

RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS – EPITOMIZING THE FACE OF OUR COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

Women are generally perceived as home makers with little to do with the business acumen. But this picture has changed remarkably over the years especially in rural India. It's the prospect of poverty which motivated them to self employment as a medicine to improve their standard of living. Moreover it's the Indian women who have setup benchmarks for the younger generation besides conservative, tradition bound, caste consciousness mindset of the male dominated society.

Hence with the today's assent that, '*Women owned businesses boost the economy*' the present study intends to find out motivational factors behind the concept of rural women entrepreneurship, their potentialities & constraints thus faced & nevertheless the schemes undertaken by the Govt. of India in support of this.

The primary data required was collected from 100 women entrepreneurs residing in & around villages of Mandya district. Further analysis was carried out with the help of Z – test a statistical tool followed by its interpretation & suggestions part. Furthermore interesting is it appears that a transition in the rural women entrepreneurship has lead to, a practical necessity for the viability and sustainability of rural development.

Keywords: Rural Women Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, Caste Consciousness

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INTRODUCTION

A major part of the Indian economy still lies in the rural areas and villages of the country. Though a huge mass of people are constantly moving to the urban sectors, development of the villages cannot be neglected. With their excellent confidence and entrepreneurial skills, most of the Indian women have proved to be on par with their men counterparts in business acumen with an intension to raise the standard of living in Indian villages and have been really successful at it.

“When woman move forward, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves.”

- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Women constitute half of the world’s population, accomplish about two third of its working hours. But nearly 90% of rural women entrepreneurs in India are handicapped in the matter of running businesses generally due to low levels of skills, Lack of support system, restricting them to low paid occupations. For this reason, the transition from homemaker to a sophisticated business woman is not that easy.

In the words of *Former President APJ Abdul Kalam* – “Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation.”

Meaning: Women entrepreneur is any women who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business with considerable initiative and risk.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been carried out with the aim to spotlight the following objectives -

1. To analyze the motivational factors which influenced rural women to become entrepreneurs
2. To find out the potentials and constraints of women entrepreneurs along with the opportunities which promoted their idea of entrepreneurship.
3. To comprehend the different supportive measures & schemes undertaken by the Government of India in this regard.

- To gauge how the idea of entrepreneurship among rural women have helped them to improve their current economic status of life.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the rural women entrepreneurs from different villages in & around Mandya district. While the study is broader in scope & is highly significant as it makes an attempt to know the current status of rural women in India in general. Problems thus faced by her wrt gender equity, empowerment of women at large, encouragement for her entrepreneurship activity, etc.,

Furthermore it also tries to find out the suitable measures to promote the socio – economic status & social mobilization among rural women entrepreneurs thereby enhancing the advocacy of such vulnerable groups.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Type: Descriptive Research

Research Tool: The statistical tool adopted for the study is **Z – test**

List of formulas to Calculate Z test:

<i>Formula to Calculate Standard Deviation</i>	
$\bar{X} = \sum X/n$	$\bar{Y} = \sum Y/n$
$\sigma X = \sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum(X-\bar{X})^2}{n-1}\right)}$	$\sigma Y = \sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum(Y-\bar{Y})^2}{n-1}\right)}$
$\sigma \bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = \sqrt{\left(\frac{\sigma 1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\sigma 2^2}{n_2}\right)}$	

$$\text{Formula to calculate } Z_{\text{cal}} = \left(\frac{\bar{X} - \bar{Y}}{\sigma \bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2} \right)$$

Sampling Plan

(a) Sampling Technique: Judgmental Sampling.

Sampling Type: Target audience comprises only those respondents who were rural women entrepreneurs

Sampling Size: 100 Respondents

Sampling Area: The respondents were chosen from 10 villages in & around Mandya District namely,

Marasinganahalli, Pannedoddi, Mudigere, Besagarahalli, Anedoddi, Kadalur, Hombalegowdanadoddi, Anigere, Huluvadi, Anchipura.

(b) Methods of Data Collection:

The present research study was done using primary data which was collected through a Structured Questionnaire using Personal Interview technique.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anitha D.Pharm & Dr. R.Sritharan (2013) "Problems Being Faced By Women Entrepreneurs In Rural Areas" stated that, "Besides the government organizes many schemes & associations, woman are not ready to undertake the business. As compared to men, women are less motivated to start business units due to some unwanted fear, lack of motivation and kind of activities. Thus, the study aims at undertaking the entrepreneurial development among women highlights their motivational forces and relationship between socioeconomic background of women entrepreneurs, motivational factors and their existing entrepreneurial traits."

Eugenia Petridou, Niki Glaveli, (2008), 'Rural women entrepreneurship within co-operatives: training support', - "The purpose of the paper is to appraise rural women entrepreneurs, running co-operatives in Greece. The paper seeks to examine the effects of training support on their

entrepreneurial skills and attitudes, co-operatives' viability and growth prospects, and work-family balance.

Research was conducted in which 104 rural women members of co-operatives, who had participated in a specific training program contributed. Anonymous questionnaires were used to collect data on participants' perceptions of the effects of the training intervention”.

S. Shiralashetti, Abhaykumar S. Gasti (2013), 'Problems Of Rural Women Entrepreneurs In North Karnataka: A Study' – “Indian women have steadily moved from the status of housewives to educated women, employed women and now women entrepreneurs. However, women entrepreneurs are facing problem of inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate encouragement from family, government and society, marketing problems, financial problems, labour problems etc. Therefore, it is very essential to encourage women entrepreneurs by providing adequate training to build confidence and necessary infrastructural facilities to undertake entrepreneurship.

These solutions not only eradicate problems but also empower women entrepreneurs. The present study concentrates on problems of rural women entrepreneurs in north Karnataka. The study suggested providing adequate training and encouraging women by providing infrastructural facilities.”

Syeda mahboob arshiya (2008), 'Impact Of Udyogini Scheme On Economic Empowerment of women in Mandya district' – “Impact of Udyogini scheme on economic empowerment of women in Mandya district was conducted in Mandya district of Karnataka state. This district comprises of seven taluks viz., Mandya, Maddur, Malavalli, Nagamangala, Shrirangapatna, K.R. Pet, and Pandavapura.

The central government sponsored schemes through this department in the state are Swalambana and STEP , and among state sponsored schemes are Udyogini, Devadsi rehabilitation programme, Nagara Stree Shakti, stateresource centre, marketing assistance scheme and women training Programme.”

PROBLEMS & CHALLENGES OF RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

An **ILO report** on women entrepreneurship identifies the following problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

1. Lack of family support- Sometimes the family may make the women feel guilty of neglecting household duties in her pursuit of business obligations. Cultural traditions may hold back a woman from venturing into her own business.
2. Lack of capital-traditional sources of finance like banks are reluctant to lend to women entrepreneurs especially if they do not have any male or family backing. This is especially true of lower income females. Women do not have adequate finance or legal knowledge to start an enterprise.
3. Lack of confidence and faith-lack of role models undermines the self confidence of women entrepreneurs. The activity of selling is considered abhorrent to the female gender.
4. Lack of right public/ private institutions: Most public and private incentives are misused and do not reach the woman unless she is backed by a man. Also many trade associations like ministries, chambers of commerce do not cater to women expecting women’s organizations to do the necessary thing.¹

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

The *Planning Commission* as well as the Indian government recognizes the need for women to be part of the mainstream of economic development. Women entrepreneurship is seen as an effective strategy to solve the problems of rural and urban poverty.

Rural Women Work Participation in India

Country /Year	Percentage
India (1970 – 1971)	14.2
India (1980 – 1981)	19.7
India (1990 – 1991)	22.3
India (2000 – 2001)	31.6

Source: *Planning Commission Fifth Five Year Plan*

Women Entrepreneurship in Karnataka -2008-09

¹ Article on ‘Women Entrepreneurship in India’ from “Word Quotient” followed by the URL <http://www.wordquotient.com/library/entrepreneurship/women-entrepreneurship-in-india.html>

State	No. of Registered Units	No. of women entrepreneurs	Percentage
Karnataka	3822	1026	26.84

Source: Economic Survey 2008 - 09

Credit Schemes for Women

There are numerous government schemes like IRDP (integrated rural development programme), DWCRA (development of women and children in rural areas), PRY (prime minister rozgar yojna) and DRI, (differential interest rate scheme).

The ministry of rural areas and employment has several schemes for providing better opportunities to women through providing loans. Out of the variety of ameliorative strategies proposed, to improve the income generating activities of women, provision of finance at reasonable rates on regular basis for women in the informal sector is the crucial one.

In the year 1987, the government of Karnataka established KSWDC, Karnataka State Women Development Corporation, as per the memorandum of association of KSWDC, there is a set of specified objectives according to which the corporation function for the welfare of the women in need.

MANDYA DISTRICT - DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Udyogini Scheme

Udyogini is an innovative scheme, sanctioned by the government of Karnataka through Karnataka state women Development Corporation in the year 1997-98. Udyogini assists women in gaining self reliance through self employment, especially in the trade and service sector. Udyogini empowers women by providing loans through banks and other financial institutions. It also provides a subsidy from the Karnataka state women development corporation for undertaking business activities or micro enterprises. Loans are arranged through financial institutions like commercial banks and RRBs. This scheme has gone a long way in preventing women entrepreneurs from private borrowing at high rate of interest.

The scheme operating from past 10 years, has been devised for economic upliftment of women in lower economic strata of the society in all the seven taluks of the Mandy district.

Banks

The nationalized banks, district co-operative banks and women cooperative banks are empowered to sanction loans for the above scheme. More than 100 economic activities have been enlisted for sanctioning loans.

Developmental Programmes

There are various developmental programmes implemented in the district. Jawahar Rozgar Yojna is to provide employment to rural poor and the major credit linked programme implemented in the district is Swarn Jayanthi Gram Swrozgar yojana (SGSY) and Sampurna Gramina Rojgar Yojna is to provide food grains. And especially for empowerment of women the state has implemented several schemes like Udyogini, Nagara stree shakti, Devdasi rehabilitation scheme etc in the district.

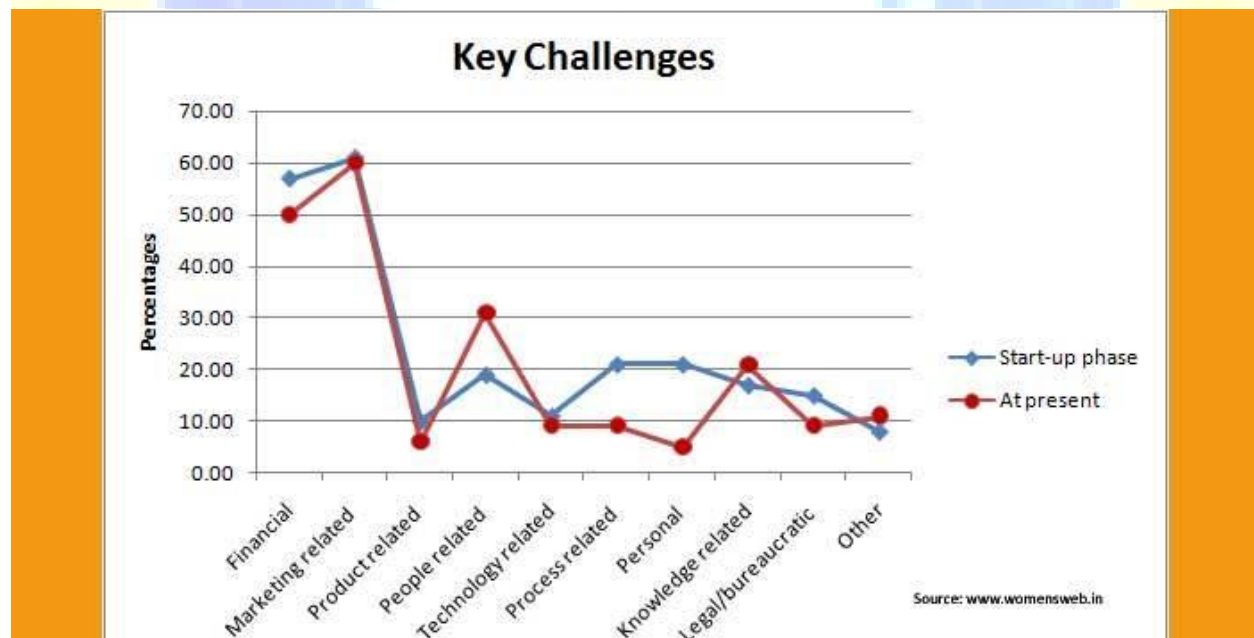


Fig 1: indicating the key challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in India

Source: Article from Women Entrepreneurship: The Road Ahead

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION²

Table 1 - Demographic profile of the Respondents

Demographic Factors	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	20 – 35 yrs	54	54
	36 – 50 yrs	40	40
	50 yrs & Above	06	06
	Total	100	100
Marital Status	Married	52	52
	Unmarried	03	03
	Widow	45	45
	Total	100	100
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	49	49
	1 st to 5 th std	33	33
	6 th to 10 th std	18	18
	Cleared 10 th std	00	00
	Total	100	100
Income (p.m)	Less than 10,000	78	78
	10,000 to 25,000	22	22
	25,000 & Above	00	00
	Total	100	100

Table 1 indicates that –

- (i) Majority of the respondents who undertake the business activity are the married women & the widow in order to take initiative for her family.
- (ii) Most of the respondents who undertake the entrepreneurial activity fall within the age group of 20 – 50 yrs & above that its very minimal in no.

² In the Calculation of Z test, Respondents with the highest response are considered as 'X' variables & the lowest response as 'Y' variables.

- (iii) Nearly 49% of the respondents are illiterate and the rest are educated only upto 5th std.
- (iv) Nearly 78% of the rural women entrepreneurs earn upto Rs 10000 /- pm while beyond that Its only minimal in no.

Table 2: Distribution & Selection of Sample sizes³

Sl No .	Kind of Business Undertaken by Rural Women	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	Total
1	Provision Stores	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
2	Bangle stores	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
3	Vegetable / Fruit vendor	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	14
4	Broom Stick vendor	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	12
5	Tailor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
6	Tea Stall	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
7	Animal Husbandry	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	14
8	Sericulture	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	20
Grand Total		12	11	09	11	09	10	10	09	10	09	100

Above table shows the distribution & selection of respondents. V1 to V 10 are the total of 10 villages in & around Mandya district undertaken for study. It was primarily the 8 diverse kinds of business activities undertaken by rural women entrepreneurs were identified. Following which 100 respondents were chosen for study on the basis of judgmental sampling.

Table 3: Problems faced by Rural Women Entrepreneurs before starting up their business

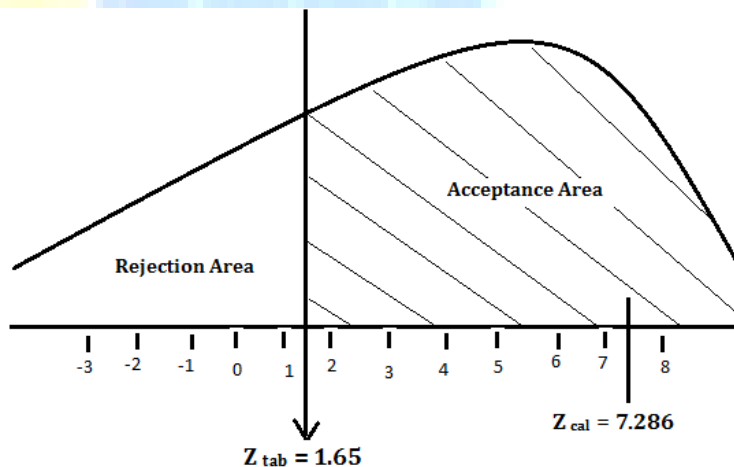
Parameters	No. of Respondents
Lack of capital	55
Lack of family support	18
Lack of confidence & faith	14
Fear of Loss	10
Fear of acceptance from Social community	03
Total	100

³ V1 to V 10 are the total of 10 villages in & around Mandya district

H_0 = Fear of Loss & acceptance from the social community are the problems which intervene in the way of rural women entrepreneur before starting up their business.

H_1 = The major problems which pull the rural women entrepreneur from starting up their own business are the lack of adequate capital, family support & their lack of confidence.

\bar{X}	\bar{Y}	σX	σY	$\sigma\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2$	Z_{cal}	Z_{tab} (One tail, Two sample test, Z at 95%)
29.33	6	22.278	5.656	3.202	7.286	1.65



Conclusion:

As $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ i.e., $7.285 > 1.65,$

Accept H_1

The major problems which pull the rural women entrepreneur from starting up their own business are the lack of adequate capital, family support & their lack of confidence.

Table 4: Objective of Rural Women Entrepreneurs to go ahead with the idea of entrepreneurship

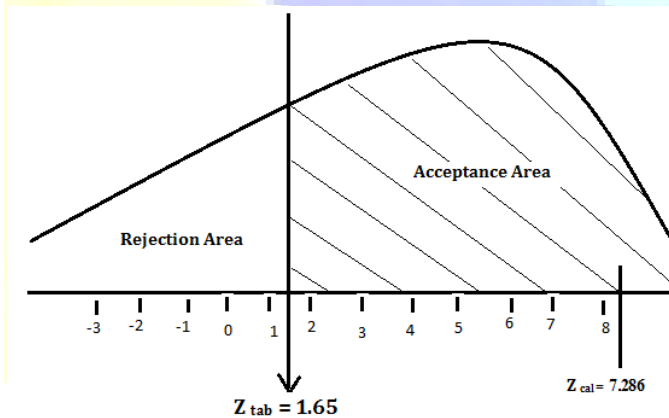
Parameters	No. of Respondents
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To earn money	57
To improve the standard of living	32
With an intension to continue the family owned business	04
take an initiative to become a helping hand for her family	07
Total	100

H_0 = The prime motive behind starting up their own business was either to continue with their family business or else to take an initiative & thus become a helping hand for their family.

H_1 = The main motive for the rural women to start up their business was to improve their standard of living by earning money.

\bar{X}	\bar{Y}	σ_X	σ_Y	$\sigma\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2$	Z_{cal}	Z_{tab} (One tail, Two sample test, Z at 95%)
39.5	5.5	24.748	2.121	4.190	8.112	1.65



Conclusion:

As $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ i.e., $8.112 > 1.65$,

Reject H_0

The prime motive behind starting up their own business was either to continue with their family business or else to take an initiative & thus become a helping hand for their family.

Table 5: Supporting hand for the Rural Women Entrepreneurs to start up their business

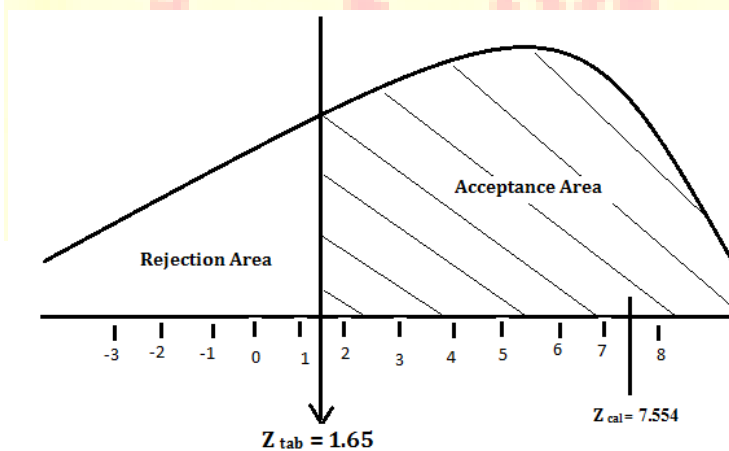
Parameters	No. of
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	Respondents
Government schemes	20
Local Supporting bodies operating in your village	42
Family	08
Loans from Banks	30
Total	100

H_0 = It was the government schemes & finally the family who extended support to start up with the business for the rural women.

H_1 = Local supporting bodies in the village & thus it was the loan borrowed from banks stood supportive to start up their business.

\bar{X}	\bar{Y}	σX	σY	$\sigma\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2$	Z_{cal}	Z_{tab} (One tail, Two sample test, Z at 95%)
36	14	8.485	8.485	2.912	7.554	1.65



Conclusion:

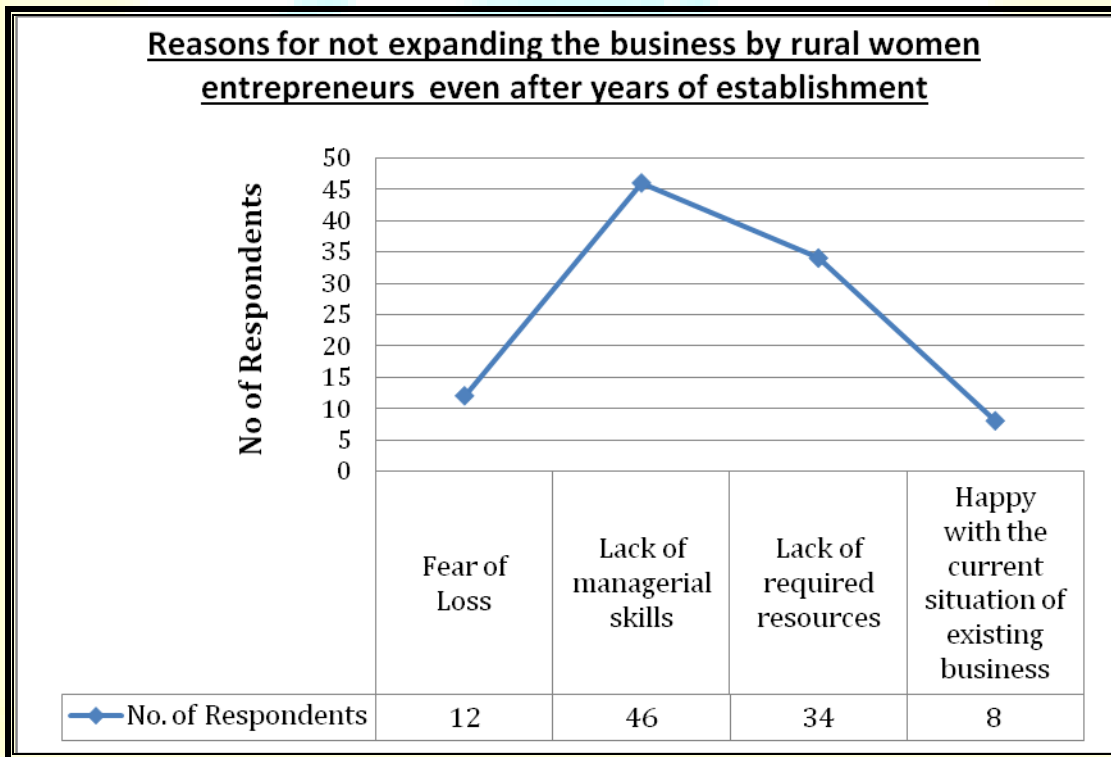
As $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ i.e., $7.554 > 1.65$,
Accept H_1

Local supporting bodies in the village & thus it was the loan borrowed from banks stood supportive to start up

their business.

Table 6: Reasons for not expanding the business by rural women entrepreneurs even after years of establishment

Parameters	No. Of Respondents
Fear of Loss	12
Lack of managerial skills	46
Lack of required resources	34
Happy with the current situation of existing business	08
Total	100



FINDINGS

1. Besides diverse government schemes emerged for the benefit of rural women entrepreneurs, it's only handful no. of women who are getting the advantage of it.
2. Majority of the Rural women are still handicapped to a greater extent with respect to the capital required to start up their business enterprise.
3. To whatever extent the society is developing, the situation of rural women still continues to be the same. i.e., Male dominance, Conservative outlook of the society, Lack of family support.
4. As the sample required was drawn around the villages of Mandya district, the major business activity taken up by rural women entrepreneurs are Animal husbandry & Sericulture.
5. Rural women thought to come out of their poverty & thereby to improve their standard of living was the main motive for them to enter into business activity.
6. Village Panchayat & Gram Seva Sangh were the supporting hands with respect to the finance.
7. But even after the years of doing business rural women entrepreneurs never think of expanding their business due to lack of managerial skill & required resources.

SUGGESTIONS

Following suggestions were found to be appropriate to remove the bottlenecks hindering the growth of rural women entrepreneurs & finally to improvise their condition:

1. The government must evolve appropriate policies to help women entrepreneurs, as the existing one are not so successful enough to have in depth reach of such rural women.
2. Networking facilities must be provided as well as adequate entrepreneurship awareness training should be provided using the help of local supporting bodies like, Gram Panchayat.
3. Sarpanch & Panchayat members are the good opinion leaders to rural women so all the government benefits should reach through them.
4. Credit facilities must be made available with low rate of interest and marketing help must be provided.

5. There is a very greater need to educate the rural men also to eliminate the conservative outlook towards rural women & thus to be supportive to them.
6. The need is to improve female literacy as education holds the key to development women in rural India.

All these will help foster a culture of entrepreneurship among women in rural India.

CONCLUSION

No economy can sustain itself without the participation of women either urban / rural. Government has devised many programs to empower rural women in various avenues but nothing can be fruitful without effective training & education. As empowering women to participate in entrepreneurial activity is not only a daunting and challenging task but also paving path for future sustainable development. Provided the rural women required support & encouragement inclusive of intensive training programmes, she can do wonders by their effectual and competent involvement in entrepreneurial activities thereby accelerating the economic growth of our country.

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Fig: Different entrepreneurial business undertaken by rural women entrepreneurs under Udyogini Scheme