

# **ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The current study is an attempt to investigate the change in women empowerment after the women entrepreneurs get financial support from the government. It examines and compares the status of women before and after the credit facility is taken by them. To conduct the study, all those women entrepreneurs who have taken a loan are interviewed. The findings highlight a significant positive change in the empowerment of women entrepreneurs before and after the loan is availed. However, despite being entrepreneurs, it is witnessed that women still not feel completely free and empowered. In most of the decisions of women related to oneself, family, finances, society and community, she is not the main decision-maker. Others dominate the decisions. The study implies to all the policymakers, international and national regulatory bodies working on women empowerment to introduce such programmes that educate the women and their families and the community on women empowerment.

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Entrepreneurs, Social Empowerment, Political Empowerment, Economic Empowerment.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Empowerment is characterized as a circumstance when the individual can settle on effective decisions, for example, to interpret his/her choices into wanted activities and results. It is also depicted as multidimensional and alludes to the extension of decision and activity on the whole circles, be it social, economic, and political, to shape one's life, (Chattopadhyaya, 2005). As indicated by (Bennett, 2002) empowerment is "the upgrade of resources and abilities of assorted people". It implies that one has authority over one's assets and choices. It is the cycle of dealing with one's own life as well as supporting and encouraging others' right over their lives, (Aspy & Sandhu, 1999). In an examination by (Tornqvist & Schmitz, 2009) women's economic empowerment is characterized as "an interaction, which builds women's genuine control over financial choices, which impact their lives and needs in the public eye". It implies that they can settle their economic choices. It has been seen for ages that women in various parts of the world are avoided such empowerment, particularly from their partners and family members. Practically all the nation's, regardless of whether developed or developing, have a past filled with mistreating women. As such, some women have been defiant to arrive at the empowered status they have today. While the developed nations are in an ideal situation, developing nations like India is still lagging in women empowerment, (Kushwah, 2020). Since a century ago, both International and National organizations have conducted a great deal of work to empower women in a joint effort with the legislatures of different countries. Empowerment has expanded, bit by bit. Education of women, formal or casual, has been one of the primary target, of different governments, welfare associations,

both in India and worldwide. This way, the woman herself would be enlightened about her freedom and the rights that she can enjoy.

Women empowerment is characterized as a woman's capability to know her privileges, rights and settle on choices all alone. Women empowerment brings about developing the decision-making ability, upgrading self-assurance, and an inward change of women's awareness that empowers them to beat outer boundaries, (Sen & Batliwala, 2020). This view principally underlines two significant perspectives. First and foremost, women empowerment is the ability to accomplish desired objectives, however not the control over others. Besides, the possibility of empowerment is not confined to women, and it applies to every individual who is weak and unprivileged of the rights to decision making, regardless of whether the person is male or female or gathering of people, class or rank. Quite possibly, the most conspicuous approaches to elevate woman empowerment is to make them independent through business uphold. Business permits a person to set up her own venture and offer work to individuals. While India has gained critical headway in making equivalent access for women in various economic directions and capacity building, the quantity of female entrepreneurs is still minimal. The current government of India has also promoted numerous schemes where they offer economic support by dispensing credits to the woman at an appealing rate of interest and help them become self-dependent. To the best of our knowledge, there is no literature on the assessment of any financial scheme on women empowerment. This study attempts to survey one of such famous financial schemes of India, the Stand-up India Loan scheme, and examining its success in effectively empowering woman taking all the dimensions, be it social, political, and economic empowerment.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The current paper tries to measure overall women empowerment after acquiring loans under the financial scheme, Standup India Loan Scheme. It also tries to compare the level of women empowerment before and after the Stand-up India loan was taken. The study is conclusive as it tries to analyze and investigate the impact of one of the famous government schemes, the Standup India Loan Scheme for women, on women's empowerment in all spheres, socially, economically and politically. According to the Stand-up India loan scheme, a loan is sanctioned to women and SC/ST entrepreneurs in India at a cheaper rate and easy eligibility. The study is conducted in the hilly state of India, namely Uttarakhand, during the period 2019 to 2021. The sampling technique used will be judgmental (under non-probability sampling technique) as the justification for selecting hill state as sample area is that hilly states have seen slow development in the past years due to their geographical constraints. In Uttarakhand, 200 questionnaire were administered, out of which 153 are selected for the final analysis, 47 are rejected due to respondent error. The responses are collected from the respondents through both faces to face meetings and telephonic interviews. A self-made questionnaire is designed to measure the degree of women empowerment, keeping the standardized questionnaire on Women Empowerment Index founded by The Hunger Project Organization, headquarters in New York as the base model. The questionnaire is in two languages- English and Hindi. The individual respondent took an average of 25 minutes to fill the questionnaire. It starts with demographic information about the woman entrepreneur. Further, there are ten parts of the questionnaire. Each part is focusing on gathering information related to the status of the woman. Frequencies and pie-charts are made to show the analysis. Paired sample T-test is used to test the hypotheses formed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part deals with analyzing the empowerment of the women entrepreneurs of the Uttarakhand region, India. In this research study, we consider many variables that can help us analyze women empowerment from all three dimensions, social, economic and political empowerment. The results of both the hypotheses testing and others are discussed in this section.

### **Empowerment of Women before and after the Stand-up India Loan is availed**

A hypothesis testing is conducted to understand and compare the economic empowerment of Uttarakhand women entrepreneurs before and after the loan is availed. Paired samples T-test is applied to test the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the economic empowerment of Uttarakhand women before and after the Stand-up India loan is availed by them. Table and showcase the results of hypothesis testing. The test also reflects that as the p-value is less than 5% significance level, there is a significant difference in the economic empowerment of Uttarakhand women before and after the Stand-up India loan is availed by them. It is seen that the mean value of women entrepreneurs is high now, i.e. after the loan is availed as compared to the time before the loan was availed, it can also be suggested that the degree of economic empowerment of Uttarakhand women is more after they took the loan and started their ventures as compared to before. It highlights that government support to women entrepreneurs is fruitful and moving in a positive direction.

A hypothesis testing is conducted to understand and compare the social empowerment of Uttarakhand women entrepreneurs before and after the loan is availed. Paired samples T-test is applied to test the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the social empowerment of Uttarakhand women before and after the Stand-up India loan is availed by them. Table and highlights the results of hypothesis testing. The test also reflects that as the p-value is less than 5% significance level, there is a significant difference in the social empowerment of Uttarakhand women before and after the Stand-up India loan is availed by them. It is seen that the mean value of women entrepreneurs is high now, i.e. after the loan is availed as compared to the time before the loan was availed, it can also be suggested that the degree of social empowerment of Uttarakhand women is more after they took the loan and started their ventures as compared to before.

A hypothesis testing is conducted to understand and compare the political empowerment of Uttarakhand women entrepreneurs before and after the loan is availed. Independent sample T-test is applied to test the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the political empowerment of Uttarakhand women before and after the Stand-up India loan is availed by them. Table and highlights the results of hypothesis testing. The test also reflects that as the p-value is less than 5% significance level, there is a significant difference in the political empowerment of Uttarakhand women before and after the Stand-up India loan is availed by them. It is seen that the mean value of women entrepreneurs is high now, i.e. after the loan is availed as compared to the time before the loan was availed, it can also be suggested that the degree of political empowerment of Uttarakhand women is more after they took the loan and started their ventures as compared to before.

### **Principal Job of Women Entrepreneurs**

The analysis of the productive activities (resulting in earning money) that women and their household members have engaged in during the past 12 months and before the loan was taken reflect that the percentage (%) of the respondents running the manufacturing unit before the loan was taken is 18.95, but now the percentage of total respondents is increased to

24.84. 11.11 % of the total respondents ran an off-farm business before the loan was taken, but now that percentage is increased to 60.13. The percentage of the respondents involved in farming/gardening (e.g., growing rice, vegetables) before and after the loan is taken is 7.19. It shows that the percentage of rearing livestock like cattle's, goats, chicken, and pig before is 11.11, and now it is decreased to 7.84. The analysis also highlights that 42.48% of the respondents were not involved in any productive work before the loan was taken, but now the percentage of the respondents is nil. These results reflect the effectiveness of the Stand-up India loan scheme on the Uttarakhand people's productive activities, who opted for this loan scheme.

### **Decisions on Household Activities**

The results show the percentage of women who feel that their husband is the primary decision-maker in terms of non-agricultural activities such as small business, casual and wage labour, or other activities, the decision of how the business is managed, where to work, when to work and whom to work for and the decision to spend the cash earned from non-agricultural activities is 61.84. 18.42% of women believe that other male household members decide, and 8.55% respond that they decide on non-agricultural activities. It shows that the % of the women who feel that their husband is the primary decision-maker about what contributions to make to the community (temple/church, traditional building) is 47.37, whereas 13.16% of the respondents believe that other male household members make the decision, 10.53% respondents reacted that they take the decision and 8.55% respondents reacted that they along with their husbands, jointly decides for contributions to the community. None of the respondents reacts that their husbands and other members jointly decide or that they and other household members jointly decide 20.39% of respondents reacted that decision is taken by other female members or people outside the household.

The results also shows that the % of the respondents who feel that their husband is the primary decision-maker about children's education is 41.45. 13.16% of respondents react that other male household members make the decision, 10.53% of women believe that they take the decision, and 34.87% responded that they, along with their husbands, jointly decide about children's education. None of the women felt that their husbands and other members jointly or the women themselves and other household members jointly decide on children's education. None of the decision about children's education is taken by other female members or people outside the household. It also highlights that the % of women who feel that their husband is the primary decision-maker about their own education is 67.76. Although 0% of respondents react that other male household members make the decision. 10.53% of women believe that they take the decision, and 13.16% respond that they, along with their husbands, jointly decide, and 8.55% of them reacted that their husbands and other members jointly decide about women's education. None of the respondents believes that they, along with other household members, jointly decide about women's education. None of the decisions is taken by other female members or people outside the household.

It reflects that the % of the respondents who react that their husband is the primary decision maker family planning is 74.34. However, none of them feels that other male household members make the decision. Only 9.21% of the women believe that they decide, and 8.55% of them react that they, along with their husbands, jointly decide about family planning. 7.89% of respondents feel that other female household members take the decisions. Again, none of the women believes that they or their husbands and other household members jointly decide about family planning. None of the decision is taken by people outside the household about family planning.

## CONCLUSION

The study examines women entrepreneurs' overall empowerment who have got financial support from the government programmes to start their business by availing Stand-up India loan scheme. It compares and analyses the change in empowerment before and after the loan is availed by the Indian women. From the study, it is witnessed that all the Uttarakhand women can read in Hindi, and the majority of them can write in Hindi. The results of the study suggests that before the loan is availed, most women were not involved in any productive work, while very few of them were running a manufacturing unit as their productive work. After the loan is available, all the women are involved in productive work, and 60.13% of the women are running an off-farm business as their productive work. The women's family owned the same assets before the loan is taken and now as well. Moreover, it is seen that the decision making of the assets lies with the husbands of the women. It is seen that to take household decisions, women's husbands are again the ones who do so. In some households, decisions are taken jointly between husband and wife. It is also seen that if the woman does not agree with the decision made by other senior members of the household, then the women cannot change the decision.

It is highlighted that as far as economic empowerment is concerned, women of Uttarakhand have not taken part in the activities actively except in managing savings/loans, household economic planning, income-generating activities and entrepreneurship. Moreover, women are not confident in performing the activities efficiently before the loan was available and currently. As far as the financial support is concerned, it is witnessed that earlier, when the loan is not availed, most of the women could borrow money from relatives or neighbours in the community, family members outside the community, village savings and loans group and microfinance institution. However, they could not borrow money from informal moneylender, banks and government programme. It is seen that after the loan is taken, women entrepreneurs feel confident in borrowing funds from banks and government programme as well. So, it can be concluded that although the government financial support programmes result in empowering women to a certain extent, but Indian women still lack self-confidence and overall empowerment.

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