

Rural Women Entrepreneurship- A Boom to the Economic Development

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Abstract-- Women entrepreneurship is one of the catalysts that brings a wide range of applications as well as solutions to the economic development of the country. This dimension has a high impact as it plays a crucial role in enhancing not simply a lady alone but for the complete transformation of a society. The attitude and perceptions of rural women towards entrepreneurship and the availability of certain favorable factors such as support system, availability of financing, entrepreneurship training, adoption of new technologies, technology transfer avenues, marketing avenues etc. are other probable factors that can influence rural women in becoming an entrepreneur. The proposed study is a holistic approach to explore into the problems and prospects of rural women entrepreneurs. A clear picture of entrepreneurial activities in rural areas is drawn, which may work as road map of entrepreneurial development in rural areas and can help estimate how far have we come and how much is to be done in order to make rural women self-reliant by entrepreneurship.

Keywords-- Women entrepreneurship, rural women entrepreneurs, complete transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

“Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation: when women are empowered, society with stability is assured” - APJ Abdul Kalam

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in combating unemployment and alleviation of poverty especially in rural regions. Entrepreneurship development is a very vital factor for the acceleration of economic growth of any country and for women empowerment in its true spirits. Recent studies point out that women have started showing more interest in becoming entrepreneurs because it provides them an opportunity to be one's own boss. Moreover, the technological development empowers women to acquire more relevant qualifications and values to meet the demands of entrepreneurship. A country, which is rich in entrepreneurship, can attain economic augmentation. The entrepreneurs organize the economic ventures for producing goods and services at lower cost with objects of maximization of new employment and setting up new business (Nazar 2005). Women as entrepreneurs have become an important part of national development planning and strategies.

The entrepreneurship shows the path to women independence and in turn satisfies the needs and aspirations for better living standard (Thuladhar, 1996).

The importance and contribution of the micro, small and medium enterprises sector to the economic growth and prosperity especially in rural areas is well established. Their role in terms of employment generation, upholding entrepreneurial spirit and innovation has been crucial in fostering competitiveness in the economy. It can lead the state economy by acquiring exports through quality production techniques and products. MSME is fast emerging into a major income generating and employment providing sector in southern part of India as well as India in general. The major advantage of the sector is its employment potential with less investment. As per present statistics, MSME sector is employing nearly 45% of India's total work force (Economic Review, 2011).

The number of workers in the urban areas is 92.28 million of which only 16.10 million are females as per Census 2001. In rural areas, out of 310 million workers, 111 million are females. Women work longer hours than men, and carry the major share of household and community work that is unpaid and invisible. According to the pilot survey conducted in 18,620 household spread over six selected States, namely, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya states that women spent about 2.1 hours per day on cooking food and about 1.1 hours on cleaning the household and utensils. Men's participation in these activities was nominal. Taking care of children was one of the major responsibilities of women, as they spent about 3.16 hours per week on these activities as compared to only 0.32 hours by males. According to the Third All India Census of Small-Scale Industries conducted in 2001-02 and subsequent estimates made, only 10.11% of the Micro and Small Enterprises in India are owned by women while 9.46% of the MSE enterprises are managed by women (Economic Review, 2011).

The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as “an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women”.

In order to encourage more and more women enterprises in the MSE sector, several schemes have been implemented by government targeted for the development of women enterprises in India. Education is one important factor which influences the lifestyle and living conditions of any human being. The education level of rural women is a factor in moulding them as aspiring entrepreneurs. The attitude and perceptions of rural women towards entrepreneurship and the availability of certain favorable factors such as support system, availability of financing, entrepreneurship training, adoption of new technologies, technology transfer avenues, marketing avenues etc. are other probable factors that can influence rural women in becoming an entrepreneur.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Even though the position of women in the southern part of India has improved dramatically according to “conventional” indicators such as health status, literacy, education, and life expectancy, and is even comparable to that of advanced countries, there has been no corresponding improvement in their social and economic status. This is most evident in their abysmally low and declining work participation rate (15.3 percent in 2001). The declining work participation rate of women, it is often argued, is reflexive of an improvement in the economic position of the family as a whole, because of which women drop out of the work force. But this is precisely what constitutes proof of the fact that their economic status has not improved. A contributory factor towards this has been the absence of job opportunities of the sort that educated women would prefer. The Eleventh Plan has focused on to bring about a considerable increase in the number of skill-imparting institutions. The Kudumbashree experiment involving poor women organized in self-help groups has not only been a remarkable success, but has also brought to the fore the enormous managerial and entrepreneurial talent that remained untapped. A similar experiment in bringing together educated women, currently engaged in the household chores, into neighborhood groups for producing a number of services, offers a potential source of gainful employment for them (Economic Review, 2011).

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Women and girls constitute three-fifths of the world's poor. Their poverty level is worse than that of men as clear gender disparities in education, employment opportunities and decision-making power exist. A large number of women are mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture as well as in micro and small-scale enterprises (MSE).

In most of the developing countries, particularly in Africa, women constitute 70-80 per cent of the total agricultural labour force and they account for over 80 per cent of food production. It is not surprising therefore to find many women engaged in food processing, weaving, personal services, beverage preparation, and selling of snack foods. In the MSE sector worldwide, women make up one-quarter to one-third of the total business population and in manufacturing they constitute one-third of the global labour force. In addition to their economic and income-generating activities, women assume multi-faceted roles in society, i.e., as breadwinner of a family, service providers in the communities and mother/care-taker of the family (Report of UNIDO on ‘a path out of poverty’ 2003).

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, came into existence as a separate Ministry with effect from 30th January, 2006. As per 2001 census 71.4 % of the Country's population constitute women and children. Empowered women are living with dignity and contributing as equal partners in development in an environment free from violence and discrimination. Promoting social and economic empowerment of women through cross-cutting policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about their rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support for enabling them is necessary to realize their human rights and development to their full potential (report on National policy for the empowerment of women, 2001).

It is widely acknowledged that women in southern part of India are far better than their counterpart's elsewhere in India and the conventional indicators such as female literacy, education etc. are included for substantiating the fact. In recent times, these ‘conventional Indicators’ are under the scanner due to various other indicators like decreasing sex ratio among 0-6 age group, work participation rate lower than the national level ratio, increasing violence against women and low political participation. There is increasing feminization of the work force in southern part of India and it is a serious matter of concern. There are fewer women in the paid workforce than men. Women's work is undervalued or unrecognized. Women work longer hours than men, and carry the major share of household and community work, which is unpaid and invisible. Multi-tasking by women needs to be recognized and acknowledged (economic review, 2011).

The major objectives of the study are as given below.

1. To identify the socioeconomic and demographic conditions of rural women entrepreneurs in southern part of India.
2. To study the attitude and perceptions of rural women towards entrepreneurship.

3. To determine the challenges that rural women entrepreneurs face in managing their businesses in southern part of India.
4. To determine the needs of rural women entrepreneurs with regard to support system, training and development.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a way of systematically solving the research problem. Sampling population in the study is rural women in southern part of India and the MSME enterprises owned and operated by women in southern part of India.

The sampling method used in this study is simple random sampling. A simple random sample is a sample selected from a population in such a way that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected and the selection of any individual does not influence the selection of any other. The selection purely depends on chance. So, the personal bias of the investigator will not be present in the sample selected. By adopting systematic random sampling in three zones of southern part of India.

The sampling unit selected for the study is rural women entrepreneurs from regions of southern part of India.

The sample size is proposed to include total sample of 900 rural women entrepreneurs, from each three Zones of the southern part of India, each zone consist of different districts,

Three zones in the southern part of India i.e.,

- Northern region
- Central region
- Southern region

Each zone comprises of 150 samples of rural women entrepreneurs from the southern part of India. For the analysis of attitude and perception of rural women towards entrepreneurship 100 samples were selected from all zones of southern part of India as the case may be. The study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The study explores in areas of attitude and perceptions of rural women towards entrepreneurship and the availability of certain favorable factors such as support system,

availability of financing, entrepreneurship training, adoption of new technologies, technology transfer avenues, marketing avenues etc. that influence rural women in becoming an entrepreneur.

V. TYPES AND SOURCE OF DATA USED FOR THE STUDY

The study will use both primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through structured questionnaire and interview schedule from the rural women entrepreneurs from informal and formal sector in the southern part of India. The secondary data will be collected through journals, reports of government organizations, published works, text books, web site and other sources.

VI. TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

In order to extract meaningful information from data collected, the data is analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Some of the statistical tests that can be used for analyzing are: Chi-square Test, Parametric and non-parametric tests, Factor Analysis, ANOVA, Correlation and Regression Analysis.

VII. VARIABLE IDENTIFICATION

A qualitative questionnaire was administered to select rural women entrepreneurs to understand the dependent variables that influence rural entrepreneurship. The identified variables were drafted in to a pilot questionnaire and are being administered to a small group of rural women entrepreneurs.

Association between Demographic Variables and business outcome of rural women entrepreneurs

The research attempted to investigate whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the demographic variables like age, education, marital status and religion. and the business outcome of rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India using chi-square technique. The null hypotheses that there is no association between the demographic variables and business outcome of rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India are tested. The strength of the relationship is assessed using Cramer's V and the results are given in table below,

Relationship between Demographic variables and business outcome

Variable	Group	Business Outcome		Total	χ^2	Phi/ Cramer's V
		Profit	Loss			
Age	Below 20 years	1 (0.10)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.10)	1.081	0.034
	21 to 30 years	300 (34.40)	80 (39.50)	89 (34.80)		
	31 to 40 years	321 (36.80)	29 (35.80)	350 (36.70)		
	Above 40 years	250 (28.70)	20 (24.70)	270 (28.30)		
	Total	872	81	953		
Education	Illiterate	45 (5.20)	5 (6.20)	50 (5.20)	2.698	0.053
	Matriculate	46 (5.30)	4 (4.90)	50 (5.20)		
	Diploma	344 (39.40)	25 (30.90)	369 (38.70)		
	Graduate	373 (42.80)	39 (48.40)	412 (43.20)		
	Post Graduate	56 (6.40)	7 (8.60)	63 (6.60)		
	Doctorate	8 (0.90)	1 (1.20)	9 (0.90)		
	Total	872	81	953		

Marital Status	Single	153 (17.50)	15 (18.50)	168 (17.60)	15.195*	0.126
	Married	558 (64.00)	40 (49.40)	598 (62.70)		
	Divorced	69 (7.90)	6 (7.40)	75 (7.90)		
	Widowed	92 (10.60)	20 (24.70)	3 (11.80)		
	Total	872	81	953		
Religion	Hindu	482 (55.30)	45 (55.60)	527 (55.30)	7.372	0.088
	Muslim	168 (19.30)	142 (29.60)	169 (20.10)		
	Christians	222 (25.50)	12 (14.80)	234 (24.60)		
	Total	872	81	953		

Source : Primary Data

Note : Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

** Significant at five percent level*

The table displays the Pearson Chi-square result which indicates that marital status groups are significantly different for the business outcome. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no association between demographic variables viz., marital status and business outcome (profit/loss) is rejected.

Association between socio-economic Variables and business outcome of rural women entrepreneurs

The research attempted to investigate whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the socio-

economic variables like type of family, head of household, occupation before business, monthly income and the business outcome of rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India using chi-square technique. The null hypotheses that there is no association between the socio-economic variables and business outcome of rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India are tested. The strength of the relationship is assessed using Cramer's V and the results are given in table

Relationship between Socio-economic variables and Business Outcome

Variable	Group	Business Outcome		Total	χ^2	Phi/ Cramer's V
		Profit	Loss			
Type of family	Nuclear	325 (37.30)	30 (37.00)	355 (37.30)	1.402	0.038
	Joint	315 (36.10)	25 (30.90)	340 (35.70)		
	Extended	232 (26.60)	26 (32.10)	258 (27.10)		
	Total	872	81	953		
Head of household	Father-in-law	248 (28.40)	20 (24.70)	268 (28.10)	9.588*	0.100
	Husband	323 (37.00)	27 (33.30)	350 (36.70)		
	Self	200 (22.90)	15 (18.50)	215 (22.60)		
	Others	101 (11.60)	19 (23.50)	120 (12.60)		
	Total	872	81	953		
Occupation before business	Housewife	344 (39.40)	20 (24.70)	364 (38.20)	20.173*	0.145
	Salaried Employee	296 (33.90)	31 (38.30)	327 (34.30)		
	Daily-wage employee	139 (15.90)	9 (11.10)	148 (15.50)		

	Others	93 (10.70)	21 (25.90)	114 (12.00)		
	Total	872	81	953		
Monthly Income before business	Up to Rs.1,500	110 (12.60)	18 (22.20)	128 (13.40)	33.393*	0.187
	Rs.1,501 to Rs.3,000	355 (40.70)	23 (28.40)	378 (39.70)		
	Rs.3,001 to Rs.5,000	272 (31.20)	13 (16.00)	285 (29.90)		
	Rs.5001 to Rs.10,000	128 (14.70)	23 (28.40)	151 (15.80)		
	Above Rs.10,000	7 (0.80)	4 (4.90)	11 (1.20)		
	Total	872	81	953		

Source : Primary Data

Note : Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

** Significant at five percent level*

The table displays the Pearson Chi-square result which indicates that the socio-economic variables viz. head of household, occupation, monthly income groups are significantly different for the business outcome. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no association between socio economic variables viz., head of household, occupation, monthly income and business outcome (profit/loss) is rejected.

Problems and Challenges in Business of Rural Women Entrepreneurs

The problems and challenges in business are classified under eight categories viz. cash flow, inadequate capital, lack of time, product quality issues, employee related issues, lack of managerial/sales skill, lack of managerial experience, family issues and these factors are ranked by the rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India. The ranking is analysed using Garret Ranking Method and the results tabulated in Table.

Problems and Challenges in Business of Rural Women Entrepreneurs

Sl. No.	Factors	Garret sum of scores	Average Score	Rank
1	Cash Flow	28683	30	VII I
2	Inadequate Capital	41880	44	IV
3	Lack of Time	36735	39	VI
4	Product Quality Issues	36075	37	VII
5	Employee Related Issues	38899	41	V
6	Lack of Marketing/Sales Skills	40788	49	III
7	Lack of Managerial Experience	50201	54	II
8	Family Issues	54759	57	I

Source: Primary Data

The scores provided by the rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India are summed using the Garret method and the average scores for each factor obtained. The average scores are converted into rank and it is evident from the Table that ‘family issues’ (Rank I) was a major problem/challenge in business with the average score of 57 followed by lack of managerial experience (Rank II) with the average score of 54. Lack of marketing/sales skill is the third factor (Rank III) which had an average score of 49. The analysis infers that family issues are the major business challenge for rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India followed by lack of managerial experience.

Problems and Challenges Faced by Rural Women Entrepreneurs in the southern part of India

The problems and challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India are many and

those challenges are more target category specific and revolve around business nature. It also depends on the local economy, competitive products, financial access, human resources, employment scenario etc. In order to understand the challenges, a 26-item scale tool was developed and administered among the rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India. The variables were measured on a five-point Likert scales with options from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scores assigned to these scales were 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The study attempted to compare the business challenges against the business outcome (profit/loss) using t test. The mean scores for different business problems and challenges variable according to the business outcome viz. profit and loss are tabulated in Table.

Problems and Challenges in Business of Rural Women Entrepreneurs

Sl.No.	Variables	Business		't' statistics
		Profit	Loss	
1.	Inability to present credible business plan for loans	2.84	2.81	0.340
2.	High rate of interest on bank loans	3.50	3.40	0.840
3.	Increasing labour cost	4.26	4.15	0.732
4.	Lack of adequate financial resource for future investment	3.55	3.38	1.575
5.	Lack of Capital for initial investment	3.74	3.79	-0.657
6.	Lack of working capital for day-to-day activities	4.14	4.28	-1.362
7.	Constant need of finance	3.87	3.72	1.655
8.	Lack of credit facility	3.81	3.96	-1.651
9.	Lack of management skills	4.55	4.75	-2.651*
10.	Lack of training for starting and running the enterprise	4.15	3.91	2.307*
11.	Lack of skilled employees	4.00	3.99	0.145
12.	Time pressure due to work and family issues	3.90	4.19	-2.466
13.	Lack of education	3.93	3.79	1.080
14.	Low risk-bearing capacity	4.18	4.04	1.065
15.	Stiff completion in marketing the products	4.18	4.43	-1.974
16.	Scarcity of raw materials for production	3.81	3.56	2.555*
17.	Long Distance travel to market products/services	4.04	4.06	-0.183
18.	Inadequate knowledge of taxi/commercial polices	4.33	4.16	1.590
19.	Lack of business support from government bodies	3.86	3.89	-0.307
20.	Bureaucracies and red tapes have negative influence on development of business	4.38	4.33	0.315
21.	Lack of Government incentives	4.64	4.65	-0.234
22.	Lack of new technologies	3.97	4.22	-2.143*
23.	Inadequate basic infrastructure	3.71	3.60	1.048

24.	No access to internet services to use for marketing services	4.28	4.23	0.305
25.	Lack of suitable business location	3.79	4.06	-2.429*
26.	Lack of awareness of Government Schemes	4.07	4.15	-0.531

The Table reveals the variables that are contributing to the business problems and challenges of rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India. The significant difference among the various business outcome (profit/loss) are identified with the help of 't' test. It can be seen from the table that lack of managerial skills, lack of training for starting and running the enterprise, scarcity of raw materials for production, lack of new technologies and lack of suitable business location are significant at 5 percent level.

Factor loading for the variables in business challenges

The business challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India are narrated with the help of factor analysis. The scores on various variables are considered for testing. The analysis reveals six factors categorised in factor analysis contribute to the business challenges/problems of rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India. The factors are financial, personnel, operational, governmental, infrastructural and others. The resulted factors, the eigen values, percent of variation, the variables contributing to the factor and the reliability coefficient are presented in Table.

Important Factors on Problems/Challenges of Rural Women Entrepreneurs in the southern part of India

Factors (Eigen Values)	Variables	Factor Loading	Reliability coefficient	Percent of variation
Financial (12.594)	Inability to present credible business plan for loans	0.647	0.845	29.946
	High rate of interest on bank loans	0.646		
	Increasing labour cost	0.645		
	Lack of adequate financial resource for future investment	0.597		
	Lack of Capital for initial investment	0.565		
	Lack of working capital for day-to-day activities	0.564		
	Constant need of finance			
	Lack of credit facility			
Personnel (3.314)	Lack of management skills	0.676	0.612	19.983
	Lack of training for starting and running the enterprise	-0.442		
	Lack of skilled employees	-0.441		
	Time pressure due to work and family issues	0.417		

	Lack of education	-0.391		
	Low risk-bearing capacity			
Operational (3.020)	Stiff completion in marketing the products	0.696	0.735	13.837
	Scarcity of raw materials for production	0.532		
	Long Distance travel to market products/services	0.531		
	Inadequate knowledge of taxi/commercial polices	-4.080		
Governmental (1.314)	Lack of business support from government bodies	0.745	0.710	8.102
	Bureaucracies and red tapes have negative influence on development of business	0.581		
	Lack of Government incentives	0.465		
Infrastructural (1.152)	Lack of new technologies	0.526	0.648	7.621
	Inadequate basic infrastructure	-0.520		
	No access to internet services to use for marketing services			
Others (1.002)	Lack of suitable business location	0.479	0.612	6.650
	Lack of awareness of Government Schemes	0.404		
			Total	86.139
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				0.830
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Approx. Chi-Square		42391.609
		df		325
		Sig.		0.000

The narrated six factors explain the business challenges of rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India to the extent of 86.139 percent. The most important factor was 'financial' which consist of eight variables with a reliability coefficient of 0.845, eigen value of 12.594 and explains 29.946 percent of variation. The second important factor was 'personnel' which consists of six variables with a reliability coefficient of 0.612, eigen value of 3.314 and explains 19.983 percent of variation.

The third factor 'operational' which consists of four variables has a reliability coefficient of 0.735, eigen value of 3.020 and explains 13.837 percent of variation.

The fourth factor 'governmental' which consists of three variables has a reliability coefficient of 0.710, eigen value of 1.314 and explains 8.102 percent of variation. The fifth factor 'Infrastructure' which consists of three variables has a reliability coefficient of 0.648, eigen value of 1.152 and explains 7.621 percent of variation.

The sixth factor 'others' which consists of two variables has a reliability coefficient of 0.612, eigen value of 1.002 and explains 6.650 percent of variation. The KMO Measure of sampling adequacy was 0.830 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant.

Association between the business variables and Problems/Challenges faced by Rural Women Entrepreneurs in the southern part of India

Since the business variables has a direct impact on the problems and challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India, the research attempted to analyse the business variables and the problems/challenges.

The included business variables are type of business, ownership, business initiation, years of experience, family history in business, no. of employees, women employees in enterprise and time spent in business. The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between the business variables and the problems/challenges faced by the rural women entrepreneurs are attempted to understand the relationship. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference among the groups of business variables in relation to the problems/challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India is tested and results tabulated in Table.

Association between business variables and problems/Challenges of rural women entrepreneurs

Sl. No.	Business Variables	F-Statistics					
		Financial	Personnel	Operational	Governmental	Infrastructural	Others
1.	Type of Business	.496 ⁰	0.146	.992 ⁰	0.616	0.248	0.613
2.	Ownership	.189 ¹	0.768	.257 ⁰	0.211	5.163*	0.745
3.	Business Initiation	.258 ⁰	0.222	.256 ⁰	0.085	1.818	0.998
4.	Years of Experience	.797 ⁰	4.622*	.973 ¹	3.128*	2.675*	0.967
5.	Family History	.511 ⁰	0.126	.005 ²	0.263	0.886	2.389
6.	No. of employees	.340 ⁰	0.832	.020 ¹	0.459	0.219	0.228
7.	Women employees	.246 ⁰	0.139	.976 ⁰	0.519	2.653*	.709 ¹
8.	Time spent	.299 ⁰	1.447	.365 ¹	0.028	0.039	.888 ¹

* Significant at 5 percent level.

The Table shows that there is a statistically significant difference found among the two levels of business ownership on the factor 'Infrastructural Challenges', $F(1, 951) = 5.163$, $p = 0.023$. Based on the p values, the 'business ownership' variable is significant for the factor 'infrastructural' and hence the null hypothesis is rejected for this business problem/challenges component. Also, a statistically significant difference is found among the five levels of business experience on the factor 'personnel challenge', $F(3, 949) = 4.622$, $p = 0.003$; 'governmental issues', $F(3, 949) = 3.128$, $p = 0.025$ and 'infrastructural issues' $F(3, 949) = 2.675$, $p = 0.046$. Based on the p values, the 'business experience' variable is significant for the factors, viz. personnel, governmental and infrastructural issues and hence the null hypothesis is rejected for this business problem/challenges component.

A statistically significant difference is found among the five levels of women employees on the factor 'infrastructural challenge', $F(4, 948) = 2.653$, $p = 0.032$. Based on the p values, the 'women employees' variable is significant for the factor, viz. infrastructural issues and hence the null hypothesis is rejected for this business problem/challenges component.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the above findings, following suggestions are made which will help in bringing in more rural women entrepreneurs in the southern part of India to the state economy.

- Since, the post income levels of rural women entrepreneurs have increased, it is suggested that steps may be taken to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem so that many rural women can take up entrepreneurship which will directly contribute to the economy.
- Majority of the rural women engage in manufacturing activity and hence adequate support like marketing, finance and human resource can be provided which will help rural women entrepreneurs to take their product to areas where there is higher demand. It will also get them better price and thereby improve their profits.
- As majority of the rural women entrepreneurs are first generation entrepreneurs and have proven to be successful, more facilities and support may be provided through government scheme for aspiring entrepreneurs who will in turn generate employment. Since the southern part of India has high unemployment rates, entrepreneurial development should be the core agenda of development.

- Many of the rural women entrepreneurs employ less than 10 people which limit them in scaling up the operations. Adequate support and awareness with respect to funding, company setup, laws and statutory regulations can be created which will help them to aspire to achieve more.
- Since the women entrepreneurs employ more women, support schemes which focus exclusively on women development will help them navigate through the business and generate profits.
- About 90 percent of the rural women enterprises run on profit. Hence, they are able to run these enterprises successfully by optimal utilization of resources. Thus, the ecosystem for women-based enterprises may be encouraged.
- The major portions of the profits are ploughed back to the enterprise and is a healthy sign of business skill where the rural women entrepreneurs aspire to achieve scale in their business model.
- Many women have family issues followed by lack of managerial experience. Since Indian women need to balance their time between family and business, these issues can be tackled by providing pooled services based on their requirement. However, the entrepreneurs are spread across rural clusters that strategy will have minimal effect. Adequate training on work-life balance will be helpful. Lack of managerial experience can be taken care by providing training. Thus, training plays a critical role in solving the problems and challenges of rural women entrepreneurs.
- Financial problems are a major challenge for rural women entrepreneurs. The Government schemes and the credit linked schemes will help them to mitigate the issue to a certain extent. However detailed analysis on the financial issues of rural women entrepreneurs will help in developing solution-based schemes for them.
- Many rural women entrepreneurs acquire business skills through informal methods. Hence adequate training facilities should be developed to train these entrepreneurs in business skills and bring them in to the formal organized ecosystem.
- Majority of the rural women entrepreneurs have not undergone any entrepreneurial training. Adequate training facility or utilization of existing facility at affordable cost will help in these entrepreneurs availing those facilities.



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