

Empowerment of Women in Rural Areas through Social Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Men & women both are two wheels of society and contribution of both is very essential for building healthy nation. There are around six lakh forty thousand villages in India and more than 70% of our population lives in villages. In rural sector 73% of the male and 30% of the female were in the labour force. About 66% of the female population in the rural sector is idle & unutilized. Even after 75 years of the independence women in India are struggling. They have to face various socio-economic problems. But now the Scenario is changing fast with development of social entrepreneurship in rural areas. Social entrepreneurs are people who have noticed a need in their community or somewhere in the world, and have come up with a way of remedying that issue. The remedy could be creative, innovative, “out of the box,” etc... Since most entrepreneurs tend to think in this manner. A social entrepreneur recognizes a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organize, create and manage a venture to achieve social change. In general, social entrepreneurs did not start out with the goal of making money, but in the long run, switch to a for-profit business. Social entrepreneurs in Indian scenario are mainly NGO's who aims at balanced economic growth of India by empowering rural India through innovative practices. Social entrepreneurs lead grassroots efforts with an innovative idea that drive social change in the lives of rural women. This has laid to economic empowerment of women in rural areas of India through training and development.

Key words: (Social Entrepreneurship, NGO's and Women Empowerment)

“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the contribution of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.” - **Swami Vivekananda**

Introduction

The Indian economy has been witnessing a drastic change since mid-1991 with new policies of economic liberalization, globalization and privatization started by the government of India. Planned economic system has been adopted in Indian economy for its growth and development. So, Far India has completed 10 five year plans with some annual plans. The 11th Five year plan has begun from April 1, 2007. No doubt, there was development in various sectors of the Indian economy during these plan periods. The production from agriculture has increased from 105 million tons in the year 1949 -50 to approximately 500 million tons in the year 2006 -07 through green, yellow, white and blue revolution. There has been more than 7% annual growth in the industrial sector. Further, service sector has been contributing to the growth of Indian economy. The important reason for considerable percentage of population below the poverty line and India still remaining a developing country with lot of problems is due to the human resources not being used at the optimum level.

There are around seven lakh villages in India and more than 70% of our population lives in villages. In rural sector 56% of the male and 33% of the female were in the labour force. About 66% of the female population in the rural sector is idle & unutilized. Even after 56 years of the independence women in India are still struggling. It is very essential to employ these resources optimally in the interest of the nation in general and her family in particular. In past, women were not ready to undertake any work, job and business due to shyness, fear and male dominance in the society. However, of late, Indian women have come out of the four walls of the kitchen and are more willing to take up entrepreneurial activities. Women of today want more economic freedom. Further, many women have proved that they are more productive than men in contributing to the growth of the economy. Just as we need two hands for the smooth function of human work, similarly, both men and women should involve in productive activities to build a strong nation. Besides, India has been facing the problem of unemployment and underemployment. To mitigate this problem, women are required to come out of their dwelling and equip themselves with the skills to become self-employed. They have to undertake entrepreneurial activities to make create additional wealth for the nation and to solve the problem of unemployment and poverty in rural areas.

Entrepreneurship development among women, particularly among rural women, will strengthen the rural and national economy. Empowerment of women is high on the agenda in development plans and policies. NGOs have proved to have the potential to facilitate the process of empowerment among women. The NGO's with their innovative ideas are helping women in rural areas to become financially strong.

Concept of Women Empowerment

Empowerment is an active multidimensional process to enable women to realize their identity and power in all spheres of life. Empowerment provides a greater access to knowledge and resources, more autonomy in decision making, greater ability to plan lives, more control over the circumstances which influence lives, and freedom from customs, beliefs and practices. Empowerment demands a drastic and basic change in the system of marriage and family, husband and wife relationship and attitude towards socialization and remarriage. Empowerment is a process that gives a person freedom in decision making.

Concept of Social Entrepreneur

Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They are ambitious and persistently, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide-scale change. Social entrepreneurs find what is not working and solve the problem by changing the system, spreading the solution and persuading entire societies to take new leaps. Social entrepreneurs often seem to be possessed by their ideas, committing their lives to changing the direction of their field. They are often seemed to be possessed by their ideas, committing their lives to changing the direction of the field. They are both visionaries and ultimate realists, concerned with the practical implementation of their vision who often works through an NGO.

Concept of NGO

NGOs are non-governmental organizations are not-for-profit organizations, voluntary associations of people and communities, may work at local, regional, national or international level. They are organized for a mission with aims and objects of common social good. NGOs determine issues and programmes according to their aims and implement through various activities. They get funding from the charities, donors and Government agencies to perform social services and humanitarian functions. They are the catalysts of society and work as agent of social change to bridge the gap between people and Governments ensuring people's participation in development for implementation of programmes and projects. Mainly there are two types of NGOs first, the development based NGOs those are engaged in developmental work and resource management; and others are issue based NGOs, working for civil and fundamental rights of people and communities. In our study we are mainly concerned with NGO's engaged indevelopmental work and resource management.

Statement of the Problem

The economic development of any country is measured by the process by per capita income of that country moves upward over a period of time. Like many other countries of the world, India has been endowed with rich natural and human resources, which are to be utilized by adopting modern technology for the growth and development of the economy. Entrepreneurship is essential for proper use of renewable resources and non-renewable resources and to provide employment to the unemployed youth. Many social entrepreneurs are playing a vital role in this direction through creation of utilities. They are training women in rural area in relation to empower themselves by making use of locally available raw materials, tailoring, Screen Painting, Food Processing etc. This has helped rural women to become economically independent. Further, there has been lot of progress in the growth and development of social entrepreneur in general and study area in particular, and it is very essential to know kind of training program conducted, its impact on women empowerment.

Need and Significance of the Study

India is a rich country inhabited, by a large number of poor people. India's five year plan has focused on increasing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and eradicating the poverty by providing more employment opportunities. The people below poverty line in India are around 20% of total population. The contribution of drought-prone areas part of north Karnataka Hubli and Dharwad district is more.

Some organizations are working to get women in these areas new stoves and lights, minor- seeming appliances that can have a major impact on their lives. Training women in some artistic skills, providing basic education, helping them set up their own business and bring greater opportunity to women. Many are of the view that the social entrepreneurs who are basically NGO's are empowering women in rural areas and there has been no study in this regard. Hence, there is need for the study.

Objective of the study

- To know what kind of training are given to women.
- To understand how it has improved the standard of living of the people in this region.
- To know how social entrepreneurship helped to empower women.

Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. To collect this primary data, questionnaires are prepared and presented personally to 55 women's who are associated with Mann Deshi Foundation in Hubli District. The percentage tool is used to examine women empowerment through the help of this foundation. The secondary data were collected from newspapers, books and journals etc.

Scope of the study

The present study covers various kinds of training program provided to women and the empowerment of women in the study area.

About Mann Deshi Foundation

This group was founded by Chetna Gala Sinha, Since its launch, the project has opened new livelihood avenues for women, while reducing their dependency on agriculture. With the increase in income levels, there is also a visible increase in the confidence levels of women in the areas. The Mann Deshi Group operates in the drought-prone areas of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

In 2006, the foundation launched the country's first rural business school – Mann Deshi Udyogini (MDU) – with classes held in Mann Deshi Bank branches. Udyogini also travels to interior Maharashtra and Karnataka through a bus fitted to meet state-of-the-art classroom requirements.

The curriculum and faculty are led by women entrepreneurs. It focuses on developing technical, financial, and marketing skills of semi-literate and illiterate women to enable them to develop small enterprises. The mobile business school also offers vocational training covering a wide range of skills, like screen printing, tailoring, fast-food preparation, agricultural courses, dairy production and veterinary training.

The Mann Deshi Foundation was one of the five winners of The Edelweiss Social Innovation Honours (ESIH) 2010 in the category of Livelihoods.

Data Analysis

The analysis of women empowerment through the working of women in rural area is done by considering four important factors productivity skills acquired by women, control over assets, decision making, responsibility, risk bearing ability of women.

Table 1. Showing Age –Wise classification of the respondents

Age Respondents	of NO REpondents	OF %
Less than 20	7	12.73%
20 - 30	16	29.09%
30 - 40	22	40.00%
Above 40	10	18.18%
TOTAL	55	100.00%

Table 1 shows that 40% of sample respondents are under the age 30-40 years, 29% are between 20-30 years. This shows that adult women who joined Mann Deshi Udyogini in the study area are more in number as compared to younger and older age group.

Table 2: Showing various training programs the respondents are under going.

TRAINING PROGRAM	YES	%	NO	%
Cotton and Leather Bags	35	63.64%	20	36.36%
Screen painting	42	76.36%	13	23.64%
Computer literacy	39	70.91%	16	29.09%
Agricultural Workshop	52	94.55%	3	5.45%
Fashion Designing	22	40.00%	33	60.00%
Food Processing	38	69.09%	17	30.91%
Jordoshi (Embroidery)	48	87.27%	7	12.73%
Making paper cups and lamps	41	74.55%	14	25.45%
Young girl workshop	21	38.18%	34	61.82%
Entrepreneur program	48	87.27%	7	12.73%
Financial Literacy	46	83.64%	9	16.36%

Table 2 shows that 94.55% of sample respondents are undergoing Agricultural workshop and 87.27% of them are undergoing the training program related to Jordoshi (Embroidery) and Entrepreneur program. 83.64% of the respondent are been trained towards managing the finance through financial literacy program.

It is evident from Table that 76.36% of sample respondents undergoing Screen painting, 74.55% towards making paper cups and lamps, 70.91% undergoing computer literacy program, 69.09% & 63.64% towards food processing and cotton and leather bags training program. This signifies that the social entrepreneurs are playing major role in building Indian economy.

Table 3: Showing weather the respondents are happy with the training programs they haveunder gone.

OPTIONS	RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	48	87.27%
No	07	12.73%
TOTAL	55	100%

The analysis of Table 3 shows that respondents were satisfied and the training programs provided they are happy that it helped them to acquire work related skills. It helped them to improve their skills and 87.27% of respondents were more benefited and only 12.73% said they were not benefited. By this way the Mann Desi are helping the women to be self-employed.

Table 4: Showing other kinds of facilities you have availed from Mann Deshi Foundation

FACILITIES	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Helps in setting up new business	19	34%
Purchase of operational equipment of your business	13	24%
Helping to get orders for your business	23	42%
TOTAL	55	100

From the analysis of Table 4 it was found that the Mann Desi Foundation helps in getting orders for their business, 42% of respondent say they have made use of it and 24% respondent purchase of operational equipment for their business. 34% of respondent say they help in setting up their new business and they are independently working.

Table 5: Showing monthly income of the respondents

Income (in Rs.)	Before Joining MDU	Percentage (%)	After Joining MDU	Percentage (%)
Less than 1,000	12	21.81%	8	14.54%
2,000 – 3,000	19	34.54%	10	18.18%
3,000 – 4,000	8	14.54%	11	20%
4,000 – 5,000	10	18.18%	18	32.72%
Above 5,000	6	10.90%	8	14.54%
Total	55	100%	55	100%

It is evident from Table 5 that income level of sample respondents has increased after joining MDU. The monthly income of majority of sample respondents was between 4,000/- to 5,000/- after joining MDU, but before joining MDU it was less than 3,000/-. This signifies that the MDU helped the members in increasing their income by taking up productive activities.

Table 6: Showing percentage of income spent on house hold expenses

PARTICULARS	NO OF RESENDENTS	%
Less than 1/4th	12	21.82
Between 1/4th - 1/2nd	34	61.82
More than 1/2th	9	16.36
TOTAL	55	100

Table 6 reveals that 61% of sample respondents spend $\frac{1}{4}^{\text{th}}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of their income towards household expenses, 21% of the respondents spend less than $\frac{1}{4}^{\text{th}}$ and 16.36% of the respondent say that they spend more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of their income towards household expenses.

Table7: Showing opinion of respondents towards increase in decision making ability

DECISION MAKING	YES	%	NO	%
Purchase & sale of fixed asset like landetc.,	24	43.64%	31	56.36%
Purchase & sale of domestic animals	29	52.73%	26	47.27%
Purchase & sale of ornaments	34	61.82%	21	38.18%
Purchase of home appliances	38	69.09%	17	30.91%
Purchase of cloths	39	70.91%	16	29.09%
Construction & improvement of Housing facility	28	50.91%	27	49.09%
Raising of Loan	25	45.45%	30	54.55%
Savings and their investment	24	43.64%	31	56.36%
Education of children	42	76.36%	13	23.64%
Participation in social activities	45	81.82%	10	18.18%
Participation in political activities	27	49.09%	28	50.91%
Performance of Ceremonial functions	32	58.18%	23	41.82%

It is evident from Table 7 that majority of the respondent was considered while making major decision in the family. The majority of sample respondents opined that 81% participate in social activities that help them to empower themselves and 76% of the respondents opined that they take major decision towards education of their children's.

Further, the majority of the respondents have opined that their opinion is taken into consideration in other decisions like purchase & sale of fixed assets like land etc., purchase & sale of domestic animals, purchase & sale of ornaments, purchase of home appliances, & purchase of cloths. These indicate that the members were given much more freedom in taking many important decisions.

Table 8: Time spent in work after the training program

PARTICULARS	NO RECONDENTS	OF %
6 - 8 hours	17	30.91
8 - 12 hours	33	60.00
More than 12 hours	5	9.09
TOTAL	55	100

It is evident from Table 8 that 60% of the respondent spend more than 8 to 12 hours on productive activities after the training program, 30% spend more than 6 to 8 hours, 9% of the respondent spend more than 12 hours.

Table 9: Showing monthly savings of the respondents

Savings level (in Rs.)	Before Joining MDU	Percentage (%)	After Joining MDU	Percentage (%)
Less than 250	11	20.00%	9	16.36%
250 - 400	20	36.36%	15	27.27%
400 – 500	14	25.45%	11	20%
500 – 700	5	9.09%	9	16.36%
Above 700	6	10.90%	8	14.54%
Total	55	100%	55	100%

It is evident from Table 9 that savings of sample respondents have gone up after they became members of MDU as compared to their earlier savings. The number of sample respondents whose monthly savings is less than Rs.250/-. The number of sample respondents whose savings is 500/- to 700/- has increased to 16.36% after joining MDU. This signifies that the savings of the members of the MDU have risen with an increase in their income. This shows that the MDU movement is empowering women.

Table 10: Showing the response of women towards repayment of loan taken

OPTIONS	RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	41	74.54%
No	14	25.46%
TOTAL	55	100%

Table 10 shows that about 74.54% of the respondent say they have taken the loan for setting up their business and personal needs and they are able to repay the loan amount taken as they are able to earn.

Findings

- 40% of sample respondents are in the age group between 30-40 years while 12.73% are less than 20 years.
- 94.55% are undergoing agricultural workshop, 87.27% are undergoing entrepreneur program and Jordoshi, 83.64% under going financial literacy program respectively.
- 87.27% of respondent said that the training program was beneficial.
- Mann Deshi Foundation facilitates the members to set up the new business, purchase operational equipments of your business, and getting the orders for their business.
- Monthly income of majority of sample respondents has gone up after joining MDF.
- Majority of sample respondents opined that their power has increased in taking decisionmaking.

- 60% of the respondent spend more than 8 to 12 hours in their productive activities, through this their economic condition has improved
- Savings of sample respondents have gone up after they became members of MDF.
- 75% of the respondent has taken loan for their family and business and they are able to repay. This shows the risk bearing ability has improvised.

Conclusion

Social entrepreneurs lead grassroots efforts with an innovative idea that drive social change in the lives of rural women. Of late there has been tremendous progress in the social and cultural environment in India. Women are now participating in all productive activities and are at par with men. No doubt, the Social entrepreneurs like Mann Deshi Foundation are working in right direction, but it is necessary to empower more and more women in social, cultural, economic, political and legal matters.

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