

A STUDY ON THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF KANNUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

Women empowerment involves the action of boosting the status of women through education, raising awareness and training. The empowerment of women and the improvement of their social, political and economic status is highly essential for the achievement of sustainable development of all areas of life. This article is an attempt to analyse the impact of family environment and work environment on women employment leading to women empowerment. The study is conducted among the women in the weaver's village of Kannur district where the men community shifted their profession to other unskilled work for a better living. 60 women weavers were selected randomly as samples and the data was collected using a structured questionnaire which included questions related to the family environment and work environment. It was found that the favorable family environment and work environment will encourage the women to go for work which leads to empowerment of the women. The employment helps to built courage and confidence among the women especially those belonging to the rural area. The training and support from the cooperative societies and Khadi Bhavan helps to improve the confidence and attracted many women to the weaving sector, which helps them to earn for their family, being at home looking after their children and household work.

Key words: Weavers, Employability, Women Empowerment, Family Environment, Work Environment

1. INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women and the improvement of their social, political and economic status is highly essential for the achievement of sustainable development of all areas of life (United Nations, 1995). The World Bank's development report 2012 made an extensive analysis on women's role in the development plan and stated that 'investing in women is smart economics'.(World Bank report 2012). Women empowerment involves the action of boosting the status of women through education, raising awareness and training.

India has made significant progress in recent decades, but this hasn't made any impact on the women empowerment. The female literacy rate in India is very low compared to other developing countries. India ranks 38th position among the 51 developing countries in the world. The reports shows 48% of female have education only till 5th standard out of which 15% who completed their 2nd standard are literate.

This affects the growth prospects of the country, so improvement of employment and women empowerment is very important for a prosperous country. The World Bank report shows, India ranks 120th among 131 countries in women employment. For achieving a poverty-free country, India has to improve women empowerment and employment. According to Ela Bhat, an Indian Co-operative organizer and an activist, the women can only be empowered through employment, which helps them to develop identity and to build up courage and confidence to communicate with public.

The woman gives priority to their children's and other family member's wellbeing. Majority of the rural women are not ready to compromise on their role as a good house wife.

The reports show that there is a tremendous decline in the women's job during 2011- 2014 period. Being a 100% literate state, Kerala also faces this decline in the women labour force. The reasons behind the quitting of jobs by the women are mainly because of patriarchy, marriage, motherhood, uncomfortable time schedule and also security.

The favorable family environment and work environment results in family wellbeing (R.Lekha & K,Mathew Jose, 2018) The family wellbeing has influence on the children's well being (Higgins. 1987) Taking care of children, in-laws and managing house hold activities are the main factor which influences the favorable family environment. Flexibility in the work time schedule, proper training, respect from the society, and income are the factors which influence the favorable work environment (Fig.1).

This study has come up with the inference that there is a tremendous increase in the number of rural women opting weaving profession. The study explores the reason behind this paradigm shift of women weavers in the weaving village of Kerala. Weaving was a thriving traditional vocation in many villages of Kannur in past. The traditional weavers of Kerala had migrated from the neighboring states and are known as 'Padma Saliyas'. These communities settled in streets or particular areas unlike the Kerala pattern of dispersed settlement. In these traditional weaving villages majority of men shifted to other professions. The main reason behind this shifting is the low returns from this hard skill labour, which is not sufficient to lead a better life.

The Government has institutionalized many measures for the upliftment of the weavers. More women in the rural areas are attracted to the training programmes and welfare schemes instituted by Governmental and other nongovernmental organizations.

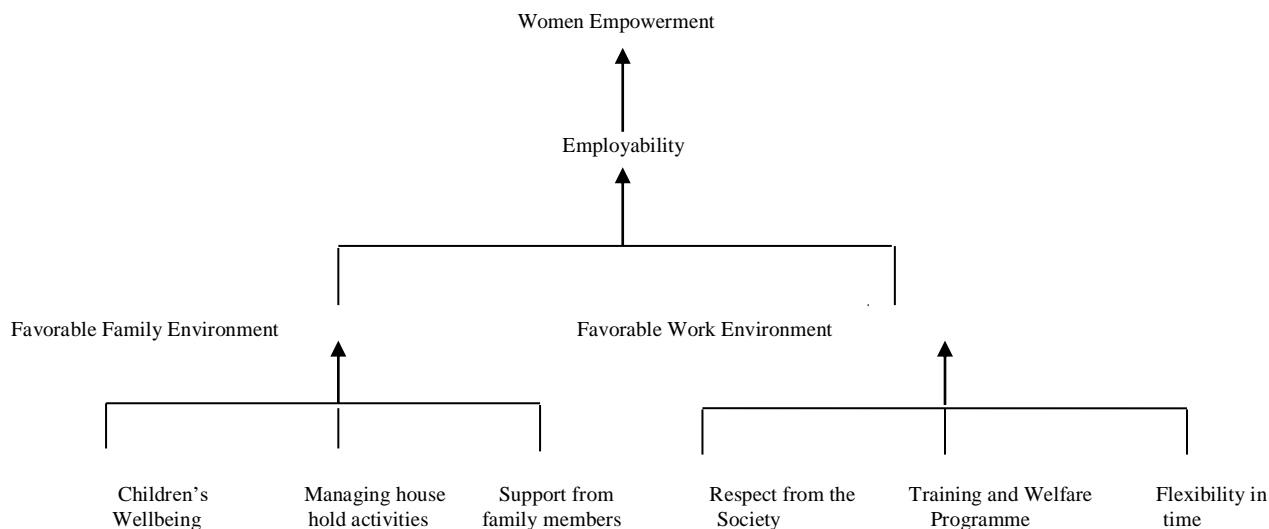
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to P.Priyadarshini (2016), the economic pressure and increasing cost of living in urban area leads the women to work and are stressed to balance their role as a professional and a homemaker by facing all the challenges from family and society. The working women are struggled by the simultaneous demand of their aspirations and traditional way of life. They are generally not able to provide proper time to household and faces problems in leaving children and going to office on time (Kumari.V and Mohanty S (2014)

Women is said to be multi-tasking than man, but balancing the work and home disturbs them and seems to be more challenging. Indian women are expected to excel at household activities as they are considered traditionally as women centred. The main reason behind this is the social perspective of the position of women. All these psychological pressure leads women to quit their job. (Azad India Foundation). According to Emma Saman, Elizabeth Prester-Marshall,Nicola Jones (2016), the main reason behind the women for opting low profile job in informal sector is the pressure to balance the work and children. According to R.Lekha and K,Mathew Jose (2018) The women weavers enjoys the flexibility of time schedule, which is a unique feature of weaving profession, allowing them to balance their home and work. Flexibility in workplace brings more satisfaction among women; there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and the flexible work option (Thulaseedharan,A &Kumar VN, 2015). People with satisfying jobs have a higher level of happiness and wellbeing, so we can state that the happiness and wellbeing is closely related with job satisfaction. The core factor for the job satisfaction is the happiness and happiness can be achieved only if they have a favorable family and work environment (R,Lekha and K, Mathew Jose. 2018).

A correspondent from Manorama Online (September 16th,2018) in his article 'Successful handloom revival project set for expansion' reported about the success of a novel project 'A loom in every household', to revive the handloom sector which is being implemented by Mangattidam panchayat in Kannur district with the support of Kudumbashree. This is to provide a means of self employment to the women in the handloom sector and by providing training in weaving. These kind of Government and non government initiatives will encourage more women into weaving. According to Clement Chauvet, Chief, skill development, UNDP India, "Investing in women's empowerment and skill development is one of the most urgent and effective means to drive progress on gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth"

Research Design:



schedule

(Figure 1)

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To explore the various opportunities of employment for women in rural area of Kannur district
 To study the influence of family environment and work environment in women employability

4. METHODOLOGY

Sample selected for the study is the women weavers of the weaver’s villages in Kannur district, Kerala. 60 women weavers were selected randomly as samples and the data was collected using a structured questionnaire which included questions related to the family environment and work environment. The selected respondents are working under Department units, Co-operative societies and Khadi Board. An ethnographic study has been done among the women weavers of Kerala for collecting the data.

5. DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

To examine the above stated objectives, the study conducted an ordinary least square (OLS) regression analysis. In this regression model, the study considered employability as the dependent variable, and the factors such as (1) work environment, and (2) family environment as the independent variables.

In these two regression equations, followed by the originally specified control variables of age and gender were entered as dummy control variables. The results of the regression analysis are shown in the following Tables.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.790 ^a	.624	.615	1.146

a. Predictors: (Constant), *work environment*, and *family environment*

The regression analysis (in Model 1) with the aforementioned dependent and independent variables supported an R² of 0.624. It indicated that around the incorporated independent variables explained a variance of 62% on the dependent variable that is employability.

Table 2: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	529.954	2	88.326	67.294	.000 ^b
	Residual	318.946	243	1.313		
	Total	848.900	249			

a. Dependent Variable: employability

b. Predictors: (Constant), *work environment*, and *family environment*.

As depicted in Table 2, the examination of the model also indicated that all these variables together work as a significant predictor of employability ($F [2,243] = 67.29, p < 0.01$).

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	1 (Constant)	1.170	.328		
Work environment	.117	.025	.091	3.935	.000
Family environment	.080	.135	.062	4.592	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employability

The study postulated in hypothesis 1 that works environment influence the Employability. In support with this, the study found significant results ($\beta = .117, p < 0.01$). Thus, the study found support for the significance of hypothesis 1.

Next, the study postulated that family environment has an impact on employability. The regression results supported a positive and significant estimate ($\beta = .080, p < 0.01$). Thus, the study supported hypothesis 2, and inferred that the family environment positively influences to create employability.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The present study reveals that there is a strong relation between family environment and work environment to the employability of women in rural areas. It can be concluded that if women have a favorable family environment and favorable work environment they are encourage to work, which further leads to women empowerment. The skill improvement projects by Government and nongovernmental organizations for the women in the weavers' villages helps to develop skill and create

income opportunities through entrepreneurship or employment for women artisans coming from the marginalized communities.

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