An exploration of socio-economic profile of rural women beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives

■ **Nishu Kanwar Bhati and Rajshree Upadhyay**

■ **ABSTRACT :** Women are considered as the key component of development of any nation. Various programmes and policies are planned from time to time to uplift this section of the society to make development inclusive. The present paper aims to explore and compare the socio economic profile of the beneficiaries and non beneficiaries of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives of private companies of Rajasthan so as to differentiate how these initiatives have been able to stir a change in their socio-economic status.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Socio-economic profile, Rural women, Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

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Rajasthan has for long been acknowledged to be one of the states where women's low status is a cause of concern. Gender equality and equity nonetheless remain major concerns for the State and society due to the deeply embedded norms of patriarchy in the social ethos, which continue to hinder efforts to mitigate women's marginalization and to secure their entitlements in both private as well as public domains. Albeit the State has made strides in several spheres of development during the last few decades, the share of women in development has not been equitable. At present, a number of business houses/ NGOs as well are involved in the SHG formation through their CSR initiatives. Industrial houses are trying to augment rural women's income to sustain their livelihoods thereby focusing on creating, supporting and developing rural women-led enterprises, supporting women's role along value chains, enhancing their income opportunities and promoting their linkages to high value markets. They also strive to support women-led associations and small scale businesses in overcoming their supply side constraints so that they can take full advantage of opportunities offered by the market. Business houses equally claim that their social projects for women empowerment aim to establish a bright and empowered future for the rural women. Thus the present paper discusses the socio economic profile of these beneficiaries and compares them with non beneficiaries.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The present study was conducted in Rajasthan state.

Four companies comprising of Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL), Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited (CFCL), JK Lakshmi Cement Limited (JKCL) and Shree Cement Limited (SCL) were purposively selected on the basis of their activities focusing on empowerment of rural women. From each company 60 rural women beneficiaries of CSR initiatives and 60 non beneficiaries were included in the study to make a total sample of 300 respondents. For the purpose of data collection, socio- economic scale developed by AICRP Home Science extension and communication management was used. Frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data pertaining to the background information of the respondents (both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) *i.e.,* age, marital status, occupation, education, caste hierarchy, family structure, organizational membership, ownership of fixed assets and socio-economic status have been presented in this section.

Age:

Perusal of the Table 1 indicates that more than half of the beneficiaries (51.25 %) were in the age group of 18-30 years with 40.83 per cent in the age group of 31-45 years, while more than half of non beneficiaries (58.33 %) were in the age group of 31-45 years and more than one fourth beneficiaries (28.33 %) were in the 18-30 years age category. No respondents were reported to be above 60 years of age.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of personal variables						(n=300)
						f (%)
Sr. No.	Personal variables	Beneficiaries				Non-beneficiaries (n_2= 60)
		HZL (n_3=60)	CFCL (n_4=60)	JKCL (n_5=60)	SCL (n_6=60)	Total (n_1=240)	
1.	**Age (in years)**						
	18-30	17 (28.33)	25 (41.67)	45 (75)	36 (60)	123 (51.25)	17 (28.33)
	31-45	33 (55)	26 (43.33)	15 (25)	24 (40)	98 (40.83)	35 (58.33)
	46-60	10 (16.67)	9 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (7.92)	8 (13.33)
	Above 60	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
2.	**Marital status**						
	Unmarried	6 (10)	10 (16.67)	13 (21.67)	15 (25)	44 (18.33)	9 (15)
	Married	49 (81.67)	47 (78.33)	47 (78.33)	41 (68.33)	184 (76.67)	51 (85)
	Widow	5 (8.33)	3 (5)	0 (0)	2 (3.33)	10 (4.17)	0 (0)
	Divorced	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3.33)	2 (0.83)	0 (0)
3.	**Occupation**						
	Non-wage earner	0 (0)	10 (16.66)	12 (20)	5 (8.33)	27 (11.25)	54 (90)
	Wage earner						
	Farm labour	0 (0)	13 (21.66)	17 (28.33)	38 (63.33)	68 (28.33)	6 (0.1)
	Farming (Including dairy farming)	0 (0)	30 (50)	10 (16.66)	4 (6.66)	44 (18.33)	0 (0)
	Service	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Enterprise	60 (100)	7 (11.66)	21 (35)	13 (21.66)	101 (42.08)	0 (0)
4.	**Education**						
	Illiterate	3 (5)	11 (18.33)	20 (33.33)	30 (50)	64 (26.67)	24 (40)
	Read and write	11 (18.33)	16 (26.67)	10 (16.67)	21 (35)	58 (24.17)	15 (25)
	Primary school	11 (18.33)	20 (33.33)	12 (20)	5 (8.33)	48 (20)	10 (16.67)
	Middle school	16 (26.67)	5 (8.33)	7 (11.67)	2 (3.33)	30 (12.5)	7 (11.67)
	High school	12 (20)	5 (8.33)	11 (18.33)	2 (3.33)	30 (12.5)	0 (0)
	Post matric diploma	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Graduate and above	7 (11.67)	3 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (4.17)	4 (6.67)

Marital status:

An insight into the Table 1 highlights that majority of the beneficiaries (76.67 %) and non-beneficiaries (85 %) were married, whereas 18.33 per cent of beneficiaries and 15 per cent of non-beneficiaries were unmarried. Here, it was also seen that only 4.17 and 0.83 per cent of beneficiaries were widow and divorced, respectively, with none of the non-beneficiaries in these categories.

Occupation:

Data pertaining to occupation in Table 1 highlights that among the total beneficiaries 11.25 per cent were non wage earner. At HZL, all the beneficiaries (100%) were running enterprise. At CFCL, half of the beneficiaries (50%) were practicing farming including dairy, nearly one third of the beneficiaries (21.66%) were farm labourers, 16.66 per cent were non-wage earners and the rest (11.66%) were running enterprise. More than one third of the beneficiaries (35%) at JKCL were running enterprise while at SCL more than half of the respondents (63.33%) were farm labourers and nearly one fifth of the beneficiaries (21.66%) were running

enterprises. Out of beneficiaries, a total of 11.25 per cent were non-wage earners. Regarding the non-beneficiaries, majority of them (90%) were non-wage earners while remaining were farm labourers.

Education:

Data pertaining to education, in Table 1, reveal that nearly one fourth of beneficiaries (26.67%) and 40 per cent of non- beneficiaries were illiterate, while one fourth of both beneficiaries (24.17%) and non- beneficiaries (25%) were able to read and write. The table further reveals that very few respondents (4.17% beneficiaries and 6.67% non-beneficiaries) were graduates.

Caste:

Information presented in the Table 2 reveals that among the beneficiaries nearly equal respondents were from all the three categories *i.e.*, SC/ST (33.33 %), backward class (35 %) and upper middle caste (31.67 %). In case of non-beneficiaries equal numbers of respondents (41.67 %) were from backward class and upper middle class and the remaining (16.67%) belonged to SC/ST.

Sr. No.	Social variables	f (%)					Non-beneficiaries (n₂= 60)
		Beneficiaries					
		HZL (n₃=60)	CFCL (n₄=60)	JKCL (n₅=60)	SCL (n₆=60)	Total (n₁=240)	
Table 2 : Distribution of the respondents on the basis of social variables							**(n=300)**
1.	**Caste hierarchy**						
	SC/ST	8 (13.33)	18 (30)	20 (33.33)	34 (56.67)	80 (33.33)	10 (16.67)
	Backward class	20 (33.33)	24 (40)	14 (23.33)	26 (43.33)	84 (35)	25 (41.67)
	Upper middle	32 (53.33)	18 (30)	26 (43.33)	0 (0)	76 (31.67)	25 (41.67)
2.	Family structure						
	Family type						
	Nuclear	33 (55)	33 (55)	31 (51.67)	26 (43.33)	123 (51.25)	22 (36.67)
	Joint	27 (45)	27 (45)	29 (48.33)	34 (56.67)	117 (48.75)	38 (63.33)
	Family size						
	small	12 (20)	12 (20)	11 (18.33)	31 (51.67)	66 (27.5)	10 (16.67)
	Medium	48 (80)	44 73.33)	48 (80)	29 (48.33)	169 (70.42)	48 (80)
	Large	0 (0)	4 (6.67)	1 (1.67)	0 (0)	5 (2.08)	2 (3.33)
3.	**Organizational membership**						
	No membership	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	60 (100)
	Member of formal organization	55 (91.67)	51 (85)	56 (93.3)	54 (90)	216(90)	0 (0)
	Office bearer of formal organization	5 (8.33)	9 (15)	4 (6.67)	6 (10)	24 (10)	0 (0)
	Member of non-formal organization	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Office bearer of non-formal organization	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

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Family structure:

Visualization of Table 2 indicates that nearly half of the beneficiaries (51.25 %) and one third of non-beneficiaries (36.67 %) had nuclear families. The table further highlights that majority of beneficiaries (70.42 %) as well as non beneficiaries (80 %) had medium sized families.

Organizational membership:

Table 2 brings to light that majority of the beneficiaries (90%) were members of formal organizations or self help groups that were formed by the companies, with few holding positions as office bearers (10 %) of the respective organization such as chairperson, treasurer and secretary. Probe into the matter revealed that all the companies work through self help group approach in order to reach the target group. None of the non-beneficiaries had any organizational membership.

Fixed assets:
Land holding:

Looking into the land holding aspect, Table 3 showcases that majority of both beneficiaries (84.58) as well as non beneficiaries (91.67) were landless while only a few possessed land upto 5 acres in both categories.

Livestock possession:

Table 3 further reveals that nearly one fourth beneficiaries (29.17 %) and non-beneficiaries (23.33 %) possessed small herd size, while medium herd size was

possessed by 9.17 per cent beneficiaries and 13.33 per cent non-beneficiaries. Large herd size was possessed by only 11.67 per cent non-beneficiaries.
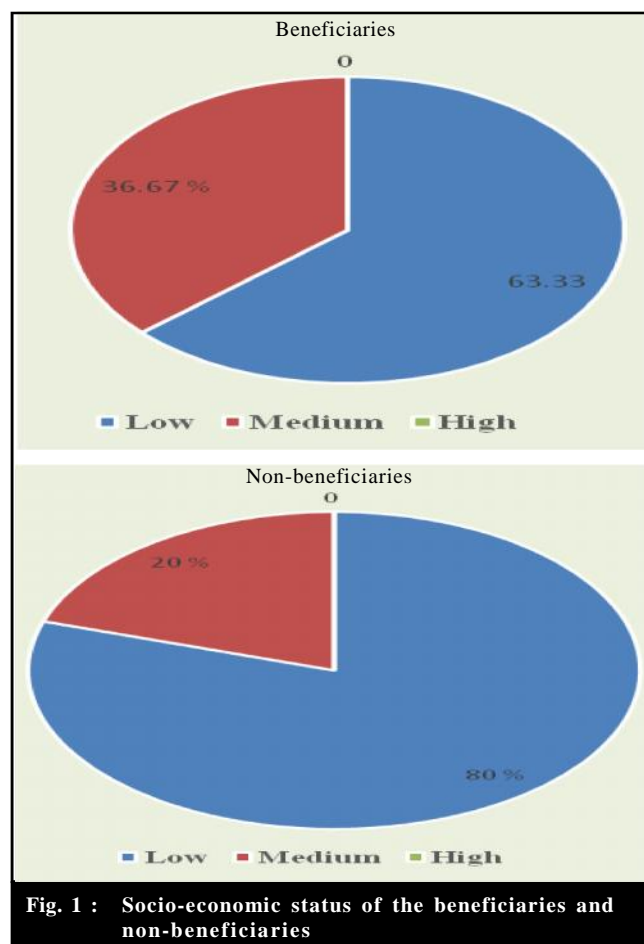

Fig. 1 : Socio-economic status of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

Table 3 : Distribution of the respondents on the basis of economic variables						(n=300)
Sr. No.	Economic variables	f (%)				Non-beneficiaries (n₂= 60)
		Beneficiaries				
		HZL (n₃=60)	CFCL (n₄=60)	JKCL (n₅=60)	SCL (n₆=60)	Total (n₁=240)	
1.	**Land holding**						
	No land	57 (95)	39 (65)	47 (78.33)	60 (100)	203 (84.58)	55 (91.67)
	1.0 to 2.5 acres	3(5)	17 (28.33)	13 (21.67)	0 (0)	33 (13.75)	3(5)
	2.6 to 5.0 acre	0 (0)	4 (6.67)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (1.67)	2 (3.33)
	5.1 to 10 acre	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	More than 10 acres	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
2.	**Livestock ownership**						
	Small herd size	3 (5)	35 (58.33)	28 (46.67)	4 (6.67)	70 (29.17)	14 (23.33)
	Medium herd size	0 (0)	20 (33.33)	2 (3.33)	0 (0)	22 (9.17)	8 (13.33)
	Large herd size	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (11.67)

Socio-economic status:

On the basis of scores obtained by the respondents in different aspects of socio economic scale, the respondents were categorized as having high, medium and low socio-economic status. Data in Fig. 1 point out that majority of the beneficiaries (63.33 %) and non-beneficiaries (80 %) were from low socio-economic status whereas 36.67 per cent of beneficiaries and 20 per cent of non- beneficiaries had medium socio-economic status with none having high socio-economic status. As far as women's socio-economic development is concerned the private companies have been able to instill a change in rural women's position but still a lot needs to be done. The results reveal that there has been some difference between the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Studies find support from Selvaraj (2016) and George *et al.* (2009).

Conclusion:

Women's socio-economic development is critical to ensure the socio-economic development of any community. To bring women into the mainstream and to encourage their participation in the process of national development has, therefore, been a major concern of the Government as well as private initiatives in this case. Despite all this women remain a vulnerable group. Exploring and understanding the socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries and non beneficiaries would help to frame programmes and policies as per need of the group and would accelerate development process.

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