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Perceived Constraints and Suggestions of Self Help Group Women Entrepreneurs in Andhra Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

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The present investigation was carried out in three district of Andhra Pradesh viz., Chittoor (from Rayalaseema region), East Godavari (from Coastal region) and Srikakulam (from North Coastal region) during 2016-18. The main objective of the study was to analyse the constraints in operating the enterprises by the SHG women entrepreneurs and suggestions to overcome them. The study highlights that, the prominent constraints expressed by women entrepreneurs, about personal and socio-psychological constraints, 'Male dominance'; In case of financial constraints, 'Inadequacy SHG loan amounts'; In case of technological constraints, 'Lack of entrepreneurial training opportunities'; Regarding marketing constraints, 'Stiff competition', In case of infrastructure constraints, 'Inadequate space & building' were perceived as the major constraints by the majority of the women entrepreneurs. When all these problems addressed properly by the policy makers, then the women entrepreneurs bring laurels to their family, to the SHG, to the village and to the nation. The major suggestions given by majority of women entrepreneurs were 'Support from the family members to share the house hold activities', 'Organizing training programmes to develop entrepreneurial capabilities', 'Increase in SHG loan amounts' and 'Establishing women co-operative societies to eliminate middle men'.

Introduction

'Woman' is the key for success of any human being because of their excellent qualities such as hard-working nature, patience, cordial affiliation, convincing capacity, communication etc., in handling multifaceted activities. On the other hand women in rural areas are comparatively less educated, economically poor, confined to limited geographical boundaries and live under rigid structural constraints. Entrepreneurship is one

of the prospective options to uplift rural women by generating self employment opportunities. The concept of Self Help Group (SHG) acts as a driving force for the rural women with the ultimate objective of converting household women as enterprising women and encouraging them to enter into entrepreneurial activities. Women entrepreneurs of self help groups facing so many problems in operating their enterprises. So it is necessary to study the constraints in operating the enterprises and suggestions

given by them to overcome them. The constraints expressed and suggestions given by the women entrepreneurs in operating the enterprises will not only serve as indicators of perceived conditions, but also help the planners, policy makers, scientists to modify the strategies to improve the entrepreneurial culture among the women and also support them for effective operation of their enterprises. This investigation would also help the planners, policy makers, extension functionaries, scientists and other officials based on which they would prepare appropriate modifications suitable for the SHG beneficiaries in all spheres of development.

Materials and Methods

Andhra Pradesh state was purposively selected. One district each from three regions of the state viz., Chittoor (from Rayalaseema region), East Godavari (from Coastal region) and Srikakulam (from North Coastal region) were purposively selected based on the highest number of SHGs. Four mandals from each district, two villages from each mandal and one hamlet from each village were purposively selected based on the highest number of SHGs thus making a total of 12 mandals, 24 villages and 24 hamlets respectively. From each village ten women entrepreneurs were selected from all the existing SHGs in that hamlet, by using simple random sampling procedure thus making a total of 240 women entrepreneurs as the sample of the study.

For the present study the 'constraint' was operationalised as the something that limits or controls in operating the enterprises by the women entrepreneurs of SHGs. Based on the exhaustive review of literature, interaction with women entrepreneurs during pretesting and by taking experts opinion, a total of 48 problems were identified and arranged under

five categories viz., twelve personal and socio-psychological, nine financial, eight technical, fourteen marketing and five infrastructure constraints were included to analyze the constraints. The women entrepreneurs were asked to rate each constraint on a three point continuum viz., major, minor and not a constraint with the scores of 2, 1 and 0 respectively.

Then the ranking was given to the constraints under each category based on the magnitude of mean scores obtained. 'Suggestion' was operationally defined as the requirements expressed by the women entrepreneurs in order to fulfill their needs. An open ended schedule was developed to measure the suggestions. The suggestions as expressed by the respondents were keenly observed and framed into ten major suggestions. They were measured using frequency and percentage. Finally the suggestions were ranked from one to ten based on the descending order of frequencies obtained.

Results and Discussion

In this objective, the constraints perceived and the suggestions given by the women entrepreneurs to overcome their constraints were observed and depicted as shown below:

Constraints in operating the enterprises by the women entrepreneurs

The constraints in operating the enterprises by the women entrepreneurs were classified into four major types which were linked with personal and socio-psychological, financial, technological, marketing and infrastructure constraints.

The table 1 explicitly depicted that, the constraints were ranked based on the order of highest mean score obtained within each major type of constraint.

In consideration to personal and socio-psychological constraints 'Male dominance' (1.88) was ranked first and felt as the most problematic by a huge majority of women entrepreneurs. It was followed by decreasing order of mean scores of the constraints as 'Lack of freedom' (1.87), 'No risk bearing capacity' (1.83), 'No support from other family members' (1.77), 'Conflict due to dual responsibilities' (1.75), 'Lack of self confidence' (1.69), 'Fear of social security' (1.46), 'Indifferent attitude of society' (1.18), 'Lack of recognition and appreciation' (1.15), 'Difficulty in travelling' (0.88) ranked second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth respectively. 'Negative attitude towards SHGs and VOA's' (0.50) and 'Health problems because of this business' (0.24) was ranked eleventh and twelfth and felt as a minor constraints by the women entrepreneurs of SHG.

In financial constraints, very large majority of the women entrepreneurs felt that 'Inadequacy SHG loan amounts' (1.93) as a foremost constraint and it was ranked first. 'Limited working capital' (1.71) was ranked second and was considered as one of the major constraint by most of the women entrepreneurs of SHG. A moderate majority of the women entrepreneurs observed 'Shortage of capital in starting the business' (1.66) as a major constraint. 'Lack of government assistance' (1.62) was ranked fourth and also considered as one of the major constraint by the slight majority of women entrepreneurs. 'Lack of own funds and resources' (1.30), 'Improper utilization of funds' (1.29), 'Negative attitude of banks' (1.04) and lack of education in financial management (1.03) were considered as major constraint to some extent by majority of the women entrepreneurs. 'Delay in sanctioning the loan' (0.97) was ranked ninth and felt as a minor constraint by large majority of the women entrepreneurs of SHG. Regarding technological constraints 'Lack of

entrepreneurial training opportunities' (1.83) ranked first and was felt as a prominent constraint by the most of women entrepreneurs. It was followed by Lack of knowledge of various government schemes (1.42), 'Lack of adequate skill to start new venture' (1.19), 'Lack of knowledge of various government schemes', 'Experience workers leave the unit after sufficient exposure' (1.03) 'Non availability of skill manpower' (0.88) were felt as some of the major constraint. While 'Leakage and damage of the product' (0.23) 'Machinery repair/troubles' (0.19) and 'Unavailability of raw material/feed' (0.18) were felt as minor constraints by the slight majority of women entrepreneurs.

In marketing constraints, very large majority of the women entrepreneurs felt 'Stiff competition' (1.81) as a foremost constraint and it was ranked first. 'Late payment by the customers' (1.75) was ranked second and was considered as one of the major constraint by most of the women entrepreneurs of SHG. A moderate majority of the women entrepreneurs observed 'Inappropriate price for the products' (1.39) as a major constraint. 'Exploitation by middle men' (1.38) was ranked fourth and also considered as one of the major constraint by the slight majority of women entrepreneurs. 'Fluctuation in the prices of the product' (1.19), 'Shortage of manpower for selling the products' (1.17), 'Lack of knowledge of how to market the product' (1.07) and 'Difficulty to sell the product in market' (1.03) 'Fluctuation in the demand of the product' (0.97), 'High production cost' (0.90) and 'Inadequate publicity' (0.88) were considered as major constraints to some extent by majority of the women entrepreneurs. 'GST/tax problem' (0.28), 'Season bound business' (0.25) and 'Transportation problem' (0.22) were felt as a minor constraint by majority of the women entrepreneurs of SHG.

Table.1 Constraints in operating the enterprises by the women entrepreneurs n=240

I.	Personal and Socio-psychological constraints	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Male dominance	451	1.88	I
2.	Lack of freedom	448	1.87	II
3.	No risk bearing capacity	438	1.83	III
4.	No support from other family members	424	1.77	IV
5.	Conflict due to dual responsibilities	420	1.75	V
6.	Lack of self confidence	406	1.69	VI
7.	Fear of social security	351	1.46	VII
8.	Indifferent attitude of society	282	1.18	VIII
9.	Lack of recognition and appreciation	276	1.15	IX
10.	Difficulty in travelling	210	0.88	X
11.	Negative attitude towards SHGs and VOA's	120	0.50	XI
12.	Health problems because of this business	58	0.24	XII
II.	Financial constraints	Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Inadequacy SHG loan amounts	462	1.93	I
2.	Limited working capital	410	1.71	II
3.	Shortage of capital in starting the business	399	1.66	III
4.	Lack of government assistance	389	1.62	IV
5.	Lack of own funds and resources	312	1.30	V
6.	Improper utilization of funds	310	1.29	VI
7.	Negative attitude of banks	250	1.04	VII
8.	Lack of education in financial management	248	1.03	VIII
9.	Delay in sanctioning the loan	232	0.97	IX
III.	Technological constraints	Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Lack of entrepreneurial training opportunities	440	1.83	I
2.	Lack of knowledge of various government schemes	340	1.42	III
3.	Lack of adequate skill to start new venture	286	1.19	II
4.	Experience workers leave the unit after sufficient exposure	248	1.03	IV
5.	Non availability of skill manpower	210	0.88	V
6.	Leakage and damage of the product	55	0.23	VI
7.	Machinery repair/troubles	45	0.19	VII
8.	Unavailability of raw material/feed	42	0.18	VIII
IV.	Marketing constraints	Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Stiff competition	434	1.81	I
2.	Late payment by the customers	420	1.75	II
3.	Inappropriate price for the products	334	1.39	III
4.	Exploitation by middle men	330	1.38	IV
5.	Fluctuation in the prices of the product	285	1.19	V
6.	Shortage of manpower for selling the products	280	1.17	VI
7.	Lack of knowledge of how to market the product	256	1.07	VII
8.	Difficulty to sell the product in market	247	1.03	VIII
9.	Fluctuation in the demand of the product	233	0.97	IX
10.	High production cost	216	0.90	X
11.	Inadequate publicity	210	0.88	XI
12.	GST/tax problem	68	0.28	XII

13.	Season bound business	59	0.25	XIII
14.	Transportation problem	52	0.22	XIV
V.	Infrastructure constraints	Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Inadequate space & building	288	1.20	I
2.	Inadequate communication facility	282	1.18	II
3.	Inadequate power supply	150	0.63	III
4.	Shortage of equipments or machines	127	0.53	IV
5.	Lack of storage for goods	50	0.21	VII

Table.2 Suggestions given by the women entrepreneurs to overcome their constraints

n=240				
S.No.	Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Support from the family members to share the house hold activities	240	100.00	I
2.	Organizing training programmes to develop entrepreneurial capabilities	240	99.58	II
3.	Increase in SHG loan amounts	238	99.17	III
4.	Establishing women co-operative societies to eliminate middle men	235	97.92	IV
5.	Providing more working capital assistance from the financial institutions	232	96.67	V
6.	Enhancing the repayment period of SHG loans	230	95.83	VI
7.	Giving subsidies for different components of women enterprises	220	91.67	VII
8.	Providing interest free loans			VIII
9.	Providing raw material on concessional basis	218	90.83	IX
10.	Close supervision of SHG activities by the higher authorities	212	88.33	X

Regarding infrastructure constraints ‘Inadequate space & building’ (1.20) ranked first and was felt as a prominent constraint by the most of women entrepreneurs.

It was followed by ‘Inadequate communication facility’ (1.18), ‘Inadequate power supply’ (0.63) were felt as some of the major constraint. While ‘Shortage of equipments or machines’ (0.53) and ‘Lack of storage for goods’ (0.21) was felt as a minor constraint by slight majority of the women entrepreneurs. This finding was in agreement with the findings of Rao (2011), Sreeram

(2013), Vijayabharathi and Masthani (2014) and Mubeena (2017).

Suggestions given by the women entrepreneurs to overcome their constraints

List of suggestions given by the respondents were collected to overcome the constraints in operating the enterprises by the women entrepreneurs. The results are presented in table 2. The suggestions offered by the women were arranged in descending order of their frequency and percentage. It could be

vividly seen from the table 2. that the all (100.00%) the women entrepreneurs of SHG felt that 'Support from the family members to share the house hold activities' was the major suggestion and it was ranked first among all the suggestions given by the women entrepreneurs. 'Organizing training programmes to develop entrepreneurial capabilities' was suggested by second majority (99.58%) of the women entrepreneurs. 'Increase in SHG loan amounts' was suggested by 99.17 per cent of the women entrepreneurs and ranked third. It was followed by 'Establishing women co-operative societies to eliminate middle men' (97.92%) ranked fourth, 'Providing more working capital assistance from the financial institutions' (96.67%) ranked fifth, 'Enhancing the repayment period of SHG loans' (95.83%) ranked sixth. 'Giving subsidies for different components of women enterprises' was also felt as one of the major suggestion by a majority (91.67%) of the women entrepreneurs and ranked seventh. 'Providing interest free loans' was also felt as major suggestion by a slight majority of the women entrepreneurs which was ranked eighth.

'Providing raw material on concessional basis' (90.83%) and 'Close supervision of SHG activities by the higher authorities' was the major suggestions given by slight majority of the women entrepreneurs which ranked ninth and tenth (88.33%). The finding draws support with the studies of Rao (2011), Sreeram (2013) and Mubeena (2017).

In conclusion, SHG is a novel and innovative organizational setup in India for women upliftment and welfare. All women in India are given a chance to join any one of the SHGs for training and development so as to be prospective entrepreneurs and skilled workers. The SHGs are promoted by the government to make the women in India

resourceful enough to be entrepreneurs. The study highlights that, the prominent constraints expressed by women entrepreneurs, about personal and socio-psychological constraints, 'Male dominance'; In case of financial constraints, 'Inadequacy SHG loan amounts'; In case of technological constraints, 'Lack of entrepreneurial training opportunities'; Regarding marketing constraints, 'Stiff competition', In case of infrastructure constraints, 'Inadequate space & building' were perceived as the major constraints by the majority of the women entrepreneurs. It is painful to know that after establishing an enterprise through their hard work women entrepreneurs were facing the problems of stiff competition from the established brands and lack of better market facilities. This should be taken note of by all concerned because the success of the entrepreneurship development programmes depends upon success of the women entrepreneurs which in turn linked with the demand that their product/service gets in the market. During their training programme orient them towards availability of different market channels and techniques of running enterprise competitively and parallelly in line with big corporate enterprises, thereby they could able to sustain the profits by running viable enterprises. When all these problems addressed properly by the policy makers, then the women entrepreneurs bring laurels to their family, to the SHG, to the village and to the nation.

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