

# Women and entrepreneurship development: a sociological study of Duliajan Town of Assam

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**Abstract:** Entrepreneurship Development refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. Women entrepreneurs bring together the productive resources and act as a catalytic agent in the process of economic development and entrepreneurship is the skill and ability, which initiate innovations and undertake the risk. This paper is attempt to examine the how women are empowered in entrepreneurial activities and observed the motivating factors of women to start their own entrepreneurial enterprises. In this context, the socio-economic status of the women entrepreneurs have been observed and analyzed. In this work investigated the phenomenon by using in depth interview and observation techniques at Duliajan town of Assam. The study found that women entrepreneurs have been engaged in different types of entrepreneurial activities. They have successfully developed their socio-economic status through entrepreneurship development. The women have been empowered through economic independence through which they get the opportunity to have control over their self reliance, self-determination and a way to achieve favourable social status.

**Key words: - Entrepreneurship development, Empower, Entrepreneurial activities**

## INTRODUCTION

Women are playing increasingly indispensable roles in international, national and household economies. (Swarajyalakshmi, 1998). Women are the wheels of a nation, constituting 50 percent of the total population. They contribute one third of labour force and supply two third of the total working hours and yet they are earning only one-tenth of the income and they own only one percent of the total wealth (Saravanavel, 1987). Though they found (Chidambaram and Themozhi, 1998) a significant part of the workforce in India, still they lag behind men in terms of level and equality of employment. They are burdened with discrimination, which in turn perpetuates their low status. Women at home and work place are considered as inferior to male. They have had and still have lesser access to assets, resources, technology and credit. Women's work in communities combines domestic service and 'productive work' (Vinze, 1987). It is often said that they bear a 'double burden' (Iyer,1991), working long hours in the economic activities and equally long hours in childcare, food preparation, cooking, washing and cleaning. Despite distributive justice being categorically underlined in the developmental plans, the needs of women have not been adequately addressed. Employment of women (Dhillon, 1993) is characterised by low pay, long hours of work, low productivity, low skills and lack of job security. Whether in the organised or unorganised sectors, women face several enigmas, which account for their low status as women workers. Their lack of access to productive inputs such as raw materials, credit, technology, training and markets are the major impediments. Women represent a bulk of the labour force especially (Singh, 1992) in the developing economies. However, they are not yet brought under the fold of main stream of development and has not been given appreciation of their considerable contribution.

The concept of entrepreneurship is proving to be a helpful instrument for the empowerment of women. Entrepreneurship development and income generating activities are a feasible solution for empowering women. It generates income and also provides flexible working hours according to the needs of home makers. Participation in income generating activities helps in the overall empowerment of women. Empowering women through education, ideas, consciousness, mobilization and participatory approach can enable them to take their own decisions, make them self-reliant and self-confident. (Baporikar, N.; 2002)

Entrepreneurship is an important way to fulfil their personal needs, to make them self-dependent and moreover to improve their economic status. Women entrepreneurship is an emerging reality. Over the years hundreds of womenowned business appears to have mushroomed in large cities of the country (Sethi, 1994). It would be very important to promote active involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities because it is widely seen as one of the most effective ways of directly responding to women's own expressed needs. Whenever a change is necessitated in the society, the need of participation of women is very much felt. Women's development through women's participation in entrepreneurial activities should be seen as a process whereby they can attain gradual control over resources and processes in the production, marketing, and financing of goods and services. Promotion of women entrepreneurship aimed at establishing their right to take training and education for entrepreneurship development, providing access to credit and financing opportunities, and promoting their role in initiating and managing economic enterprises (Arunachalam, 1997). The role of women entrepreneurship help industrial development promotes economic development and helps to solve the problems of unemployment and poverty. Women are trying their level best to attain quality of opportunity in various ways, which are different over the time and society. Women entrepreneurship enables to pool the small capital resources and skill available with them. It paves the way for fuller utilisation of capital and also mobilises the female human potential. Women were economically developed by the entrepreneurial activities. They were gaining better social status and it also helps them to take decision in their family relationships. It is suitable for them because it is possible to do work when they have free time. Development of women entrepreneurship enables men to understand and appreciate women's abilities. Entrepreneurship development among women offers mental satisfaction and provides diversion to women from routine work. It gives psychological satisfaction or relief to the educated women and profiles a sense of achievement and separate and enhanced identity in society (Rageswari and Sumangala, 1999). Development of entrepreneurship among women removed the all social, economic and personal problems.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Now a days' women entrepreneurship become an important tool for women empowerment. Women entrepreneurship is relatively a recent phenomenon which came into prominence in late the 1970's. There has been dramatic increase in the number of women setting-up in business and it has been noted that they

have become the fastest growing segment within the small business sector (Moore and Buttner 1997). Due to spread of education, beneficial government policies toward women, entrepreneurship awareness and new kind of avenue, women are venturing as entrepreneurs in all kind of business, economic and other useful activities. The entrepreneurship is proving to be a helpful tool for the empowerment of women. Entrepreneurship development is a feasible solution for empowering women. Women entrepreneurship in our society is less developed and it is more so in Assam, but we need it for our economic development and social justice. So, it is very necessary to understand the problems and prospect of women entrepreneurs. In the patriarchal society, Women have to face many challenges for fulfilling their aims. It is very condemnable for patriarchal society that a woman goes to outside of house to do something by irritated the circumference; through they succeed in their working place. But the patriarchal society does not accept it as usual matter. Now, in the present day society, women are involving and increasing rate of business field as entrepreneurs has changed the social and economic growth of the society. So, women entrepreneurs are playing a more vigorous role in economy and the society. In this context, this study is very important from sociological view point as well as gender standpoint.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The present study attempts to observe the socio-economic status of the women entrepreneurs. Secondly, this study strives to study the motivational factors of entrepreneurial activities on women and finally the study attempts to examine whether the women become empower through entrepreneurship development.

### **FIELD AND METHODOLOGY**

The present study is carried out in the 'Duliajan' Town of Dibrugarh district. Duliajan is an industrial town situated in Dibrugarh district in upper Assam and it is the located in the upper northeast corner of India. In this study, it was focus that there were 145 women entrepreneurs and 100 women entrepreneurs were selected as respondents purposively. After that, these respondents have been divided into two categories on the basis of their marital status: 55% (55) married and 45% (45) unmarried women entrepreneurs. The research design of the study is exploratory in nature and use purposive sampling. The present study has been conducted with the help of both primary and secondary source of data. The primary data were collected through interview schedule and personal interviews and secondary data were collected from books, journals, govt. publications etc.

### **THEORITICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE STUDY**

Sociologists argue that entrepreneurship is most likely to emerge under a specific social culture. According to them, social sanctions, cultural values and role expectations are responsible for the emergence of entrepreneurship. Society's values are the most important determinant of the attitudes and role

expectations. According to Weber, religious beliefs produce intensive effort in occupational pursuits, the systematic ordering of means to end, and the accumulation of assets. It is these beliefs which generate a drive for entrepreneurial growth. (Rajkonwar, A.B.; 2004) The famous sociologist Max Weber's theory of entrepreneur discusses in his famous study 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'. (Weber; 1988) Weber's view of entrepreneurship is often identified with his theory of charisma. He analysis that some special type of human being or the charismatic person who makes other people want to follow him or her, simply by virtue of his or her extraordinary personality. (Weber, M.; 1988) Following this perspective, this study has tried to explore various factors that affects and influences the women entrepreneurs. In this study, it has been observed three approaches of entrepreneurial development, which are- Entrepreneurial Events Approach, Entrepreneurial Assessment Approach and Multidimensional Approach. Entrepreneurial events approach entrepreneurship is a process by which individuals plan, implement and control their entrepreneurial activities. This approach focuses on the process of entrepreneurial activities viz. Initiative, Organization, Administration, Relative autonomy, Risk taking and Environment. Entrepreneurial assessment approach stresses making assessment qualitatively, quantitatively, strategically and ethically in regard to entrepreneur, the venture and the environment. Multidimensional approach states that entrepreneurship is a complex multidimensional framework that emphasizes the individual, the environment, the organization and the business enterprise process. In view of this study entrepreneurial events approach was followed. Following this approach we have seen that women entrepreneurs are plan and implemented their entrepreneurial activities for their future prospect and they control their ventures. They initiated their own enterprises and they also risk their enterprises. So, this theoretical approach is very much applied for this research study.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

### **Socio-economic background of the women entrepreneurs**

Social background of the individual plays a very important role in the formation of personality. It needs no clarification to draw attention to the fact that a person's sex, age, caste, religion, marital status, education, occupation, economic capability etc., has a strong bearing in his or her thinking and decision making process. Its plays a crucial role in shaping one's attitude, perceptions, and decisions of the individuals.

This study found that out of the 100 respondents, 68% (68) respondents live in nuclear families and 32% (32) respondents belong to joint families. The age wise distribution of the respondents showed that, the highest numbers of respondents 29% (29) were between 25-29 years, 28% (28) were between 30-34 years, 6% (06) were between 50-54 years and 2% (02) were between 55-59 years. In this study, the majority of the respondents i.e., 94% (94) respondents are from Hinduism. As many as 4% (04) respondents are from Islamism and 2% (02) were the followers Christianity. Community wise, the respondents in this study are



diverse. It was also found in this study that the respondents different communities. Here, the majority of the respondents i.e., 44% (44) respondents were belonging to Ahom community, 41% (41) respondents belong to other communities like Mishing, Nath, nepali etc ;9% (09) of the respondents belong to Kalita community, 4% (04) respondents belong to Muslim community and the lowest only 2% (02) respondents belong to Brahmin (Kaiyothy) community. In this study, As far as the marital status of the respondents is concerned, among the 100 respondents 55% (55) respondents were married and 45% (45) respondents were unmarried.

Educational background is the most important part of the research activities. Above figure depicts that among the 100 respondents the majority of the respondents of the universe of the study i.e., 38% (38) respondents were under graduate, 27% (27) respondents were educational standard is graduate, 22% respondents were found who read up to class X, 11% (11) respondents were found whose standard was H.S.L.C pass and only 2% (02) respondents were post-graduate holders. Family source of income is a very important aspect in terms of the economic development of the respondents. Having known the family background of the respondents this study find out the occupational background of the respondents starting from their husband's occupation of the married women. Among the 55 married women's, the majority of the respondents i.e., 29% (29) respondents' husbands' occupation was trade and business, 11% (11) respondents' husbands engaged in Industrial enterprises, 9% (09) respondents' husbands were engaged in government service, 5% (05) respondents' husbands engaged in any other working activities like driving, poultry firm etc. and only 1% respondents' husbands working in agriculture. In the context of unmarried women, the study reveals that the majority of the respondents' fathers i.e. 34% (34) were engaged in trade and business. As many as 27% (27) respondents' fathers occupations was industrial enterprise, 25% (25) respondents' fathers occupations was government service, 9% (09) respondents' fathers were engaged in agriculture and 5% (05) respondents' fathers were engaged in any other working activities. Monthly family income is another element of social background of the respondents. Again, the study also depicts that among the 100 respondents, the maximum number of the respondent's families i.e. 23% (23) belong to income groups rupees 8001/- to 13000/- and more than 23000/-. The income group of rupees 3001/- to 8000/- which covers 21% (21) and 15% (15) numbers of the respondent's family are from the income group of rupees 13001/- to 18000/-. As many as 13% (13) family of the respondents are from the income group 18001/- to 23000/- and only 5% (05) family of the respondents have no more income and who earn below 3000/- rupees per month for their survival.

### **Motivational factors of entrepreneurship development of women**

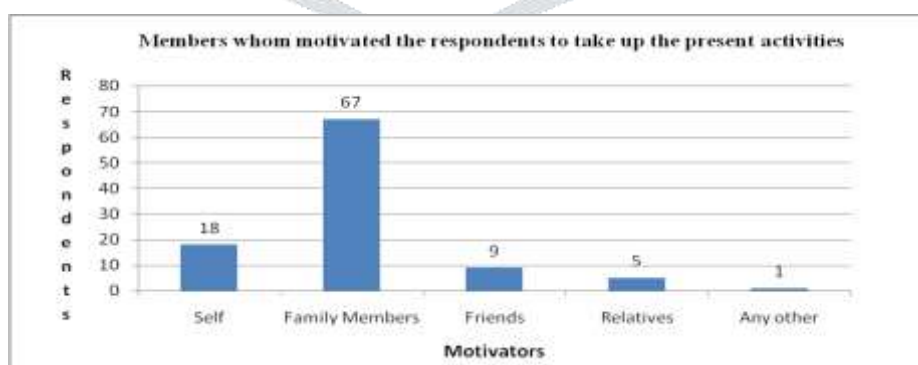
Women entrepreneurship development is the instrument of women empowerment. Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional, multi disciplinary and multi faced phenomenon which encompasses innovations and newness as an integral part. Entrepreneurship is an important factor in the process of economic development, without entrepreneurial functions development would be inconceivable. (Chanchan, C.; 2013) Entrepreneurship Development refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. It aims to extend the base of entrepreneurs

in order to hasten the pace at which new ventures are created. This accelerates employment generation and economic development. During the time of field study it has been observed that, women entrepreneurs were engaged in different types of entrepreneurial activities. which are: Garment making (item of clothing), Cutting and tailoring, knitting, embroidery & woolen articles, general store, beauty parlor, training institute, toy making, and food processing, steel fabrications, printing and binding and any other. This study reveals that, 8% (08) women were involved in garment making (item of clothes). They produce only clothes for women and children and produce new varieties of garment like mekhaela, riha, blouse, frock, shirts; shaddars etc. which are mostly women wears. The make clothes of various designs keeping in view the changing fashions and local demands. Total unit of production by the individual firm varies from one to another. 28% (28) women were engaged in enterprise of cutting and tailoring. Knitting is another enterprise, in which women entrepreneurs tend to be interested as 7% (07) of the respondents were engaged in knitting. This unit produced ladies and children wear only. In the same 7% (07) and 10% (10) respondents engaged in embroidery & woolen articles and general store respectively. 16% (16) were found to have been engaged in beauty parlor enterprise. 5% (05) of the respondents established privately training institute. 7% (07) of the respondents were engaged in food processing enterprise. Out of 100 respondents 2% (02), 2% (02) and 3% (03) of the respondents were engaged in toy making, steel fabrication and printing and binding enterprises respectively. Any other enterprises including jute, bamboo and cane craft and poultry firm etc are popular enterprise in which women entrepreneurs were found to be interested as 5% (05) of the respondents established such units respectively.

Motivation plays an important role in undertaking a business enterprise. For understanding the motivational aspect, we observed by whom they are motivated to start the present enterprise. The figure-I shows the members whom motivated the respondents to take up the present activities.

**Figure: I**

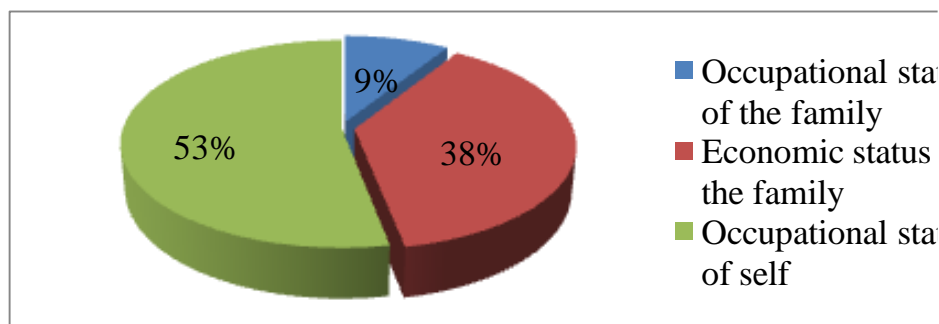
**Members whom motivated the respondents to take up the present activities**



From the above figure depicts that out of 100 respondents, majority of the respondents i.e., 67% (67) respondents opined that they were motivated by family members to take up the present enterprise. Secondly, 18% (18) of the respondents reported that they were self motivated. They did not get advice, suggestions or pressure from any person any time. They decided themselves to do some business for their living. However,

9% (09) of the respondents said that they were motivated by their friends who were engaged in different types of entrepreneurial activities. 5% (05) of the respondents were motivated by their relatives and rests of 1% (01) of the respondents motivated by any other person like maternal uncle. From the data presented in the table it seen that family members played a significant role in motivating the respondents to take up the present enterprise. In this study, we observed some of the motivating factors to empower through different entrepreneurial activities. The figure: II shows the influencing factors to start the enterprise of the respondents.

**Figure: II**  
**Influencing factors and starts the enterprise of the respondents**



From the above figure: II reveals that large majority i.e., 53% (53) of the respondents were very much influenced by herself that means occupational status of own, 38% (38) of the respondents were influenced by economic status of the family and 9% (09) of the respondents stated that occupational status of the family might be influencing factor for their present enterprise. The large majority of the respondents stated that their influencing factor is own. Because, some of the respondents were engaged in different working activities before starting their enterprise and they were influenced primarily by previous association in the same line and they thought to take up business activity. Second largest majority of the respondents were very much influence by economic status of the family, because choice of entrepreneurial activity is not considered only on the basis of skills and technical knowledge, but also on the economic status of entrepreneurs family. Women entrepreneurs who belonged to high or medium income group family, they generally preferred to women to engage in business activity but lower income group families also considered women to enter into business enterprises that the necessary training obtained by themselves. Besides economic status, occupational status of the family was also considered to be relevant to choosing the type of enterprise.

During the study it has been found that, out of 100 respondents, the majority of the respondents i.e., i.e., 55% (55) respondents viewed that they were getting the own idea. Secondly, 38% (38) respondents opined that they have getting the idea their family members like mother, father, brother, husband sister etc, 3% (03) respondents reported that they have getting the idea from their traditional family occupation and lastly 4% (04) of the respondents mentioned that they have getting the idea from other persons like friends, relatives etc. Basically entrepreneurship implies earning income for living the individual. In the study, every woman's have different considerations to motivate the entrepreneurship development. Such as, some of the

women were achieving social status, some of the women want to be economically dependent, some of the women want to continue family business etc. The following table no-I depicts responses of the respondents.

**Table No: I**  
**Considerations on which the respondents were selected the present Enterprise**

Sl.No.	Considerations	Number of the respondents	Percentage (%)
1	To achieve social status	01	1%
2	To become economically independent	60	60%
3	To encourage family income	33	33%
4	To continue family business	03	3%
5	Any other (interest, to generate job)	03	3%
	Total	100	100%

From the above table: I depicts that out of 100 respondents, the majority of the respondents i.e., 60% (60) respondents had reason for becoming economically independent. 33% (33) of the respondents reported that their main consideration was to encourage family income. 3% (03) of the respondent's consideration was to continue family business. However, 3% (03) of the respondent's main consideration was to their own interest, to generate jobs etc and lastly, only 1% (01) of the respondent's main consideration was to achieve social status. In this study it has found that, out of 100 respondents, the majority of the respondents i.e., 54% (54) respondents mentioned that, they have selected the present entrepreneurial activities because of higher profit of income. Secondly, 14% (14) of the respondents reported that they have selected the present entrepreneurial activities due to lack of competition. However, 28% (28) of the respondents opined that they have selected the present entrepreneurial activities for other reason such as family legacy, to attain self dependency, to generate jobs etc. and only 4% (04) respondents viewed that they have selected the present entrepreneurial activities because of attachment of better social position.

## CONCLUDING REMARK

In this study it has been found that the women who were more educationally qualified perceived entrepreneurship as a challenge, ambition fulfillment and for doing something fruitful, whereas less educationally qualified entrepreneurs perceived it as only tool for earning money quickly. Majority of the potential entrepreneurs had conscious about their entrepreneurial activities but they needed moral support from male members and other family members for setting up their enterprises. Women entrepreneurs prefer to combine their need for excellence with emotional dependency of the male members. They had an inner uncertainty of their own capabilities and needed a male support to pave their entrepreneurial activities either with money, business know-how or moral support. Among the motives to become an entrepreneur were economic needs, utilization of own experience and education, husband's and family's support and interest, availability of free time and finance, desire to be economically independent, higher profit of income, better social position and satisfaction of doing something on one's own. Due to the impact of self confidence,



capital building, economic solvency, modern education and increasing scientific temperament women are empowered in Assam have been considered for entrepreneurial activities up to a mark.

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