

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH MILK MICRO ENTERPRISES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract: India is a land of enterprises, where almost 70% of the population is still self-employed, some place this estimate as high as 80%. An entrepreneur is a person who is able to scan the environment, marshal resources and implement actions to bring into existence a commercial venture, who can initiate and establish large, medium or small enterprises. The concept of women entrepreneurship is multidisciplinary in nature embodying economic, psychological, social, cultural and political as well as environmental characteristics. The types of responses women are generating in certain circumstances highlight women as special type of entrepreneurs, away from men with distinction. The need for bringing women to the main stream of economic development of our country is because of their proven success in all fields, wherever they got the opportunity. Development of micro-enterprises at grass-root level means for amelioration of several socio-economic problems stemming from poverty and unemployment. Micro entrepreneurs can gain economic empowerments, better market access, and control over their environment through appropriate institutions. This paper attempts to bring out the empowerment of women through micro enterprises. With regard to the overall improvement in the status, majority of the women entrepreneurs' perceived medium (72.5%) followed by high (15.5%) and low (12%) extent of improvement in their overall status.

Key words: Empowerment of Women, Micro enterprises, Self Help Group, Employment

Introduction: Women form a vital part of the Indian Economy, who constitute one third of the labour resource, and primary member contributing in the survival of the family. It is true that the poorer the family, the greater is dependence on women's income. It is believed and established theoretically that economic independence of women would empower and mainstream the women. Empowerment is a feeling that propels one to accomplish one's goal. It signifies increased participation in decision-making. It is the process through which people feel themselves to be capable of making decisions. Empowerment not only relates to personal but also relates to the societal element. It means increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make effective development and life choices and to transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes. Various schemes have been set up and a number of initiatives have been geared towards promoting women entrepreneurship and empowerment. Among the various mechanisms available for this purpose, micro enterprise is considered one of the vital tools for empowering the women. Empowering women particularly rural

women is a challenge. Micro enterprises in rural area can help to meet these challenges. Micro - enterprises not only enhance national productivity, generate employment but also help to develop economic independence, personal and social capabilities among rural women.

Methodology: A study was conducted in the state of Andhra Pradesh by selecting three districts (Visakhapatnam, West Godavari and Rangareddy) purposively. Among three districts 18 villages were selected randomly. From the selected villages 120 dairy micro-enterprises were selected, from each enterprise the owner of the enterprise was selected as the respondent for the study. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data has been collected through a questionnaire administered to 120 women entrepreneurs. The impact will be measured under three components i.e Employment, Socio-economic and personal aspects. For these major aspects a pool of 32 items were selected and administered to women entrepreneurs on three point continuum with scores of 3,2,1 for 'Increased', 'Same' and 'Decreased' respectively.

Results and Discussion:

I. Characteristics of women owning milk micro enterprises:

Table 1: Age of enterprise

S.No	Motivating factor	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
1	Less than one year	54	45.0
2	1-3 yrs	46	38.3
3	4-6 yrs	20	16.7
4	7 and above	0	0

Many of the enterprises had been in existence for three years and less with only 45.0% followed by 1-3 yrs (38.3 %) and 4-6 yrs (16.75) being over 3 years as

indicated in Table 1. Non of the enterprises got more than 7 yrs age.(Wanga etal.2009).

Table 2: factors motivating entrepreneur to start dairy enterprise

S. No	Motivating factor	Percentage (%)
1	Earn a living	62.3
2	Market availability	14.0
3	Training in dairy	8.8
4	Business close to home	1.7

Several factors motivated women to start dairy micro enterprises as shown in Table 2. Majority went into the business to earn a living as the only source of livelihood or to supplement the family’s income. Others had training in the dairy field and therefore opted to start milk processing business to utilize their knowledge and skills, while others started the business because they realized an available market for dairy products. Still others started the enterprises to create a market for raw milk, either from their own

farms or for other farmers. Only a few chose dairy businesses because they could operate close to home. This contrasts other findings that indicate that women tend to operate micro enterprises because access to credit; thus they tend to use personal savings or capital assistance from relatives as startup capital (Gordon 1996a; Trenchard, 1987). The capital saved or received from friends and relatives, however, is often not enough to facilitate the growth of these enterprises; hence many remain at subsistence level.

Table3: Distribution of respondents according to trainings undergone

S. No	Category	Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Undergone training	32	2.7
2.	Not undergone training	88	73.3

Only 2.7 % of the women had formal training in dairy processing before starting their enterprises. The rest (73.3 %) learnt value addition skills from friends

and relatives or from previous employment and through observations without theoretical background to explain concepts.

Table4 : Distribution of respondents according to their Managerial abilities

S.No	Category	Respondents		Mean	S.D
		Frequency	Percentage		
1.	Low (<78)	17.0	14.0	82.21	4.2
2.	Medium (78-86)	92.0	76.5		
3.	High (>86)	21.0	17.5		

From the table 4 , it could be inferred that majority (76.5%) of the respondents belonged to medium

category followed by 17.5% in high and 14% in low Managerial abilities category.

Table 5: Distribution of women entrepreneurs according to their Knowledge

S. No	Category	Respondents		Mean	S.D
		Frequency	%		
1.	Low (< 17)	24	20.0	25.77	8.89
2.	Medium (17-35)	75	62.5		
3.	High (>35)	21	17.5		

The data in the table 5, reveals that majority (62.5%) of the women entrepreneurs had Medium knowledge on dairying as against (17.5%) had high knowledge,

while (20.0%) of the respondents had low knowledge. The findings of the study are similar to the results reported by Sharma (2009).

II. Impact Of Dairy Micro-Enterprise On The Status: The perceived effect of micro-enterprises on the status was measured in terms of the extent of improvement in the status as perceived by the rural women .The results pertaining to the perceived effect of micro-enterprises on the status of rural women are presented in terms of the extent o improvement

under selected components namely employment and economy, Social aspects and personal aspects are presented at length. Status of women entrepreneurs was obtained from the aggregate of the component indices and the respondents were categorized into low, medium and high based on mean and standard deviation.

Table 6 : Distribution of respondents according to the perceived effect of dairy enterprise On the status of Women entrepreneurs

S. No	Category	Respondents		Mean	S.D
		Frequency	Percentage		
1.	Low (<61)	14	12.0	65.00	4.22
2.	Medium (61-69)	87	72.5		
3.	High (> 69)	19	15.5		

With regard to the overall improvement in the status, majority of the women entrepreneurs perceived medium (72.5%) followed by high (15.5%)and low (12%) extent of improvement in their overall status .

Table 7: Distribution of rural women based on perceived effect of micro-enterprise On different components of their status

S.No	Component of Impact	Category	Respondents	
			Frequency	Percentage
1.	Employment and Economy	Low (<15)	32	26.66
		Medium (15-21)	67	55.83
		High (>21)	21	17.50
2.	Personal aspects	Low (<27)	20	16.66
		Medium (27-33)	81	67.50
		High (>33)	19	15.83
3.	Social aspects	Low (<30)	28	23.33
		Medium (30-40)	72	60.00
		High (>40)	20	16.66

It could be clearly observed from the table 7 that the majority of the women entrepreneurs (55.83%) perceived medium extent of improvement in the employment and economic status followed by low (26.66%) and high (17.50%).The results are in line with Tracey et al. (2006) and Radha Rani (2006)

Among women dairy entrepreneurs, majority (67.5%) of them perceived medium extent of improvement in personal aspects. While 20% of them perceived low, 19% of women entrepreneurs had high extent of improvement in personal aspects. The results are in contrary with Radha Rani (2006)

It is observed with respect to perceived improvement in social aspects, that a large percentage (60.0%) of the respondents perceived medium extent of improvement followed by low (23.33%) and high (16.66%) .The results are in line with Radha Rani (2006)

Conclusion: Women entrepreneurs can play a role of catalyst in social and economic development of country like India. They faced many obstacles specifically in finance and marketing of their produce. Micro finance is playing a vital role in the

success of SHGs, particularly the entry of rural women in micro enterprises will be encouraged and aggravated. Rural women can do wonders by their effectual and competent involvement in entrepreneurial activities. The rural women are having basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. Now, what is the need is knowledge regarding accessibility to loans, various funding agencies procedure regarding certification, awareness on government welfare programmes, motivation, technical skill and support from family, government and other organization. More over formation and strengthening of rural women Entrepreneurs network must be encouraged. Women entrepreneur networks are major sources of knowledge about women’s entrepreneurship and they are increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for its development and promotion. This will motivate other rural women to engage in micro entrepreneurship with the right assistance and they can strengthen their capacities besides adding to the family income and national productivity.

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