

Socio-economic profile of women entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

Government is providing many facilities to upgrade the socio-economic status of women entrepreneurs which required further research. The present study was conducted to analyze the socio-economic background of women entrepreneurs. The socio-economic characteristics were studied under three heads; personal, family, and enterprise related characteristics. Primary data were collected through interview schedule in zones of Agra city in U.P. during 2002-2005 and percentage was used as a statistical measure. The study shows that the majority of entrepreneurs were in the middle age group (45 %), belonging to general category (81.70 %), graduate and above (75 %), married (78.30 %), belonging to nuclear (76.70 %); medium-sized (70 %), business families (75 %) having an income below mean per capita per annum (56.70 %).

INTRODUCTION

In traditional societies, women were confined to the four walls of the house, performing only household activities. Our society is still male dominated and women are treated as equal partner both inside and outside the four walls of the house. Women have been described as the embodiment of Shakti; but in real life she is treated as *Abla i.e.* weak and dependent on men. Man has not been fair to the 'fairer sex' in economic life. In order to improve the status and position of women at home and in society at large, it is necessary to achieve economic independence for women. Pillai and Anna (1990) reported the quest for economic independence and better social status and sometimes sheer needs for the family's survival, force women into self-employment and entrepreneurship.

In the present scenario, women are trying their level best to attain quality of opportunity in various ways, which

are different over the times and among society. They have steadily moved from the status of housewives to educated women, employed women and now women entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship enables to pool small capital resources and skills available with the women. It paves the way for fuller utilization of capital and also mobilizes the female human potentialism. In this study an attempt was made to disclose the socio-economic profile of women entrepreneurs in front of Government policy makers/programmers, training camp organizers and Non-Government organizations working in the same line. So that after reviewing the socio-economic profile of women entrepreneurs they can plan accordingly.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Agra division of the Uttar Pradesh was selected as the locale for the present study by using purposive sampling. Agra division comprises of seven districts, out of which, Agra district was selected randomly. For the

purpose of administration, Agra district was divided into two areas; Agra Urban and Agra Rural. Agra Urban was selected randomly for the present study. According to the requirements and to have balanced distribution of the respondents, the investigator divided Agra city into four zones; North-East zone; North-West zone; South-East zone and South-west zone. Primary data regarding socio-economic profile consisted of personal, family and enterprise related characteristics were collected through interview schedule, observation and discussion from the selected entrepreneurs as well as from secondary sources. Secondary data such as a list of women entrepreneurs were collected from the concerned centers such as District Industry Centers, Central Excise and Custom Department and Small Industries Service Institute (SISI), Agra during the years of 2002-2005. Based on the nature of data and relevant information, percentage was used

as a statistical measure.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Socio-economic profile was studied under three heads such as; personal characteristics, family characteristics and enterprise related characteristics of the entrepreneurs.

The data in Table 1 clearly indicate that the majority (45.00 %) of women entrepreneurs belonged to the age group of 33-45 years. Anna (1990); Nigam (1994); Mishra and Bal (1998); Prasad and Rao (1998) and Bhatia *et al.* (1999) are also in support to the above findings *i.e.* maximum women entrepreneur were in the age-group of 30-40 years. Caste-wise figures clearly showed that 81.70 per cent of women entrepreneurs belonged to general caste. The results are in conformity with that of Rao (1991) and Mishra and Bal (1998) who also

Sr. No.	Variables	Classification	Entrepreneurs	
			Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	20-32	23	38.30
		33-45	27	45.00
		46-58	10	16.70
2.	Caste	General	49	81.70
		Backward	04	6.70
		SC/ST	07	11.60
3.	Educational status	High School/12 th	15	25.00
		Graduate and above	45	75.00
4.	Marital status	Married	47	78.30
		Unmarried	8	13.30
		Widow	4	6.70
		Divorcee	1	1.70
5.	Social participation	Not member/ office bearer	41	68.30
		Member	18	30.00
		Office bearer	01	17.00

Sr. No.	Variables	Classification	Entrepreneurs	
			Frequency	Percentage
1.	Type of family	Nuclear	46	76.7
		Joint	14	23.3
2.	Size of family	Small	13	21.70
		Medium	42	70.00
		Large	05	8.30
3.	Family occupation	Business	45	75.00
		Service	15	25.00
4.	Family income (Per capita per annum)	Below mean	34	56.70
		Above mean	26	43.30

concluded that majority of women entrepreneurs belonged to general caste. Seventy five per cent of sampled women entrepreneur were graduate and above. Marital status-wise figures clearly showed that 78.30 per cent of sampled women entrepreneurs were married. Studies by Nigam (1994); Kapoor (1998); Prasad and Rao (1998); Ganesan (1999) and Vyas and Swamy (2002) are also in support to the above findings that most of the women entrepreneurs were married. Maximum women

entrepreneur were not a member / office bearer (68.30 %) in Government / Non-Government organization / Institution at the time of investigation.

The data in Table 2 clearly depict the family characteristics of women entrepreneurs that majority of women belonged to nuclear (76.70 %), medium-sized (70 %), business families (75 %) and having a family income below mean per capita per annum (56.70 %).

The data in Table 3 on enterprise related

Table 3 : Enterprise related characteristics to women entrepreneurs			(n=60)	
Sr. No.	Variables	Classification	Entrepreneurs	
			Frequency	Percentage
1.	Reasons for selection	Interest	29	48.30
		Practical experience	12	20.00
		Most convenient to perform dual responsibilities	11	18.30
		Good source of income	07	11.70
		Due to husband being n same line	03	5.00
		Better use of skills	02	3.30
		Creativity	02	3.30
		Due to husband's loss in business	02	3.30
		Good scope o the selected enterprise	02	3.30
		Having customer incipient	02	3.30
		Low mobility	02	3.30
		Keeping oneself mentally and physically busy	01	1.70
		Skillful hands easily available	01	1.70
To pass time	01	1.70		
2.	Location of enterprise	In home	37	61.70
		Outside home	23	38.30
3.	Types of enterprise	Individual	60	100.00
		Partnership	-	-
4.	Nature of enterprise	Manufacturing only	02	3.30
		Trading only	03	5.00
		Manufacturing and trading only	21	35.00
		Providing Services	34	56.70
5.	Years of establishment	0-6	32	53.30
		7-13	16	26.70
		14-20	12	20.00
6.	Employment creation	1-4	48	80.00
		5-8	09	15.00
		9-12	03	5.00
7.	Income from enterprise (Per month)	4,000-9,000	19	31.60
		9,001-15,000	25	41.60
		15,001-21,000	13	21.70
		21,001-27,000	01	1.70
		27,001-33,000	01	1.70
8.	Area of unit (Sq. feet)	33,001-40,000	01	1.70
		Below 92	35	58.30
		93-184	19	31.70
		185 and above	06	10.00

Multiple responses given by the entrepreneurs for reasons of selection

characteristics of the women entrepreneurs show that maximum had selected this entrepreneurial activity because they were interested in it (48.30 %). Majority (61.70 %) of entrepreneurs had their enterprise at their home, had individual hold on their enterprise (100 %) and were engaged in providing services (56.70 %). Maximum enterprises (53.30 %) were 0-6 years old. Eighty per cent entrepreneurs were employing 1 to 4 workers and 41.60 per cent entrepreneurs were generating income from the enterprise between Rs. 9,001-Rs. 15,000 per month. Majority of entrepreneurs (58.30 %) were running their entrepreneurial activity in the area below 92 sq. feet.

Conclusion :

Joint families are generally more supportive to women who want to enter in the business world and start up their own enterprise. Despite this belief, women entrepreneurs belonging to nuclear families have to venture into their own enterprise. This is so because the women entrepreneurs belonging to the nuclear families have an equal say and it is more easier for them to convince only one person *i.e.* their husband rather than convincing each member of the joint family in taking up an enterprise. They are also free to use their ideas and skills because they were from families having main occupation as business.

The main reasons behind taking up this entrepreneurial activity were interest, practical experience, convenient to perform dual responsibilities and good source of income. They started their enterprise when they settled in their family, where there is a balance between preparatory experiences on one hand and on the other hand they are free from family obligations.

The reasons described above were responsible to convert a woman into an entrepreneur. As a result they had individual hold on their enterprise and women were not only employing themselves but creating employment opportunities for others also. In this way, an entrepreneurial activity seems to be a significant instrument which may help in eradicating deep rooted unemployment from the society.

It can be concluded that at present better socio-economic background the women encourages their participation in the entrepreneurial world but initially their adverse condition forced them to take up, run and manage their enterprise.

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