Field Survey

Types of enterprises taken up by the respondents

The type of enterprises started by women entrepreneurs in a particular region reflects their potentiality, interest and demand of the product in the market. Among the various lines of production, weaving units have a predominant place as 28% of the unit have come under this group weaving is not only an enterprise that also the culture and tradition of Bengalies womenfolk weaving is a way of life to Bengalies women. One percent of women entrepreneurs are engaged in grocery business. It is observed in field survey that grocery business is run by male members of the family. Now-a-days, there is trend among women entrepreneurs to take up business like cutting, tailoring, cloth store, food processing cosmetics, beauty parlours, mushroom cultivation, bamboo and cane works, pottery etc. The types of enterprises taken up by the female entrepreneurs in the study region are illustrated in

Table- 1.7: Monthly turnover of the sample enterprises:

SL. No	Type of Enterprise	Frequency	Percentage
1	Cutting, tailoring and embroidery	25	25.00
2	Weaving	28	28.00
3	Cloth Store	06	06.00
4	Food processing	18	18.00
5	Cosmetics	08	08.00
6	Beauty Parlous	12	12.00
7	Grocery	01	01.00

Source:

Field Survey

Monthly turnover reflects source of inspiration and confidence for the women entrepreneurs to carry out their business. By investing more, if less turnover is earned, it may reduce the continually of business. According to the field survey, the majority of the women enterprises 33% earned between Rs. 1000-5000 per month. This monthly turnover is very meager but still they are willing to run their enterprises expecting that the future turnover will improve only two percent of entrepreneur monthly turnover is Rs. 25,000 and above. This is an exceptional case found in the field study. These are the only enterprises in Burdwan district which is specialized in garage, and supply of Ambulance and oxygen gas. These enterprises have been speedily expanding due to efficient management, well trained staffs and marketing skill.

Motive of starting business:

Motive of starting business enterprises by the women entrepreneurs are many like source of income to the family self dependent to fulfill creative urge, family inspiration and non-availability of alternative source of income. The table 10 shows that 38 percent of women entrepreneurs have started business to earn income either to assist their husband or their parents 44% of them have started business enterprises to be self dependent, 3 percent of them have started business to fulfill creative urge, 5 percent of them have started business due to family inspiration and 10 percent of them have started enterprises due to non-availability of alternative source of to the family. The motive of starting business by women entrepreneurs is shown in the Table 1.8.

TABLE 1.8 Motive of starting business

SL. No	Motive	Frequency	Percentage
1	Source of income to the family	38	38.00
2	To be self-dependent	44	44.00
3	To fulfill creative urge	03	03.00
4	Family inspiration	05	05.00
5	Non-availability of alternative source of income	10	10.00

Source: Field Survey

Factors contributing for the success of the enterprises

The success of business enterprises depend on various factors. These factors vary from enterprise to enterprise. It is found from the field study that 15 percent of women business enterprises become successful due to known business responsibility and sacrifice, 10 percent became successful due to contract with many people, 21 percent became successful due to planned approach, 31 percent became successful due to hard labour and 5 percent became successful as they are careful in financial management of the enterprises. Factors contributing for the success of the enterprises are shown in the table 2.3

TABLE 1.9 Factors contributing for the success of the enterprises

SL. No	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Responsibility and sacrifice	15	15.00
2	Contract with many people	10	10.00
3	Family support	21	21.00
4	Planned Approach	18	18.00
5	Hard Labour	31	31.00
6	Economy	05	05.00

Source: Field survey

FINDINGS

It has been observed from the above analysis that socio-economic factors influence women in making a successful entrepreneur. The overall analysis of these variables establishes that socio-economic status of the surveyed women entrepreneurs in the subdivision was above average and the hypothesis set that the growth of women entrepreneurs depend on the educational qualification acquired by them. It is found that 80% of women entrepreneurs in the study region have educational qualification. Therefore, it is accepted. However, it is observed in data analysis that women entrepreneurs in the district need training, financial support marketing network to sell their products. For the sustainable development of women enterprises, a new time oriented govt. policy is required. Despite that many women entrepreneurs of Katwa face growth barriers; they are still able to achieve significant firm growth. Personal traits such as economic independence, self-reliance, and need for achievement, helped entrepreneurial success. Family support of the right type, particularly at the stage of launching the business was a factor, which most entrepreneurs needed. In general it is not the aspiration of women that have turned them entrepreneurs; they have taken up this career in the absence of any other means of contributing to family income. Most of them started business only after all their attempts to secure a regular, secured salaried job failed.

Conclusion

The overall analysis of many variables establishes that socio-economic status of the respondent women entrepreneurs in Katwa of Burdwan is moderately good. For the workable development of women enterprises, a new time oriented government policy is required. Now in recent days Central and State government assist financially to women entrepreneurs to participate in international trade affairs, exhibitions and conferences. Research shows that there are many support groups for women in business, female entrepreneurs and women just looking for business advice. Women are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the

preserve of men and have proved that they are second to no one with respect to contribution to the development of the economy. Women in different areas want to show the support that in some cases, they never had. It is marked from the study that women are ready to face the challenges associated with setting up of business. Society is very much interested to the concept of women entrepreneur. Women are not into business for survival but to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities. Women education is contributing to a great extent to the social transformation. The future will see more women venturing into areas traditionally dominated by men.

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