

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF **WOMEN** AGRIPRENEURS IN WESTERN TAMIL NADU

ABSTRACT

Increasing women entrepreneurs has resulted in the shift of demographic characteristics of businesses and the nation's economy. Women owned enterprises are gaining importance in society by inspiring others and creating additional employment opportunities. To promote balance growth in our country, women entrepreneurs must expand sustainability. Startup India is committed in developing women entrepreneurship ecosystem through policies and initiatives, as well as building the enabling networks. Over the years, agripreneurs and agro-based industries are gaining more importance due to its significant contribution to the economy. Hence, it is mandatory to examine the entrepreneurial activity of agripreneurs for shaping the economy and enhance their social standing. This paper deals with the study on socio-economic profile with respect to women agripreneurs in Western agro climatic zone of Tamil Nadu. The study was conducted among 140 women agripreneurs using a structured interview schedule. The results revealed that women agripreneurs of Western Tamil Nadu have following aspects such as decision-making, involvement in social activities, etc.

Keywords: *Women agripreneurs, Socio-economic profile, Western Tamil Nadu*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship can be defined as the process of devoting necessary time and effort in order to create something new accepting risks and rewards. People who perform entrepreneurial activities related to agricultural produce can be called as agripreneurs. Agriculture sector makes a significant contribution to the Indian economy. Over the recent years, agro-based industries have contributed to almost 17 per cent of the nation's total GDP. India is ranked among 15 top exporters of agricultural produce in the global market (Economic Survey, 2020). Food security is one of the essential thrive to increase the importance of agro-based industries in India. In order to meet out the food demand of the increasing population, agripreneurs and agro-based industries are emerging numberless with innovative ideas in a sustainable way. Indian agriculture has moved a step backward in the recent years due to the change in climate, trade issues, etc., still agricultural exports from India to the USA have increased by 17.34 per cent in FY20 (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2021). Women entrepreneurs' contribution in the process of economic development has been recognized since 90s from various parts of the world. Global sustained economic development and social progress requires the contribution of women entrepreneurs in a distinguished way. 20.37 per cent of MSMEs in India are owned by women that accounts for about 23.3 per cent of total labour force (Economic Survey, 2020). According to McKinsey Global, women's active participation in the labour force can increase India's contribution upto US\$ 700 billion to the global GDP. Increased presence of women entrepreneurs in agro-based produce has notably influenced social and economic demographics. Women led companies have shown better leadership skills that has pulled millions of families from the poverty line and led to creation of jobs (Ashlin Mathew, 2019). The contribution of women in manufacturing and agriculture sector

are comparatively higher than men. Increased literacy rates and involvement in entrepreneurship have resulted in women empowerment especially in contributing to higher household income.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Rani (1996), the availability of leisure time encouraged women entrepreneurs from higher income strata. In contrary to the above statement, women entrepreneurs are forced to pursue entrepreneurship in order to support their families financially. Greene (2003) stated that motivation factor for women to start their businesses are not as similar as men's. Unfavorable situations such as inadequate family income, lack of employment opportunities, discontent with the present job or the desire for flexibility working (Kumbhar, 2013). These variables are considered more common among women entrepreneurs in developing economies (Dhaliwal, 1998). Hackler *et al.*, (2008) conducted research on determining the connection between human capital factors and self-employment women. The research on women entrepreneur's challenges and strategies by Lalitha Iyer (1991) examines the primary obstacles and considers particular policies and programmes for their growth. Sarbapriya and Ishita (2011) focus on Indian women entrepreneurs and their positions and challenges they encounter while establishing their own firm in a competitive business climate. Goyal and Prakash (2011) explore the concept of women entrepreneurs and the reasons for weak progress in developing economies. Singh (2012) address the problems faced by rural entrepreneurs and recommended some suggestions for their growth.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to ascertain the socio-economic profile of women agripreneurs in Western Tamil Nadu.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among the districts of Western agro climatic zone of Tamil Nadu. Simple random sampling was used to select 140 women agripreneurs for the study. A pre tested and well-structured interview schedule for primary data collection among the sample respondents. Descriptive statistics and ranking were used for statistical analysis of the study.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The socio-economic profile was analyzed using demographic variables such as age, educational qualification, marital status, etc.

Age

It is observed (Table 1) that 47.86 per cent of women agripreneurs belonged to the age group of 25 to 35 years, followed by 37.14 per cent between 36 to 45 years and 15 per cent of respondents are above 45 years of age.

Table 1. Age of the Sample Respondents

S. No	Age (in years)	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Below 25	0	0

2.	25 - 35	67	47.86
3.	36 - 45	52	37.14
4.	Above 45	21	15.00
Total		140	100

Marital Status

Table 2. Marital Status of the Sample Respondents

S. No	Marital Status	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Married	102	72.85
2.	Single	23	16.43
3.	Divorced	12	8.57
4.	Widow	03	2.15
Total		140	100

From the above Table 2, 72.85 per cent are married and 16.43 per cent are unmarried. Around 8.57 per cent of respondents are divorced and 2.15 per cent are widower.

Family Type

Table 3. Family Type of the Sample Respondents

S. No	Family Type	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Joint Family	83	59.28
2.	Nuclear Family	57	40.72
Total		140	100

It could be concluded from the study (Table 3) that, majority (59.28 %) of the respondents belong to joint family culture followed by 40.72 per cent belonging to nuclear family culture.

Family Background

In the present study (Table 4), 65.72 per cent of the respondents are from urban background and 34.28 per cent are from rural background.

Table 4. Family Background of the Sample Respondents

S. No	Family Background	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Rural	48	34.28

2.	Urban	92	65.72
Total		140	100

Educational Qualification

In regard with the educational qualification (Table 5), more than half (58.57 %) of the population are graduated, followed by 25 per cent have completed upto post graduation. Around 13.57 per cent have done their diploma and only 2.86 per cent have completed till secondary education.

Table 5. Educational Qualification

S. No	Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Post Graduate	35	25.00
2.	Graduate	82	58.57
3.	Diploma	19	13.57
4.	Secondary Education	04	2.86
5.	Primary Education	0	0
6.	Illiterate	0	0
Total		140	100

Previous Occupation

From the study (Table 6), it is concluded that 42.14 per cent of the sample respondents were unemployed, followed by 29.28 per cent of respondents were employed in different sectors like IT companies, educational institutions, private organizations, etc., Around 12.14 per cent of respondents have been into their business after completing their studies. 13.57 per cent of respondents were looking after their family business and 2.85 per cent of respondents have owned different business before starting their agribusiness venture.

Table 6. Previous Occupation of the Sample Respondents

S. No	Previous Occupation	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Student	17	12.14
2.	Employed	41	29.28
3.	Looking after family business	19	13.57
4.	Own business	04	2.85
5.	Housewife / Unemployed	59	42.14
Total		140	100

Size of Business

Table 7. Size of the Business

S. No	Type of Business	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Micro	53	37.86
2.	Small	61	43.57
3.	Medium	26	18.57
Total		140	100

Nearly (Table 7), 43.57 per cent of women agripreneurs have small enterprises, followed by 37.86 per cent of respondents having micro enterprises and only 18.57 per cent have medium enterprises.

Nature of the Product

Among the sample respondents (Table 8), 65 per cent are involved in value-addition and processing, followed by 16.43 per cent involved in on-farm activities, 12.14 per cent involved in manufacturing and 6.43 per cent in agri inputs.

Table 8. Nature of the Product

S. No	Nature of Product	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	On-farm activities	23	16.43
2.	Agri inputs	09	6.43
3.	Manufacturing	17	12.14
4.	Value-addition & Processing	91	65.00
5.	Consultancy	0	0
Total		140	100

Employment Generation

Women agripreneurs have created job opportunities through their venture. About half of the sample respondents have 5 to 25 working with them, followed by 32.85 per cent of respondents have less than 5 employees. And only 16.43 per cent of respondents provide employment opportunities to more than 25 people (Table 9).

Table 9. Employment Generation

S. No	Employment Generation	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Less than 5	46	32.85

2.	5 – 25	71	50.72
3.	More than 25	23	16.43
Total		140	100

Annual Turnover

Table 10. Annual Turnover of the Sample Respondents

S. No	Annual Turnover	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Upto 15	19	13.58
2.	15 – 30	45	32.14
3.	30 – 45	52	37.14
4.	Above 45	24	17.14
Total		140	100

From the analysis (Table 10), it could be concluded that 37.14 per cent of sample respondents have an annual turnover of Rs. 30 to 45 Lakhs, followed by 32.14 per cent having an annual turnover of Rs. 15 to 30 Lakhs. About 17.14 per cent have more than Rs. 45 Lakhs as their annual turnover and 13.58 per cent of the total sample respondents have less than Rs. 15 Lakhs as their annual turnover.

Factors Contributing Success of the Enterprises

The success of an enterprise depends on various factors such as support from family and friends, hard work and dedication, systematic approach, effort from employees, etc, (Samanta, 2016). In this study, certain factors have been taken into consideration to assess the success factors of women agripreneurs.

Table 11. Factors Contributing Success

S.No	Factors	No. of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Support from friends and family	66	47.14
2.	Responsibility and sacrifice	27	19.28
3.	Social network	8	5.71
4.	Systematic approach	22	15.71
5.	Hard working employees	17	12.14
Total		140	100

From the above Table 11, it could be inferred that 47.14 extend their support from family and friends to succeed in their business. Around 19.28 per cent of the sample respondents

concluded that being responsible and sacrifices they made promote their entrepreneurial success.

Conclusion

It could be concluded from the study that women education and family background contribute to a great extent to the social transformation. Women get into business not only for their survival but also to satisfy their inner urge to prove their capabilities. Research shows that women are more willing to take up any activities that enhance their career growth. For the workable development of women enterprises, new framework of Government policies is required. Over the recent years, State and Central government provides more financial assistance to women agripreneurs to engage themselves in international trade affairs, exhibitions and conferences. Women's contribution to economy has shown better performances than men. The future will see more women venturing into agribusiness areas promoting the economy.

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