

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF KAMRUP
DISTRICT IN ASSAM

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Abstract

The present study is a humble attempt to know how women entrepreneurs take major household decisions in association with their husbands and parents. Besides, the study explores whether entrepreneurship along with other factors had any impact on women in empowering them. The study reveals that entrepreneurship has been instrumental in enhancing not only their economic status in the society but also their decision making power. Women are becoming more personally and economically empowered and participating freely in the society due to entrepreneurship.

Key Words: Women empowerment, Women entrepreneurship, Gender equality, Women Empowerment Index,

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Introduction

Issues on women empowerment and gender equality have been a part of international development discourse since the 1970s. World Development Report ^[17] highlighted the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality work as both ends in themselves as well as 'smart economics' - a key lever for development impact and poverty reduction. Greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation, and make institutions more representatives.

Empowerment of women is a process of making women politically active, economically productive and independent and is able to take part in intelligent discussion in matters that affect them. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNDFW) includes the following points in its definition of women empowerment:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the way in which these relations may be changed.
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life ^[8].

Women empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resource; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally ^[9]. In other words, empowerment means acquiring self-recognition of one's own capacity and contribution to the family, community and society at large in order to create a positive self-image and build confidence. Empowerment of women begins when she becomes aware of her socio-psycho-cultural and political rights and capable of exercising their power, control over resources, participate in greater proportion and contribute more and more in the decision making processes. These happen when women have increasing access to knowledge and opportunities as per with their capabilities without any discrimination and thus be able to move on their own fearlessly on self-confidence and without any assistance. All these in turn help in developing their status in the family as well as in the society. Empowerment is thus a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept ^[1]. Female empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their

potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment^[18]. In that study, deliberate use of the term “female” empowerment as opposed to women’s empowerment, was used to capture empowerment aspects of girls and adolescents.

The policy of empowering women has its dual effect in reducing gender discrimination as well as accelerating development. Existence of gender discrimination itself is a bottleneck of the process of development. Therefore, the empowerment of women has become a core issue of development. Women empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women Conference in 1985 at Nairobi, which defined it as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women. After that woman empowerment and policies regarding women empowerment were discussed side by side with the policy of development.

There is a bidirectional relationship between economic development and women’s empowerment. It is defined as improving the ability of women to access the constituents of development—in particular health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation. In one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, continuing discrimination against women can, as Sen has forcefully argued, hinder development. Empowerment can, in other words, accelerate development^[2]. Evidence demonstrates that, in economies where gender equality is greater in terms of both opportunities and benefits, there is not only higher economic growth but also a better quality of life.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are fundamental dimensions of human development. Because half of humanity is not enjoying progress in human development, such development is not universal. Flexible working arrangements and enlarged care options, including daycare center, after school programmes, senior citizen homes and long-term care facilities, can help women broaden their choices. Gender equality has been found to promote economic growth, household poverty reduction and human development. But the reverse is not always true. This means that governments need to pay dedicated attention to gender equality and

not rely solely on growth to achieve it ^[19]. The pairing of the two concepts of women's empowerment and gender equality into one Millennium Development Goal implicitly recognizes that gender equality and women's empowerment are two sides of the same coin: progress toward gender equality requires women's empowerment and women's empowerment requires increases in gender equality ^[6].

There are a large number of works relating to entrepreneurship and women empowerment. In this study we have reviewed only few important ones to understand the concepts and to link them. Nayak & Mahanta^[11] in their study observed that access to education and employment are the enabling factors to empowerment, achievement towards the goal, however, depends largely on the attitude of the people towards gender equality. According to Dwibedi & Misra ^[3] women entrepreneurship could be used as an important tool to empower women. Nachimuthu & Gunatharan, ^[9] through their study deduced that entrepreneurship of women enhances their economic status and decision making power. The World Bank^[17] identified empowerment of women as one of the key constituent elements of poverty reduction and as a primary development assistance goal. According to Nagaraja ^[10], employment can also be an important source of empowerment for women, particularly in the formal sector. Employment empowers women by providing financial independence, alternative source of social identity and exposure to power structures. Nayak & Mahanta^[12] using secondary data made an analysis on the status of women and their empowerment in terms of various indicators such as access to education, employment, household decision-making power, financial autonomy, freedom of movement, exposure to media, political participation, experience of domestic violence etc in the state of Assam. Their study revealed that development process in the state is not gender neutral; women enjoyed quite inferior status as compared to the average women in India. Empowerment of women through entrepreneurship development is considered as a tool to women empowerment because through enterprise management women learn to strengthen their qualities which enables their decision making power in every sphere of life. Entrepreneurship improves the level of mobility, decision making power, awareness and capacity building of women which are also considered as some of the important indicators of women empowerment ^[14]. Empowering women and advancing their socio-economic position are fundamental elements for apprehending

the full prospects of economic and social progress of the whole community, and thus sustainable development^[16].

Again, gender equality and development are considered as two sides of a coin. The reverse relationship of gender equality and development are also a matter for policy implication for two reasons. First, gender equality matters in its own right, because the ability to live the life of one's own choice is a basic human right, to be enjoyed by everyone, whether one is male or female. Because development is a process of expanding freedoms equally for all people, gender equality is a core objective in itself. Second, greater gender equality can enhance economic efficiency and improve other development outcomes. The three main channels for greater gender equality as well as empowerment of women to promote growth are-

- Reduction in barriers to more efficient allocation of women's skills and talents can generate large (and growing) productivity gains.
- Improvement in women's endowments, opportunities, and agency can shape more positive outcomes for the next generation.
- Increase in women's individual and collective agency produces better outcomes, institutions and policy choices^[17].

Therefore, gender equality vis-a-vis women empowerment becomes a development goal for the planners and policy makers. Entrepreneurship can enhance economic independence of women, which is considered as core determinant of women empowerment. There are different ways by which women can make themselves empowered. Entrepreneurship is considered one of the most effective ways for economic development and empowerment of women. Because economic empowerment in most cases determines the decision making power of a women inside their houses and also outside of their houses. A successful entrepreneur is automatically able to earn the quality of a good leader throughout the process of entrepreneurship.

Again, to enhance women empowerment and the gender balance in leadership, it is very essential to encourage entrepreneurship. There are several reasons why businesses should be – and increasingly are – interested in enhancing the role of women in their businesses and why policy makers want to release the untapped potential of women entrepreneurship. Such reasons include:

a) to attract and retain the best talent; b) to better serve consumer markets, including those in which women are the main customers; c) to enhance diversity and improve overall performance in the workplace and economy; and d) to address future demographic change^[13].

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ladies Organization (FLO) were established in 1993 as a national body to focus on women's empowerment through the promotion of entrepreneurship and managerial excellence. The International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (ICECD) supports women in India to establish micro, small and medium enterprises. The Centre's research programmes focus on policy requirements for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship as a means of realizing women's economic empowerment^[15].

Women entrepreneurship has the two-fold effects of empowering women and contributing to the equitable and inclusive economic growth of their countries. Therefore, promotions of entrepreneurship need to be addressed in order to realize the potential contribution of women for equitable and inclusive growth of their societies along with empowering themselves.

A study of SHGs conducted at Coimbatore by Jerinabi^[5] revealed that micro enterprise among women can be means to empowerment. It helps them to become responsible towards enhancement of their own welfare and make them less dependent upon others. A score card consisting of certain parameters/attributes to measure the degree of empowerment of the women was prepared to examine the empowerment of women in his study. Women opined that their involvement in and ownership of a successful institution enhance their collective strength and empowerment that come with organization. Nachimuthu and Gunatharanin^[9] their study tried to find out the differences between women in other forms of enterprises and the Self Help Groups, and attempted to identify the strength of these two forms of enterprising in empowering women. Economic status, self-worth, self-confidence and social status of women entrepreneurs were the variables that defined empowerment of women in their study. They found that Women entrepreneurs in SHGs were more empowered than other (Non SHG) entrepreneurs. Maru and Chemruj^[7] in their study examined the effect of microfinance interventions on empowerment of women entrepreneurs in Mogotio Constituency in Kenya. They confined their study in three

objectives- the effect of micro credit, micro savings and training on empowerment of women entrepreneurs. Linear multiple regression technique was used to determine the effects of MFI intervention on empowerment of women. Results showed that except for microfinance saving, other MFI interventions such as microfinance credit and microfinance training significantly and positively affected empowerment of women entrepreneurs. A study of OECD^[13] provided a comprehensive overview and analysis based on global evidence to support the hypothesis that enhancing women's economic empowerment by improving entrepreneurship and leadership could contribute to economic growth, job creation and prosperity. It includes policy analysis and best practices from OECD countries to support the main argument and to execute it. Singla & Singh^[14] conducted a study at Vaishali district of Bihar to find the overall impact of entrepreneurship development on women's status and the extent to which an entrepreneur is empowered. For measuring the extent of women's empowerment a set of three indicators— "level of mobility", "decision-making power", and "awareness and capacity building" consisting of different sub indicators was constructed. The findings revealed that there is a substantial improvement in overall status of women in the family. The empowerment index score for the indicator "level of mobility", of the majority of the respondents was in the medium to high category. The study concluded that most of the respondents exhibited their extent of empowerment in medium category.

Thus, the literatures that studied the impact of women entrepreneurship on empowerment of women tried different variables that might initiate the empowerment of women and found mix responses. Again, the empowerment of women and success of the business, in most cases, found to go hand in hand, because empowered women could lead their business in proper way.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the impact of entrepreneurship on empowerment of women; and
2. To analyze the impact of socio economic factors that affect empowerment of women.

Methodology

Both primary as well as secondary data are used in the present study. Pre-divided Kamrup district i.e., Kamrup (Metropolitan) and Kamrup (Rural) district was first selected for the study. According to the report of Sixth Economic Census, Assam ^[4]the top three districts in terms of percentage share in total number of women owned establishments in the state were Barpeta (21.13%), Kamrup (Metropolitan) (11.06%) and Nagaon (9.46%). Again, in urban areas, Kamrup (metropolitan) was the major contributing district in the state, which alone contributed more than one-third (35.77%) of total establishments run by women entrepreneurs. Considering the number of persons working in establishments owned by women entrepreneurs in urban areas, Kamrup (metropolitan) was the major contributing district in the state which alone contributed more than one-third (36.08%) of total persons employed in establishments run by women entrepreneurs. Preliminary information on these enterprises in the district made us to believe that the district is conducive for acceleration of the pace of entrepreneurship. Therefore, this district was purposively selected for undertaking the study. Secondary data such as the list of women entrepreneurs and other basic information relating to the enterprises were collected from the records of District Industries and Commerce Centre, Kamrup. According to the Office of the Commissioner of Industries and Commerce, Kamrup District, 546 enterprises were registered in the year 2007-2008 of which 83 were women led enterprises for which basic data were available. It was also found that a large group of women entrepreneurs was doing their businesses without registering to any concerned authority. Therefore we decided to survey both registered and non-registered women entrepreneurs for the purpose of a holistic analysis. Out of 83 registered women entrepreneurs, 56 were found to be functional. Accordingly we surveyed these 56 registered women entrepreneurs along with another 56 non-registered women entrepreneurs. So, in total 112 women entrepreneurs were taken for our study. A well designed and pre-tested questionnaire schedule was prepared for collection of data.

First, a general comparison in different aspects of household decision making was carried out before and after entrepreneurship. After that Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was estimated for different indicators of decision making before and after entrepreneurship to see the changes in level of women empowerment through entrepreneurship. Again, multiple linear regressions

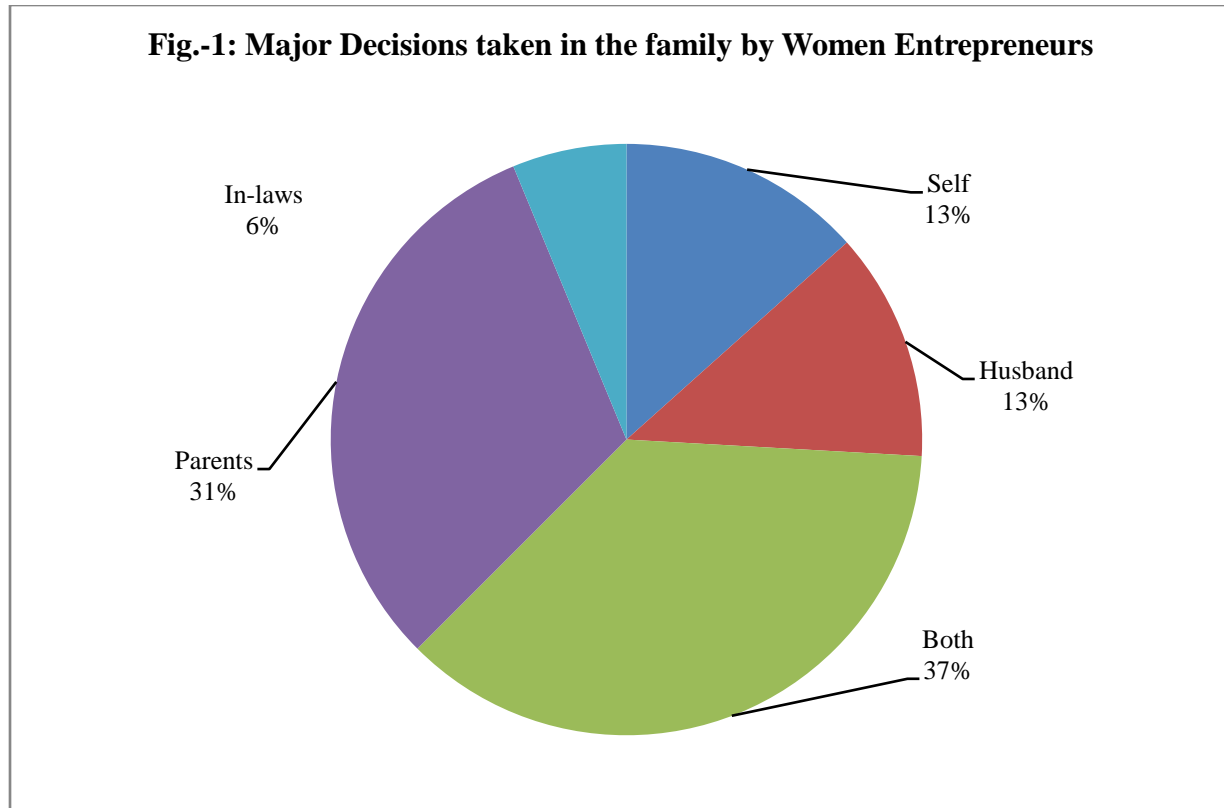
were used to find out the significant socio economic variables that affected women empowerment.

Results and Analysis

In this study, the status of women entrepreneurs in different areas of household decision making were examined before and after entrepreneurship and tried to find out whether entrepreneurship helped women in empowering them. Also, an attempt was made to find out different socio economic variables that significantly affect empowerment of women. Feelings of women entrepreneurs as individuals in the society after entrepreneurship have also been explained.

Major Decisions taken in the Family

The present status of women entrepreneurs on household decision making was examined and is shown in Fig. 1. Maximum 36.61% of women entrepreneurs replied that all major family decisions were taken jointly, either with the help of their husbands, if married or with the help of their parents, if unmarried. In case of 31.25% of women entrepreneurs who were unmarried, decisions were taken by their parents, 13.39% of women entrepreneurs took major decisions by themselves, 12.50% by their husbands and the rest 6.25% by their in-laws. It is clear from the study that majority of women entrepreneurs (67.86%) are found to be dependent either on their husbands or on their parents while making household decisions. This can be attributed to the fact that majority of the women entrepreneurs were not the sole income earners of their family; they were providing only supplementary income to their families either to their husband's income or their parent's income.



2. Household Decision making Power of Women Entrepreneurs Before and After Entrepreneurship

Here, we have tried to analyze whether entrepreneurship helped the women entrepreneurs to participate more in household decision making i.e., whether they were more empowered or not after entrepreneurship. Therefore, we compared the percentage of women entrepreneurs in major areas of household decision making before and after entrepreneurship (Table 1).

Decision on/ Decision by	She decides		She consults & decides		Jointly		She is consulted		She is not consulted	
	BE	AE	BE	AE	BE	AE	BE	AE	BE	AE
Amount of borrowing	1.79	24.11	4.46	29.46	11.61	33.93	32.14	12.50	50.00	0
Amount of savings	1.79	25.00	4.46	28.57	10.71	33.93	32.14	12.50	50.89	0

Usage of own earnings	23.21	51.79	39.29	25.89	9.82	22.32	20.54	0	7.14	0
Maintenance of family income	2.68	18.75	4.46	22.32	11.61	46.43	28.57	12.50	52.68	0
Usages of personal income	21.43	57.14	33.04	24.11	18.75	18.75	12.50	0	14.29	0
Purchase of Furniture/ Consumer durables	2.68	17.86	3.57	21.43	25.00	57.14	43.75	3.57	25.00	0
Children's education	0	4.92	0	3.28	63.93	90.16	34.43	1.64	1.64	0
Children's marriage	0	4.35	0	2.17	76.60	93.48	19.15	0	4.26	0
Decision on own health care	4.46	31.25	45.54	51.79	28.57	16.96	18.75	0	2.68	0
Decisions of having another child	0	0	0	4.96	91.67	95.31	6.67	0	1.67	0
BE: Before Entrepreneurship; AE: After Entrepreneurship <i>Source:</i> Survey data										

It was observed that in 1.79% cases women used to participate in the decision of household borrowing before entering into entrepreneurship, which increased to 24.11% after they engaged in entrepreneurship. In the same area (borrowing), for 4.46% cases, women had to consult and decide before entrepreneurship, it increased to 29.46% after entrepreneurship, in 11.61% cases, they decided jointly (with husband or parents) before entrepreneurship, which increased to 33.93% after entrepreneurship, in 32.14% cases, they were consulted before entrepreneurship, which became 12.50% after entrepreneurship (they were taking decision by them after entrepreneurship) and where in 50% cases, when they reported that they were not consulted before entrepreneurship, no one reported that they were not consulted after entrepreneurship. In

case of decision regarding amount of savings in their household, for 1.79% cases they could take decision by themselves before entrepreneurship, which increased to 25% after entrepreneurship, for 4.46% cases they consulted and decided, it increased to 28.57% after entrepreneurship, for 10.71% cases they took these decision jointly, it changed to 33.93% after entrepreneurship, for 32.14% women entrepreneurs, they were consulted before entrepreneurship which become 12.50% after entrepreneurship (they used to take decision by own after entrepreneurship) and in 50.89% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one reported that they were not consulted after entrepreneurship. In case of decision on usage of own earnings, for 23.21% cases they could take decision by themselves before entrepreneurship, which increased to 51.79% after entrepreneurship, for 39.29% cases they consulted and decided, it became 25.89% after entrepreneurship (they decided by themselves after entrepreneurship), for 9.82% cases they took these decision jointly, it changed to 22.32% after entrepreneurship, in 20.54% cases they were consulted, but after entrepreneurship no one said that they were consulted as because they could take this decision by themselves after entrepreneurship, in 7.14% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship whereas no one reported that they were not consulted after entrepreneurship. In case decision regarding maintenance of family income, in 2.68% cases they could decide by themselves before entrepreneurship, which increased to 18.75% after entrepreneurship, in 4.46% cases they had to consult and decided, which changed to 22.32% after entrepreneurship, in 11.61% cases they decided jointly before entrepreneurship and it changed to 46.43% after entrepreneurship, in 28.57% cases they were consulted before entrepreneurship and it became 12.50% after entrepreneurship (either they decided by own or decided jointly) and in 52.68% cases they were not consulted before being entrepreneur whereas no one reported that they were not consulted after entrepreneurship. In decision of usages of personal income, 21.43% women entrepreneurs could decide by themselves before entrepreneurship and it changed to 57.14% after entrepreneurship, in 33.04% cases they had to consult and then could decide before entrepreneurship which changed to 24.11% after entrepreneurship (they used to decide by themselves after entrepreneurship), in 18.75% cases they decided jointly before entrepreneurship and it remained same after entrepreneurship, in 12.50% cases they were consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one said that they were consulted after entrepreneurship (they decided by them after entrepreneurship) and in 14.29% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship and no one reported that they were not

consulted after entrepreneurship. In decision regarding purchase of household furniture/ consumer durables, in 2.68% cases they could take decision by themselves before entrepreneurship and increased to 17.86% after entrepreneurship, in 3.57% cases they had to consulted and then could decide before entrepreneurship which changed to 21.43% after entrepreneurship, in 25% cases they decided jointly before entrepreneurship and it increased to 57.14% after entrepreneurship, in 43.75% cases they were consulted before entrepreneurship which decreased to 3.57% after entrepreneurship (either they were decided by own or jointly after entrepreneurship), in 25% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship, but everyone denied this fact after entrepreneurship. In case of decision on children's education, no one could decide by themselves before entrepreneurship, which increased to 4.92% after entrepreneurship, no one reported that they had to consult and could decide before entrepreneurship, but in 3.28% cases they were found to decided after consulting, in 63.93% cases they decided jointly which increased to 90.16% after entrepreneurship, in 34.43% cases they were consulted before entrepreneurship, it decreased to 1.64% after entrepreneurship (they decided jointly after entrepreneurship) and in 1.64% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one reported that they were not consulted after entrepreneurship. In case of decision regarding children's marriage, no one could decide by themselves before entrepreneurship which changed to 4.35% after entrepreneurship, no one reported that they had to consult and could decide before entrepreneurship which found to 2.17% after entrepreneurship, in cases of 76.60% they decided jointly before entrepreneurship, it increased to 93.48% after entrepreneurship, in 19.15% cases they were consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one reported that they were consulted after entrepreneurship (they decided jointly after entrepreneurship) and in 4.26% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship whereas no one reported that they were not consulted after entrepreneurship. In case of decision regarding own health care, in 4.46% cases they decided by themselves before entrepreneurship, it changed to 31.25% after entrepreneurship, in case of 45.54% women entrepreneurs they had to consult and could decide before entrepreneurship, it increased to 51.79% after entrepreneurship, in 28.57% cases, they decided jointly before entrepreneurship, it changed to 16.96% after entrepreneurship (either they decided by themselves or they decided after consulting). In case of 18.75% women entrepreneurs they were consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one reported that they were consulted after entrepreneurship (either they decided by themselves or

they decided after consulting), in 2.68% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one found to not consulted after entrepreneurship (either they decided by themselves or they decided after consulting). In case of decision regarding having another child, no one reported that they decided by themselves before entrepreneurship and after entrepreneurship, again no one reported to decide after consulting before entrepreneurship, which found to increase 4.96% after entrepreneurship, in 91.67% cases they decided jointly, which increased to 95.31% after entrepreneurship, in 6.67% cases they were consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one reported that they were consulted after entrepreneurship (they decided jointly), in 1.67% cases they were not consulted before entrepreneurship, whereas no one reported that they were not consulted after entrepreneurship. So, it was observed that in almost all of the cases (indicators), the percentage change in decision making power of women entrepreneurs after entrepreneurship increased significantly.

3. Women Empowerment Indices Before and After Entrepreneurship

To analyse whether the entrepreneurial activity make women entrepreneurs strong enough to take the different households decisions or not, that were examined in terms of women empowerment indices before and after entrepreneurship. Therefore, Women Empowerment Index (WEI) is calculated on decision making power of women entrepreneurs on different matters (indicators) before and after entrepreneurship. That is, through this analysis an attempt is made whether the entrepreneurial activity helps the women entrepreneurs to become more empowered or not. Here, the types of decisions (indicators) that are examined are decision on household borrowings, savings, usage of own earnings, maintenance of family income, usages of personal income, purchase of furniture/ consumer durables, children's education, children's marriage, own health care and decision on having another child.

For every indicator, Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was estimated before and after entrepreneurship by the following formula for each woman and then averaged for all the women surveyed (n=112):

$$WEI = \frac{X_i - \text{Min}(X_i)}{\text{Max}(X_i) - \text{Min}(X_i)} \quad i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, n$$

In this way, we get WEI of one indicator and for every indicator we have two indices, that is, Women Empowerment Index before Entrepreneurship (WEIBE) and Women Empowerment Index after Entrepreneurship (WEIAE). Now taking percentage of relative change in WEI before and after entrepreneurship, we get the value of percentage change in women empowerment after entrepreneurship. That is, change in Women Empowerment Index is calculated as follows:

$$\Delta WEI = \frac{AWEI - BWEI}{BWEI} \times 100$$

Now, taking average of WEI of different indicators, we get the Composite Women Empowerment Index (CWEI) before and after entrepreneurship. After that, the percentage of relative change in Composite Women Empowerment Index before and after entrepreneurship shows the overall change in empowerment of women in household decision making after entrepreneurship.

Here, Table 2 shows the comparison of women empowerment index before and after entrepreneurship. It is found that in case of the indicator “Decision on Borrowing” the value of WEI is 0.190 before entrepreneurship and it increases to 0.551 after entrepreneurship. Therefore, the percentage change in WEI is 190.196% in this indicator after entrepreneurship. Similarly, on the “Decision of Saving” the value of WEI is 0.185 before entrepreneurship, which increases to 0.554 after entrepreneurship and the percentage change in WEI is 198.795% in this indicator. In case of “Usages of Own Earning” the value of WEI is 0.627 and it increases to 0.647 after entrepreneurship and the percentage change in WEI is 3.203 %. On “Maintenance of Family Income” the value of WEI before entrepreneurship is 0.190 which increases to 0.491 after entrepreneurship and the percentage change in WEI is 158.824%. On “Usages of Personal Income”, WEI before entrepreneurship is 0.571, which increases to 0.692 after entrepreneurship and the percentage change in WEI is 21.094%. On “Purchase of Consumer Durables and Furniture”, WEI is 0.288 before entrepreneurship which increases to 0.512 after entrepreneurship and thereby percentage change in WEI is 77.778%. In case of married women entrepreneurs, on “Children’s Education”, the WEI is 0.529 before entrepreneurship and 0.681 after entrepreneurship and the percentage change in WEI is 28.704%. The WEI on “Children’s

Marriage”, before entrepreneurship is 0.583 and increases to 0.610 after entrepreneurship. The percentage change in WEI in this indicator is 4.622%. On the “Decision on their Own Health Care” the value of WEI is 0.576 and 0.647 respectively before and after entrepreneurship and the percentage change of empowerment of women after entrepreneurship is 12.403%. In case of married women entrepreneurs, the WEI on the indicator “Decision of having Another Child” is 0.627 before entrepreneurship which increases to 0.647 after entrepreneurship and the percentage change in empowerment of women after entrepreneurship is 57.031%. The overall empowerment index i.e., Composite Empowerment Index before entrepreneurship is 0.437 and it increases to 0.637 after entrepreneurship and therefore the percentage change in empowerment of women after entrepreneurship is 45.869%.

Table2: Comparison of WEI before and after entrepreneurship in different Indicators			
Indicators	WEIBE	WEIAE	% Change in WEI
Decision on Borrowing	0.190	0.551	190.196
Decision on Saving	0.185	0.554	198.795
Decision on Usage of Own Earnings	0.627	0.647	3.203
Decision on Maintenance of Family Income	0.190	0.491	158.824
Decision on Usages of personal income	0.571	0.692	21.094
Decision on Purchase of Furniture/ Consumer durables	0.288	0.512	77.778
Decision on Children’s Education	0.529	0.681	28.704
Decision on Children’s Marriage	0.583	0.610	4.622
Decision on Own Health Care	0.576	0.647	12.403
Decisions of having Another Child	0.627	0.985	57.031
Composite Women Empowerment Index	0.437	0.637	45.869
Note: WEIBE and WEIAE refer to Women Empowerment Index Before and After Entrepreneurship respectively			
<i>Source: Survey Data</i>			

4. Impact of Socio Economic Variables on Composite Women Empowerment Index

Here, in this study, we have analysed the impact of different socioeconomic variables on Composite Women Empowerment Index (CWEI) for each entrepreneur in different area of household decision making. For this CWEI were calculated for each entrepreneurs and then the

impact of the socio economic variables such as age, caste, religion, marital status, general education, technical education, occupational status before entrepreneurship, type of parental family, type of husband's family, adoption of sales promotional measures, participation in training programme or Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), status of registration (registered or unregistered), location of enterprises (rural or urban), dual (home-work) conflict, present capital of enterprises and status of male support behind the enterprises were examined by the following multiple linear regression model-

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_{16i} X_{16i} + U_i$$

Where CWEI is Composite Women Empowerment Index, β_j = Coefficients, $j=0,16$ and X_1 = Age, X_2 = Caste, X_3 = Religion, X_4 = Marital Status, X_5 = General Education, X_6 = Technical Education, X_7 = Status before Entrepreneurship, X_8 = Type of Parental Family, X_9 = Type of Husband Family, X_{10} = Sales Promotion Measures, X_{11} = EDP or Training Programme, X_{12} = Status of Registration, X_{13} = Location, X_{14} = Dual Role Conflict, X_{15} = Present Capital, X_{16} = Status of Male Support.

Results of multiple linear regressions on composite women empowerment index of different socioeconomic variables are shown in Table 3.

Factors	Coefficients	t Value	PValue
Intercept	0.34679	2.047856	0.043334
Age	0.00655	2.072063	0.040969**
Caste	-0.03667	-1.67835	0.096566
Religion	-0.01709	-0.57788	0.56471
Marital Status	0.031674	0.534138	0.594494
General education	-0.00453	-0.16979	0.86554
Technical Education	0.07306	2.414893	0.017654**
Status Before Entrepreneur	-0.06393	-1.00381	0.318022
Type of Parental Family	0.098834	1.984611	0.050072
Type of Husband Family	0.053601	1.407821	0.162448

Sales Promotion Measures	-0.01921	-0.35389	0.724205
EDP or Training	0.039878	0.751397	0.454271
Status of Registration	0.057068	1.225954	0.223246
Location	-0.0737	-1.50397	0.135906
Dual Role Conflict	-0.02237	-0.36446	0.716328
Present capital	5.47E-10	0.013945	0.988903
Status of Male Support	-0.24297	-4.00947	0.000121**
** Significant at 0.05 level.			

Here, in Table 3, it observed that age, level of technical education and status of male support were found to be statistically significant in regards of composite women empowerment index of different household decision makings. Age of the entrepreneurs significantly affect their strength in household decision making, i.e., women entrepreneurs of higher age were more empowered in comparison to women entrepreneurs of lower age in the area of household decisions. They could take decision by own rather than depending on others. Higher age means more experience, better knowledge and in-depth confidence which make them able to take decision independently in their household. Again, technical education is intense and specific knowledge of respective field which make anyone more efficient and skill. An entrepreneur with higher technical education obviously could become a successful businessman which could affect their power of decision making in their home. Another variable- status of male support was found significant, but negatively related with women empowerment index; which means that male support negatively affects empowerment of women. Male support may be in the form of mental, physical or financial support- all these make the women entrepreneur dependent on their male counterparts, which also lower their capacity of decision making in different area. That is, if the women entrepreneurs are supported by male then it might be the fact that they are dominated by male which hindered them (women) taking part in household decision, also lower empowerment.

5. Feelings of Women Entrepreneurs after Entrepreneurship

Empowered women define their attitude, values and behaviour in relation to their own real interest. They have autonomy because they claim their freedom from existing male

hierarchies, whether they live in traditional societies or modern industrial societies^[8]. Empowerment of women also means their improved sense of security, freedom of expression and better position in the society. Here, in Table 4, the women entrepreneurs expressed their feeling as an individual in the society after entrepreneurship.

Table 4: Feelings of Women Entrepreneurs after Entrepreneurship			
Types of Feelings		No. of Women Entrepreneurs	% of Women Entrepreneurs
Feelings of Security	Much more secure	39	34.82
	More Secure	69	61.61
	Just as Much Secure	04	3.57
	Less Secure	00	00
Overall Position in Society	Much Better	19	16.96
	Better	76	67.86
	Unchanged	17	15.18
	Worse	00	00
Freedom of Expression	Increased significantly	23	20.54
	Somewhat increased	76	67.86
	Remained unchanged	13	11.61
	Decreased	00	00
<i>Source: Survey Data; Total No. of Entrepreneurs = 112</i>			

Here, maximum 61.61% of women entrepreneurs reported that they felt more secure after entrepreneurship, 34.82% felt that they were much more secure, 3.57% felt just as much secure and no one reported that they were less secure after entrepreneurship. The feelings of women entrepreneurs on their overall position in the society after entrepreneurship were such that 67.86% of women entrepreneurs felt that because of entrepreneurial activity their overall position in the society were better, 16.96% felt much better, 15.18% felt that their position in the society were unchanged and no one felt worse than before. In regards of freedom of expression, 67.86% of women entrepreneurs felt that after entrepreneurship their freedom of expression in the society increased somewhat, where 20.54% felt that their freedom of expression increased significantly, according to 11.61% women entrepreneurs it remained unchanged and no one felt decreased freedom of expression after entrepreneurship.

Findings and Conclusion

In the study, we found that majority of women entrepreneurs took major household decision in association either with their husbands or parents. But at the same time, in the area of household decision making, almost in all the cases, the percentage change in decision making power of the women entrepreneurs increased after entrepreneurship. Again, age, technical education and male support has found to affect significantly on empowerment of women. The freedom of expression of women entrepreneurs, their position and sense of security in the society had improved after entrepreneurship. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that entrepreneurship of women has enhanced their economic status in the society and decision making power of them. Women are becoming more personally and economically empowered through business ownership or entrepreneurship development. That is, women's ability to gain control over economic resources, decision making and to participate freely in the society through entrepreneurship can pave the way of women empowerment.

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