



## A STUDY ON EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF BANGALORE

Hema.Srinivasan\* Dr. Padma.Srinivasan\*\*

\*Research Scholar, Jain University, Bangalore.

\*\*Associate Professor, Christ University, Bangalore.

### **Abstract**

Indian women have been assuming the role of a homemaker taking care of their children do their household activities and also manage small and micro enterprises within a limited geographical reach. Women, being the weaker lot among humans are allowed to participate in business space. Owing to the globalization and pragmatic changes in the business environment, today's women have realized the need to step out of their homes and economically empower themselves. They feel the urge to empower themselves economically and contribute towards societal development. This has directly initiated in empowering women have started coming forward to start their own small and medium size business in the developing countries. Poverty and lack of education are major barriers in not allowing women to take active part in entrepreneurial activities. In this regard, the role of Micro finance Institutions in empowering women financially is commendable. The present study is an attempt in assessing the role of women as an Entrepreneur, by focusing on variables such as financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills and their ability to sustain in their business.

**Key Words: Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs, Microfinance Innovations.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Employment in general and self-employment in particular, is intimately connected with women's empowerment. Self-employment in the context of Minority women plays a significant role in connecting them with work world and domestic world. It helps them to earn fairly reasonable amounts without affecting their domestic responsibilities. The key area in the empowerment of women is the economic area. Women's active participation in economic activities leads to their economic development. Emergence of women entrepreneurs in the economic independence and their improved social status throughout the world has added to the women's participation in economic activities. In India too, women are participating in larger numbers in almost all the spheres of economic activity. From village to city,(according to) a large number of women workers and entrepreneurs are contributing towards the national income of the country . Now it has been accepted that the women's movement is for the welfare of women, thus contributing in the national development. Islamic Women are treated as equal to men in spiritual as well as some other aspects of life though the area of responsibility is different. In this context, Microfinance has been playing an important role in empowering women. Microfinance Institutions have been helping women to strengthen their financial base and economic contribution to their families. In this regard, the contributions made by Grameena Koota Financial Services Private Ltd in Bangalore cannot go unnoticed. This microfinance institution was set up in 1999 with the idea of granting timely and affordable credit to women. Amongst their various services, the noteworthy aspect is about empowering women through entrepreneurship programs.

Grameen Koota Financial Services Private Ltd. (GFSPL) in Bangalore offers a multitude of both financial and nonfinancial services for women participates. Snapshot of their financial services include Micro credit loans for small and medium enterprises, MSME loans, Loans for agriculture, education, household needs, and personal consumption. Non-financial services consists of Enterprise skill development; business development services, financial literacy promotion, basic health education, medical services and providing emergency need based services to its members.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. 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". Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to



push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stand on their own feet. A sense towards independent decision making about their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. There are number of factors which motivate the women entrepreneurs to choose this career option, but among all higher education, income and family support may play an important role. A woman in society plays variety of important role to discharge her duties and responsibilities properly. Research shows that the most important role played by the women in society is to discharge her domestic duties and responsibilities properly. Further, it has been observed that the most important role played by the women in society is to be a homemaker and also to be economically independent.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the various entrepreneurial abilities of women.
2. To investigate the impact of Micro financial institutions on the empowering of women.
3. To study the sustainability factors of business of women entrepreneurs.
4. To study the extent to which Islamic women have contributed towards the growth of their business.

Need for the present study: Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or Group to make choices and transform their choices into desired actions and outcomes. The processes are actions which improve the efficiency and fairness of the organization. Kabeer (1999) stated that women's empowerment is about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability. It is important to understand as a process and not an instrumental form of advocacy it requires measurement and degree of magnitude.

Empowerment is a positive state of thing to acquire. Basically it's about the power, helping, achieving, and succeeding. The concept of the power revolves around the idea of power."Knowledge is power, but power is also knowledge". The powers can change the empowerment towards the better. Secondly, it depends upon the notion that power can proliferate. Power is often related to our ability to make others do what we want regardless of their own wishes or interests.(Weber, in 1946) stated traditional social science emphasizes power as influence and control, often treating power as a commodity or structure divorced from human action( Lips, 1991) conceived in this way power can be viewed as unchanging or unchangeable. Weber (1946) gives us a key word beyond this limitation by recognizing that power exist in isolation, it is created in relationships, power and power relationships can change. Rapport (1984) has noted that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence but difficult to define in action as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts. According to Bailey (1992) how we precisely define empowerment within our projects and programs will depend upon the specific people and context involved.

It is also assumed that support for female entrepreneurs will increase women's employment more generally and leads to tapping an underutilized resource for economic development. These mutually reinforcing spirals of empowerment are assumed to result from access to micro finance without explicit strategies to address other dimensions of poverty or gender subordination.

Broadly there may be two ways for bringing about gender equality and women empowerment—a) through inducting women in the mainstream of development and assuring their access to productive assets and (b) through legislation for ensuring them equal social and political status and assuring their participation in political decision making and thus providing them a platform for venting their grievances, integrating their issues into the mainstream of the decision making process and fighting for the cause of female community in general and of the poor and oppressed women in the society in particular. However is both strategies providing education is the crucial link which holds the key.

The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. Development warrants the eradication of the feeling of



dominance and dependence of whosoever is associated with inferior economic status. Professor Amartya Sen taking a much wider view of development talks of development as the process of expansion of entitlement—that is, giving life sustenance and self esteem- and capabilities: giving freedom. (Sen, A. Poverty and Famines): an essay in entitlement and deprivation, 1984). Development improves quality of life through the process of expansion, ensures freedom from hunger, exploitation, discrimination and oppression and also infuses a sense of self belief and provides the strength to stand up against violence.”

Development effectiveness is an act of transformation to end violence, poverty and discrimination” (Noeleen Heyzer ). Economic independence is the basic premise behind empowerment through development. While women’s participation in the development process provides them employment opportunity and the opportunity to get out of the clutches of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy etc, economic independence imbibes confidence and the strength to stand up and think about their future. Employment generating schemes in rural areas providing preferential treatment to poor women workers may prove to be a good move in this direction, but it needs a definite preconceived development strategy and pattern. Growth itself does not guarantee gender equality and women empowerment. The present mode of production based on the market system has no inbuilt system of minimizing gender disparity; rather it thrives on opportunities created by gender relations for power and profit. (Conell, R.W-Gender and power, 1987). Development strategy for oriented education and vocational training. A preconceived development strategy studded with emphasis on employment, education, health, nutrition, sanitation etc, critical elements that contribute to the quality of human life, more so in the rural sector, may prove to be effective in the long run to raise the status of women but in men dominated societies with social and political institutions biased in favour of gender discrimination, may not prove to be effective enough to take them out of the downward gravitational pull. Economic empowerment can be a handy tool in as much as enabling a woman to lead a graceful existence in her family and society but may not prove too potent a weapon in the larger more grim battle against social, political and even economic oppression, which warrants collective strength. In a democratic setup collective strength emanates from political participation.

It requires some legislative compulsions for mending the working of political and social institutions, which if left to them are unlikely to change in favor of women. It thus calls for, essentially, an active participation of women in the decision making process. Empowerment of women through legislation then provides the women with a constitutional platform to stand up to men, to raise their voice on issues concerning women oppression, subjugation and related issues and thus in effect, providing them with an identity in an orthodox male dominated sociopolitical setup, in addition to providing a much needed forum to seek solutions to problems directly affecting them: the true essence of empowerment. In a decentralized federal structure, with growing emphasis on the implementation of various employment and income generating schemes, participation of women in the decision making process at the institutional level becomes imperative if they are to seek any meaningfully significant gains for themselves.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Elizabeth littlefield et.al (2013) has observed that micro finance is one weapon which not only looks into the sustainability factor of women’s business but also takes care of their physical and mental health. According to the Indian Constitution, women are at par with men. Equal job opportunities will help in the productivity of the nation.(Sourav bhattacharjee-2012). Dr. Hiranmayee Mishra(2012) , mentions about the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment of Indian constitution which helps in women to participate in the economic development of the country. Emerlson Moses (2011), mentions about cash in the hands of women helps them to become better decision makers. It is observed that microloans are beneficial to women below the poverty line.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Employment in general and self-employment in particular, is intimately connected with women’s empowerment. Self employment in the context of rural women plays a significant role in connecting them with work world and domestic world. It helps them to earn fairly reasonable amount without affecting their familial and domestic responsibilities. The key area in the empowerment of women is the economic area. Women’s active participation



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in economic activities leads to their economic development. Emergence of women entrepreneurs in the economic independence and their improved social status. Throughout the world the women's participation in economic activities is increasing. In India too, women are participating in larger number in almost all the spheres of economic activity. From village to city, a large number of women workers and entrepreneurs contributing towards the national income of the country can be observed. Now it has been accepted that the women's movement is for the welfare of development and empowerment of women, thus contributing in the national development.

Entrepreneurship is instrumented for economic development. The entrepreneurial spirit is gaining momentum in the wake of economic reforms sweeping the entire world. This spirit is to emerge from human beings on a large scale for the realization of the objectives of economic reforms. The women entrepreneurship seems to have been sidetracked even to this day. However the role of women entrepreneurship is carving its niche. Women entrepreneurship has a tendency to occupy the center stage in the development process in the future and the women folk will be indulging in Endeavour pursuit.

In the wake of employment market saturation, the women are left with entrepreneurial avenues which mainly consist of industrial entrepreneurship. Since, industrial entrepreneurship needs intensive efforts and time involvement; women are left with business entrepreneurship only. The trend of women entrepreneurship is orienting itself towards business, in which services may also be included.

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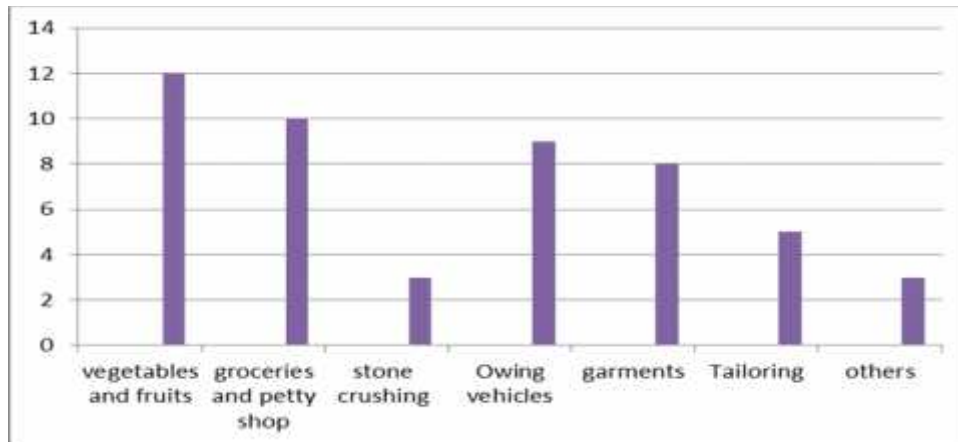
### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted through structured questionnaires. The study examined major aspects concerning the entrepreneurial aspects of empowerment of women entrepreneurs. The data for study was collected from the women who belong to Avalahalli, Bangalore South. The study mainly focuses on the extent of income generation and savings of women in this area who have been financed by Grameen Koota Financial Services private limited. The Data used for this study is based on 50 women samples from South Bangalore District, Karnataka. Samples were taken from women members of Grameena Koota Financial Services Private Limited. Convenient sampling method was followed while capturing the data.

### ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

#### Occupation of the Women

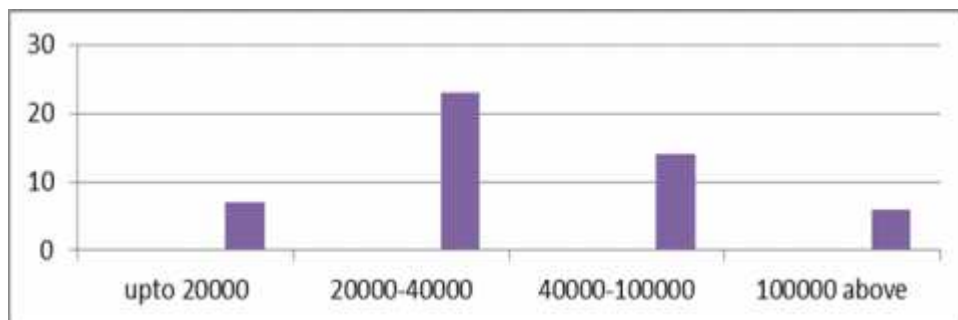
Business Occupations of Women	Numbers	Percentage
vegetables and fruits	12	24
groceries and petty shop	10	20
stone crushing	3	6
Owing vehicles	9	18
Garments selling	8	16
Tailoring	5	10
Others	3	6



**Interpretation:** From the above table, it is interpreted that majority of the women engage in selling vegetables and fruits. 20% of the women own petty shops and grocery shops. The remaining women are engaged in stone crushing, garments selling, tailoring and owning vehicles and giving the vehicles on hire.

#### Income of the Women (Per Annum)

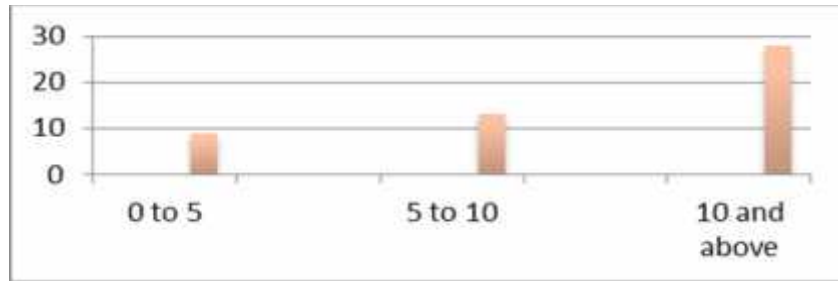
Income per annum	Number of women	percentage
upto 20000	7	14
20000-40000	23	46
40000-100000	14	28
100000 above	6	12



**Interpretation:** The majority of the women earn an income of INR 20000 to 40000 per annum.(46%). 28% of the women earn an income of INR 40000 to 100000 per annum. A few women earn up to INR 20000 per annum and above INR 100000 per annum.

#### Number of Years the Women is Associated with the Microfinance institution

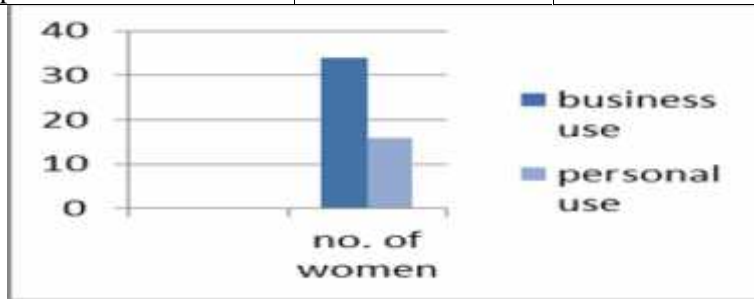
Number of Years as Clients of Microfinance Institutions	Number of clients	percentage
0 to 5	9	18
5 to 10	13	26
10 and above	28	56



**Interpretation:** It is found that 28 women out of 50 women have been associated with the Microfinance institution for more than 10 years. 13 of them are associated for 5 to 10 years and 9 of them have been associated for 5 years and below.

**Purpose for Which the Loans are Taken**

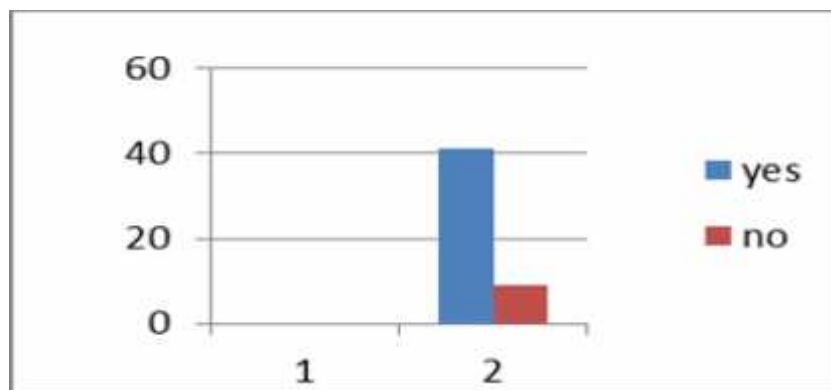
Purpose of loan	No. of Women	Percentage
business use	34	68
personal use	16	32



**Interpretation:** While 68 % of the women use loans for business purpose, 32% of the women use loans for personal use.

**NEED FOR EXPANSION OF THE BUSINESS**

Need to expand the business	Number of women	percentage
Yes	41	82
No	9	18

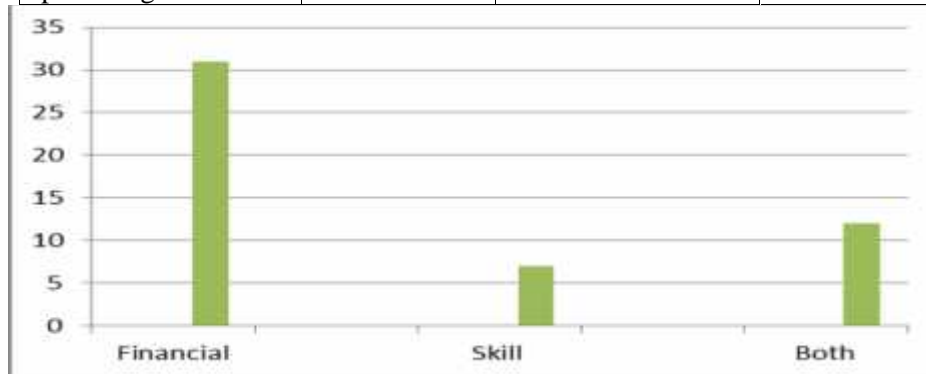




**Interpretation:** A majority of the women (82%), wish to expand the business while a few of the women did not show an inclination to expand their business but were satisfied with the income earned and their business.

### Support Required by Women through Microfinance Innovations

Support	Financial	Skill	Both
Required	support	Development	
No of women	31	7	12
percentage	62	14	24



**Interpretation:** While 62 % of the women felt the need for increased financial support, 14% of the women wished to get training in new skills or improvement in existing skills. 24% of the women wanted both financial support as well as training.

### FINDINGS

1. It has been found that majority of the women entrepreneurs have taken up occupations such as opening of petty shops to sell groceries, retailing of vegetable and fruits, and selling of garments. Some of them have resorted to hiring of vehicles and stone crushing meant for construction purpose.
2. It has been observed that with the due support of Grameen Koota Financial Services Private Limited, Islamic women have started various business in a span of 5 to 15 years. Around 46 percent of the women earn an annual income of INR 20000- 40000 with the help of their business.
3. Microfinance Institutions support these women not only by providing finance but also by rendering non financial services such as training and awareness programmes. This has motivated them to sustain in their business in spite of their various inadequacies.
4. Around 68 percent of the women have ploughed back their earnings into enhancing their business activities. This show cases an urge for further developing their business and also motivating other women to enter into entrepreneurship.
5. Innovations in microfinance products and services are duly accepted by women participants, especially towards enhancing their entrepreneurial skills for meeting competitive business uncertainties.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women entrepreneurship is instrumental for the economic development of a country. The entrepreneurial spirit is gaining momentum in the wake of economic reforms sweeping the country. Women entrepreneurs constitute nearly half of the Global population. The gender gap in India is strong in the areas of Literacy, health and political representation. Low literacy amongst these business women, Lack of social setting to improve the awareness and conditioning of women's minds about being just housewives, Limited knowledge of business opportunities at a small scale basis, Insufficient support from family members and acute problems in day to day living conditions. The problem is particularly serious in India. A survey by Women's Web Women & Entrepreneurship in India 2012 shows a significant rise in female entrepreneurship in the country, but there are a still few challenges that



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they face to achieve success. Women in India have done very well for themselves and the country. Government is taking various steps at all spheres to uplift Indian women in all spheres whether it is education or employment. Women entrepreneurs in all walks of life feel the need to expand their business. This would help them establish their reputation which in turn will raise their confidence. This will happen when the Microfinance institutions bring out new schemes and innovative services which will help these women to get better in their business arena. The implementation of the innovative schemes will help these women to develop in a holistic manner. In this regard, Grameen Koota Financial Services private limited has brought out various innovative products and services for its existing and prospective women entrepreneurs.

Women's contribution in the economic development of our nation is recognized and steps have been taken to foster and promote women entrepreneurship because women occupy approximately 45% of the Indian population. Everyone one of us will agree to the point that a smart and confident women can grab a job anytime, but if she ventures into the field of entrepreneurship then she can give livelihood to minimum 10 or more women. Thus, proper molding of entrepreneurial skills, abilities & traits of women is required to manage the changes in trends and global market challenges. This can be done by spreading awareness and consciousness among women as well as changing their attitude. One needs to remember always that a woman is a better house wife but at the same time she is a successful entrepreneur also. She proved herself in every sphere of life and now she has got her life dreams to fulfill.

By doing so, she will empower and grow within her family and the society. Of course we have come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding.

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