

PERCEIVED ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF REGISTERED WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

Abstract

To achieve the purpose of the study, 105 registered women entrepreneurs in Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) were identified in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu. Key informant method was adopted for the selection of sample. In this study registered women entrepreneurs in Micro, Small and Medium enterprises-MSME were selected for the study. it was decided to select 35 respondents randomly from each sector/unit (Food and Allied Products, Manufacturing Products and Service) among registered using Simple Random Sampling. Series of questions were asked through well structured interview schedule. A little less than three -fourths (73.33%) of the registered and unregistered women entrepreneurs had medium level perceived economic empowerment. Nearly one-fifth (18.10 %) and few (8.57 %) of the registered women entrepreneurs had high to low level perceived economic empowerment respectively. Among the registered women entrepreneurs majority (86.67 %) of registered women entrepreneurs had increased standard of living followed by more than three fourth (77.14 %) inferred that, they had developed saving habits.

Key Words: Women, Entrepreneurs, Economic, Empowerment, Standard of living

1.1.Introduction

Empowerment comes from the term 'empower' which mean 'to give power or authority and to enable or permit'. There is increasing recognition that economically empowering women is essential both to realize women's rights and to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare. In the last five years, a broad range of organizations have committed themselves to the goal of women's economic empowerment. These organizations realize that economically empowering women is a win-win that can benefit not only women, but society more broadly. It promotes women's ability to achieve their rights and well-being while also reducing household poverty, increasing economic growth and productivity, and increasing efficiency. Empowerment passes through two stages: firstly, access to or control over various material and non-material resources, secondly, the power or capacity to convert them into desired outcomes in three aspects. These are: economic, social and political empowerment. Economic empowerment includes facilitating women's control over household resources or access to financial markets, access to income, assets, food, market and decision making power in the economic sphere. Women who are economically empowered contribute more to their families, societies and national economies. It has been shown that women invest extra income in their children, providing a route to sustainable development. Women continue to be excluded in social, economic and political domains, which show the inadequate attention towards inclusive growth and unequal gender relations. Keeping this in mind the perceived economic empowerment was studied. The empowerment of women was studied as direct and perceived empowerment

2.1.Review of Literature

Rawat Roshni (2014) stated that empowerment is not essentially political alone; it is a process having personal, economic, social and political dimensions with personal empowerment being the core of the empowerment process. In fact political empowerment will not succeed in the absence of economic empowerment.

Iram & Rohit, (2015), have explained the empowerment of rural women through entrepreneurship. They explained that there are number of problems regarding rural women entrepreneurship in India relating to social aspects, economic life, skill problem, problem of family support, courage etc. they further explained the role of self-help groups in promoting entrepreneurship among rural women for strengthening the rural women sustainable development and helping them to remove the gender inequalities.

Srinivasa (2017) observed from the study that, financial institution supports, infrastructure support, social supports, market and government policy supports are very much influence on women to promote and undertake entrepreneurship and it brings the prosperity and empowerment in terms of economic self-sustainability, social empowerment and creating more employment opportunities to other women

Women can make a significant contribution to the economic development in terms of creating new jobs and increasing the gross domestic product (GDP) (Kelley et al., 2017; Hechevarría et al., 2019)

3.1. Research Methodology

Coimbatore District was selected for the study because it is the second most industrialized district in the state, also known as the “Manchester of South India” for its development in the industry. The respondents were selected from three types of sectors such as Food and allied Products, Manufacturing, service were selected for the study. Since the secondary data on the number of women entrepreneurs in each block/ village were not available, samples were resorted to the selection of women entrepreneurs from different entrepreneurial hubs (Public, private and Non- Government Organizations). A sample size of 105 women entrepreneurs were considered for the study. Key informant method was adopted for the selection of sample. In this study registered women entrepreneurs in Micro, Small and Medium enterprises-MSME were selected for the study. Here the sector wise respondents largely differs hence proportionate sample size could not be adopted for common sample size for the study. Hence it was decided to select 35 respondents randomly from each sector/unit

(Food and Allied Products, Manufacturing Products and Service) among registered using Simple Random Sampling. Each unit consisted of 35 respondents constituting 105 respondents. The direct and perceived empowerment were listed out and included in the interview schedule. The entrepreneurs were requested to indicate the aspects of impact as perceived by them. The impact has been measured in terms of income, total new assets, total savings, consumption expenditure and occupation after the establishment of enterprise as expressed by the respondents. The respondents had to answer against a set of three choices viz., 'increasing', 'no change' and 'decreasing' which were given scores of 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The total impact score was obtained by adding the scores. Percentage analysis was used for further analysis.

In order to identify the perceived empowerment level of the women entrepreneurs, their responses were collected on a dichotomous scale. A score of two was given to the yes responses and the no responses were given a score of one. Using cumulative frequency method the respondents were categorised into low, medium and high.

4.1. Findings and Discussion

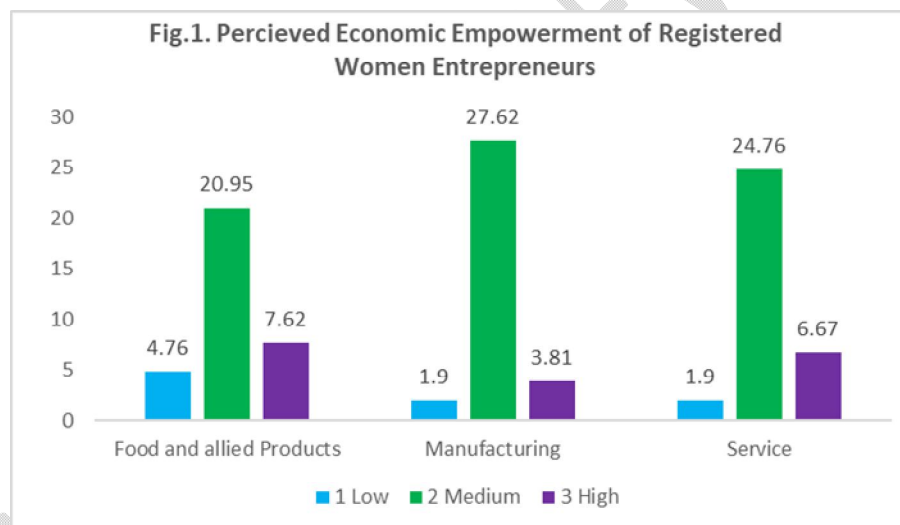
4.1.1. Overall perceived economic dimension

Economic empowerment is recognized as an important goal of the women entrepreneurs. Economic empowerment has been ascertained by taking into account the opinion of members on the economic variables like the capacity to spend more, increase in value of assets, rise in income, increase in savings, amount of borrowing and amount of expenditure improvement in the savings habit and provision of employment opportunities. The respondents according to their overall economic dimensions are presented in Table 1 and Fig. 1

Table.1. Distribution of respondents according to their overall perceived economic dimension

S.No.	Category	Registered women entrepreneurs (n=105)							
		Food and allied Products (n=35)		Manufacturing (n=35)		Service (n=35)		Total (n=105)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Low	5	4.76	2	1.90	2	1.90	9	8.57
2	Medium	22	20.95	29	27.62	26	24.76	77	73.33
3	High	8	7.62	4	3.81	7	6.67	19	18.10
Total								105	100.00

A little less than three-fourths (73.33%) of the registered and unregistered women entrepreneurs had medium level perceived economic empowerment. Nearly one-fifth (18.10%) and few (8.57%) of the registered women entrepreneurs had high to low level perceived economic empowerment respectively.



4.1.2. Statement wise distribution of economic empowerment

The data collected on various items of perceived economic empowerment among the women entrepreneurs are given in Table 2

Table 2. Statement wise distribution of respondents on their perceived economic empowerment

S.No.	Economic empowerment	Registered women entrepreneurs (n=105)								
			Food and allied Products (n=35)		Manufacturing (n=35)		Service (n=35)		Total (n=105)	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Successful entrepreneurship	No.	26	9	28	7	21	14	75	30
		%	24.76	8.57	26.67	6.67	20.00	13.33	71.43	28.57
2.	Economic independence	No.	22	13	27	8	22	13	71	34
		%	20.95	12.38	25.71	7.62	20.95	12.38	67.62	32.38
3.	Stabilized income	No.	21	14	23	12	19	16	63	42
		%	20.00	13.33	21.90	11.43	18.10	15.24	60.00	40.00
4.	Increased ability to support family financially	No.	27	8	25	10	24	11	76	29
		%	25.71	7.62	23.81	9.52	22.86	10.48	72.38	27.62
5.	Development of savings habit	No.	30	5	27	8	24	11	81	24
		%	28.57	4.76	25.71	7.62	22.86	10.48	77.14	22.86
6.	Creation of own assets	No.	29	6	7	28	24	11	60	45
		%	27.62	5.71	6.67	26.67	22.86	10.48	57.14	42.86
7.	Debt clearance	No.	24	11	28	7	26	9	78	27
		%	22.86	10.48	26.67	6.67	24.76	8.57	74.29	25.71
8.	Free from exploitation of money lenders	No.	29	6	12	23	19	16	60	45
		%	27.62	5.71	11.43	21.90	18.10	15.24	57.14	42.86
9.	Improvement in standard of living	No.	32	3	30	5	29	6	91	14
		%	30.48	2.86	28.57	4.76	27.62	5.71	86.67	13.33
10.	Security for future life	No.	22	13	26	9	19	16	67	38
		%	20.95	12.38	24.76	8.57	18.10	15.24	63.81	36.19
11.	Access to credit	No.	25	10	24	11	13	22	62	43
		%	23.81	9.52	22.86	10.48	12.38	20.95	59.05	40.95
12.	Access to market	No.	24	11	19	16	14	21	57	48
		%	22.86	10.48	18.10	15.24	13.33	20.00	54.29	45.71
13.	Increase in spending for educating girl children	No.	23	12	22	13	19	16	64	41
		%	21.90	11.43	20.95	12.38	18.10	15.24	60.95	39.05

14.	Household expenditure decision making	No.	19	16	24	11	17	18	60	45
		%	18.10	15.24	22.86	10.48	16.19	17.14	57.14	42.86

Among the registered women entrepreneurs majority (86.67 %) of registered women entrepreneurs had increased standard of living followed by more than three fourth (77.14 %) inferred that, they had developed saving habits, less than three fourth (74.29 %, 72.38 % and 71.43 %) had debt clearance, increased ability to support family financially and possessed successful entrepreneurship respectively.

These findings derives support from the finding of Mary (2012).

4.1.3.Direct empowerment

Table 3.Distribution of women entrepreneurs according to the direct impact of empowerment

S.No.	Direct Impact	Registered women entrepreneurs (n=105)					
		Increasing		No change		Decreasing	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Average annual income	72	68.57	27	25.71	6	5.71
2	Total new assets	62	59.05	43	40.95	0	0.00
3	Total Savings	78	74.29	21	20.00	4	3.81
4	Total expenditure for family	69	65.71	28	26.67	8	7.62
5	Changes in occupation	59	56.19	46	43.81	0	0.00

From the above 3 it is said that with respect to direct impact among women entrepreneurs, nearly than three -fourth (74.29 %) and more than three-fifths (68.57 %) of the registered women entrepreneurs said that the total savings and annual income have increased respectively after starting the enterprise. Due to heavy competition in every field and prevailing unemployment, the women members are motivated to start enterprise and participate in the development activities to meet out their increasing needs of their family. Hence, there was an increased change in annual income of registered women entrepreneurs . Total expenditure for family was increased by 65.71 per cent. Total new assets and changes in occupation was increased and noticed among a little less than half (59.05 % and 56.19 %)of the respondents respectively. No changes in occupation and no change in new assets was

observed among two-fifths (43.81 % and 40.95 %) of registered women entrepreneurs respectively.

5. Conclusion

Real empowerment is possible only when a woman has increased access to economic resources, with more confidence and self motivation, more strength, more recognition, more involvement in the family matters through participation. The women entrepreneurs have possessed medium level of perceived economic empowerment, hence to move to the higher side the gender disparity should be eliminated and the cumbersome process in receiving loans must be simplified so that easily access financial institutions there by get loans to expand their business and move forward in the path of economic empowerment through successful entrepreneurship.

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