

# Socio Economic Impacts of Women's Employment in Rajasthan

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Women Empowerment is a process by which women gain greater control over resources and challenge the patriarchy and gender based discrimination against them. The Millennium Development Goal -3 – 'The empowerment of women' is critical to the attainment of all MDGs. Women empowerment needs to occur across many domains e.g. in her own life, in her home and community and at the national and international level. Very often, it is assumed that women's participation in income generating activities will lead to their empowerment. Hence a general notion propagates that when a woman has income of her own, her ability to negotiate within the household will improve and she will have greater control over decisions.

The present paper focus on Socio Economic Effects of employment on women that leads to empowerment of women.

## 1.1 Review of Literature:

Puhazhendi and Satyasai in 2000 studied impact evaluation of SHGs and covered changes in socio-economic condition of 560 members of SHGs and found that average net income per household, average value of assets per households increased after joining SHGs.<sup>1</sup>

Myrada studied upon impact of Self Help Groups on empowerment status of women in Southern India and found that saving habit among women members has not proved very effective for women empowerment and they rarely take part in village level decisions.<sup>2</sup>

Singh and Gupta (1984) in their study on 'Potential Women Entrepreneurs – Their Profile, Vision and Motivation' found the reasons for becoming an entrepreneur amongst the respondents. 'Economic Gain' ranked as the reason of greatest importance followed by 'Keeping oneself busy'. 'Fulfilment of one's ambition' ranked third followed by 'Wanted to become independent' and a host of other reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Singh et al. (1985) in their work relating to 'Successful Women Entrepreneurs –their Identity, Expectations and Problems', found the reasons or motivational factors for

venturing into entrepreneurship amongst the sample respondents. The study further revealed that although women enter in business for different reasons but eventually became high achievers and independent thinkers. 70.8 percent of the respondents had been taking male help in running the enterprise and only 29.2 percent were operating entirely on their own.<sup>4</sup>

Rani (1986), in her study 'Potential Women Entrepreneurs' found that the desire to do something independently was the prime motivating factor to start business activity amongst the sample respondents. The women in her sample reiterated their capability to take independent decisions and told that the thought of entering into entrepreneurial areas was their own and not influenced by others. The author further found that factors such as educational and income background did not influence much in their decision to jump on to entrepreneurial bandwagon.<sup>5</sup>

Vinze (1987) in her research study in 'Women Entrepreneurs in India – A Socio-Economic Study of Delhi' conducted on 50 women entrepreneurs of Delhi found out that enterprises set-up by these women entrepreneurs were in different fields. In place like Delhi, a metropolitan city state, people in low and middle income groups with some education and moderate experience set-up small scale industries in large numbers and as such entrepreneurship was largely acquired. Women entrepreneurs opined that financial assistance from banks has been significant but procedures and formalities need to be more flexible. Streamlining of procedures was also considered essential for acquisition of technical know-how.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.3 Methodology:**

To find socio economic effects of employment on women, Qualitative techniques e.g. Focus Group Discussions, Intensive case studies etc. have been used. 30 employed women and 30 control group women have been interviewed in groups as well as individually.

### **1.4 Socio Economic Effect:**

To find impact of employment on socio-economic status of women, few key questions related to household income, education, health care, food expenditure and non-food expenditure etc. were discussed. Following facts have been came out :-

- An overall improvement in household income is observed among almost respondent women. Although lot of variation in increase in income is observed. A number of

factors were found responsible for this variation e.g. employment status of women, development of the area, income level of household etc.

- Overall proportion of women having institutional delivery and treatment at private hospitals increased sharply.
- The proportion of children of women having education in private school is increased likewise proportion of family member having higher education also increased.
- Improvement in dietary habits, general improvement is standard of living including housing conditions is observed during field survey.
- Dependence on money lenders is reduced due to loan facility for employed women.
- Most of the women show preference for purchasing clothes and other items at any time rather than at festivals or special occasions.
- Women are now better informed of banking related matters. They are now more aware of government schemes and other welfare programmes.
- During survey, scholar found that due to employment, self esteem and awareness of women is increased and they are now more conscious for their children's education and career but their voice is not effectively heard in family, however about 70% women were satisfied with their multiple roles.
- Women respondents informed that their economic and social status has improved due to employment.

#### 1.4 Drawbacks :

During FGDs many facts showing drawbacks of employment of women have also emerged. Few observations are as under :-

- Long distances between the home and the work place increase both commuting time and work burden, leaving women with even less time for family responsibilities.
- Almost all women reported that they have liberty to go to relatives but they can't decide to go on their own. Every time they have to take permission.
- Women don't have liberty to go to movies or vacation tour or at any other place of their choice. Almost all women reported that these all plans are made by their husband or other male member of family.
- Almost all women respondents unanimously informed that they have less time to take care of their own health and this leads to various kinds of disease e.g. Thyroid, Diabetes and high/ low B.P. etc. And they have to take medicines regularly

- 40-50% women reported that due to increased income of the family, their husband feel more liberty to spend more and they don't even let women spend according to their desire and need.
- Most of the women are busy with their job responsibility, household chores and children care and their spouse take advantage of that and enjoy their life with the income earned by women and this leads to disempowerment.
- Scholar with survey team realized that due to more responsibilities, women have to pay a lot for peace in the family in terms of misbehaviour from family members, spendthrift activities etc.
- Due to easy accessibility of loan for government employed women, their family members or spouse force the women to take loan and many times loan money is used for unproductive activities and burden of repaying the loan remain on women only and she has to repay the loan from her salary.

Meenakshi, 45 year old, having two daughters, working as a senior officer in government department shared that her husband asked her for some financial support to start a business. Since she was very much devoted towards her family, she took loan of 50 lakh rupees on her salary and assets and after that her husband cheated her in relationship as well as in financial matter and now she is repaying the loan from her salary. She has to spend a lot for her daughter's education also, hence inspite of good job, she always feels herself cheated from her husband.

- Most of the women were complaining that due to increased income of family, their husband drinks alcohol a lot and harrase them as and when and they have to tolerate everything for the peace in family.
- About 30-40% women reported that although they are financially independent yet they can't spend their income according to their desire. If they try to do so, they have to face many problems in family and at last final say always lie with their husband.

Rekha, working in a school since 10 years, her husband is also working in the same school, and both go together in school. She gets up at 5 am in the morning and does all house hold chores and her husband gets up after 8 a.m. and after reading newspaper and gossiping with neighbour he gets ready for school. She has to spend 6 to 7 hours daily for household chores after doing same job and after that she cannot spend her own money without permission of her husband.

- About 10-20% women are facing domestic violence from husband or from in-laws even after earning a lot for family.

Seema, age 35 years, senior government officer, her husband is a businessman, Seema shared that her husband keeps full hold on her salary, he keeps ATM card also and give her a small amount for her expenses. Just after marriage she opposed for this, she has to go to court also but no one supported her and finally she had to stay with her husband. At present she has a daughter and she is not even able to provide good education and other facilities to her daughter, according to her desire. For each and everything she has to take permission from her husband and she has also accepted everything as her destiny for the sack of her daughter and peace in the family

- During survey, not a single woman reported that she can financially help her parents or brother from her salary. Even they can't keep their parents at their home without permission from husband but their parent in laws stay with them and their husband don't even feel the need to ask on this matter.
- Almost all women reported that that their husband and in laws always expect expensive gifts on festivals/ occasions from their parents and their parents also try to send gifts to her in laws but at the same time, women cannot give gifts to them, even after earning.
- During survey, scholar realized that earlier male member of the family had to earn for family and this inhibits feel of responsibility towards family in them but now when women are earning, they are all feel free from their responsibility and enjoy more

liberty. If women gets sick, she is being sent to her parents or she has to take care of herself on her own.

- During survey it is found that due to employment, knowledge and self esteem of women is increased and they are now more aware of their children education and career, but their voice is not heard effectively in family. About 90% women are satisfied with their multiple roles.

On discussion in groups, it came out that women realize that their burden should be shared with spouse or with male members of family but they never demand for that. They are aware about their daughter's education and career but at the same time they want that their daughter should be expert in all household chores also e.g. cooking, cleaning etc. They feel that after marriage their daughter will have to take care of her husband and in-laws and its her duty and same thing they expect from their daughter-in-law also. They firmly believe that it is duty of their daughter-in-law/daughter to take care of their son/son-in-law respectively. This indicates that only employment cannot bring a big change in status of women empowerment.

#### References:

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