

EXTRACTS FROM PH.D. STUDY ON “SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF WOMEN MICRO-ENTREPRENEURS IN SEWAR BLOCK OF BHARATPUR DISTRICT, RAJASTHAN” : Kiron Wadhera

The study focusses on socio-economically disadvantaged women in villages of Bharatpur district, who have ventured and set up a micro-enterprise, in an effort to alleviate their family's poverty.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify whether the need for achievement was present in the profiles of the women micro-entrepreneurs;
- To analyze the relationship between the presence of the need for achievement, and their ability to sustain their micro-enterprise over a period of time (5 years); and
- To study the relationship between the absence of the need for achievement and their inability to maintain their micro-enterprises.
- Role of family support and social effect and impact of the enterprise on their empowerment, social confidence, family decision-making and status in the community.

Research Methodology

The sample has been drawn from a total of 786 women micro-entrepreneurs in the area. Only 29 percent of them have reported success in their first activity. The sample for the study consists of 93 women from successful category (Category A) and 90 women from unsuccessful category (Category B) totaling 183. In addition, their husbands or other male members (183) and 4 NGO workers were interviewed (Total sample – 370).

The primary data for the study have been collected using structured interview schedules for (a) rural women micro-entrepreneurs respondents; (b) the husbands or any other male family member; (c) an observation checklist of respondents' houses; (d) The Thematic Apperception Test (administered to 45 respondents); (e) the scoring manual for achievement-motivation; (f) interview-guide for qualitative information from 45 TAT respondents; and (g) discussion guide used with NGO workers. The data was processed through the SPSS computer software package.

Findings

Most respondents are below 40 years of age, 69 percent leading a married life, 66 percent have 3 to 5 children, and three-fourth of the rural women entrepreneurs are illiterate. Most are Hindus, and 78 percent belong to socially deprived castes. Majority were married below 17 years of age, and 46 percent live in nuclear families.

More than two-thirds of the women report their husband's income to be less than Rs.2500/- a month, and over two-thirds report their family income as going up to Rs. 4000 a month, on account of her enterprise.

Women have spent their income from their enterprise on (1) converting a mud house into a brick house; (2) buying a bicycle; (3) purchasing cattle; and (4) purchasing utensils, after spending on better food and children's school education.

There is a significant change in the movement of the women outside of the four walls of their homes; and the way the men now accept women's ability to do things independently. An increase in women's confidence, whether their enterprise was successful or not, enhanced status, and empowerment through role in decision making, is reported by a majority of them. It is seen that 58 percent of the 183 women clearly display the need for achievement in their profile.

Of those who are successful in their very first enterprise, 91 percent display the need for achievement in their profile. Of those who failed in sustaining their micro-enterprise, 89 percent do not display any need for achievement in their profile.

In addition, while a large majority of those who chose production activities, (69 percent) display no need for achievement in their profiles, a majority of the successful women entrepreneurs usually have opted for trading and selling, rather than production as the micro-entrepreneurial activity.

The findings of the present study of rural women entrepreneurs broadly corroborate with the findings of studies on urban male entrepreneurs (McClelland, 1961; McClelland and Winter, 1969). The need for achievement in the motivation profile of the entrepreneurs appears to make the difference between their success in sustaining their enterprise for 5 years, and failure in doing so.

Family support, specially from husbands, is an important factor in her attempt to be an entrepreneur.

Common characteristics of successful micro-entrepreneurs that emerge from the findings are: Ability to take a calculated risk, to assess on the feasibility of a micro-enterprise, to choose an enterprise which best matches their background and skills, to utilize the experience of a successful activity to start a new one or expand the existing one, and to compete in the open market.

Suggestions

In the light of the study findings, a few suggestions may be offered:

- For a holistic social development and women's empowerment, female micro-entrepreneurship may be made an integral part of the development approach.
- Self-employment and entrepreneurship among women may be encouraged, particularly in rural areas, and its probability of success may be enhanced through micro-entrepreneurial training, and achievement-motivation training.
- Women, who have the need for achievement in their profile, may be given a concerted attention, and be provided training, material and financial support.
- Policy-makers may provide guidelines for setting up micro-enterprises, particularly in rural areas.

Thus, the present study underlines a viable and sustainable approach to bring about poverty-reduction in the rural areas of low-income states.

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