

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND ITS INFLUENCE IN MANIPUR

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### ABSTRACT

*Women empowerment is an essential tool to bring about changes in their socio-economic condition. In Manipur women plays a significant role not only in economic development but also in social, political, religious etc. Entrepreneurship plays a very important role in wealth - creation and employment generation. The present study is attempts to make an in-depth study to find the relationship between the characteristics of entrepreneurs with their activity and also tries to find out the influencing factors of entrepreneurs in North Eastern Region of Manipur State, India. In order to collect field data, both the structured interview, discussion and observation methods were monitored of 207 entrepreneurs in SMEs sector. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis and regression analysis were used to achieve the objectives. The study also shows the educational qualification of the respondents and success has significant relationship. The study also depicted that most of the enterprise are at the age of 6 to 10 years. The success and durability of the enterprise have significant relationship. The study further shows that necessity for increasing income is the most important factor that influences entrepreneurs to start their own enterprise.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Women Empowerment, development, factor analysis and regression analysis..

## **INTRODUCTION:**

At the time of India's independence, the socio-economic scenario was characterized by a predominantly rural economy with feudal structure. There was widespread poverty, dismal literacy rate, geographically and culturally isolated population, a rigid social structure and extremely poor transport and communication system. The state leaders and policymakers during the initial years of development planning were also not adequately familiarized to development activities. In view of the impediment to social and economic development, the pivot of the planning process had been pivoted on the strategic goal of 'economic development with social justice' (Datta 2002). Thus, the planning process in India, over the years, underscored the development of backward areas and disadvantaged population groups. Sustainable poverty reduction in the underdeveloped regions can come about only if other sectors of the economy grow rapidly. It is imperative, therefore, to ensure that the growth process is inclusive and pro-poor (Dev 2004). Entrepreneurship plays a very important role in wealth creation and employment generation. The entrepreneur who implements 'new combinations of means of production' plays a crucial role in generating the conditions for increasing opportunities for employment; additional wealth creation; introduction and dissemination of new methods and technology; and overall economic growth. Entrepreneurship depends on individual experiences, socio-cultural (including family) traditions, educational opportunities, availability of relevant skills and attitudes, supporting financial institutions and access to credit, existence of commercial trading centres, supporting infrastructure including trade routes with efficient transport and communication facilities, macro-economic environment and overall political stability. The concept on entrepreneurship is an old and complex phenomenon. It relates to the entrepreneur vision and its implementation. Entrepreneurship introduces a critical element of dynamism into an economic system. Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional term that is extremely difficult to define (Carree & Thurik, 2005). Entrepreneurship is a fundamental concept linking different academic disciplines – notably economics, sociology and history. Development of entrepreneurship has become more acceptable in social terms and is regarded as an activity that brings satisfaction from the economic aspect (Murphy et al., 2006). The most recent and authentic definition of entrepreneurship with special reference to India is given by the National Knowledge Commission (NKC: 2008) of India. NKC defines entrepreneurship as the professional application of knowledge, skills and competencies a new idea, by an individual or a set of people by launching an enterprise to pursue growth while generating wealth, employment and social good'. Manipur, one of the seven sisters of the North Eastern Region of India, The word Manipur literally means "a jewelled land" is a charming place encircled by nine hill ranges on all sides with a small and beautiful oval shaped valley at the centre. Manipur has a geographical area of 22,329 sq. kms, which constitutes 0.7% of the total land surface area of India. Entrepreneurship should be encouraged in Manipur to increase employment opportunities and to increase the livelihood of the people. The present study is conducted to shows the characteristics of women empowerment that influence entrepreneurs to start their own enterprise in SMEs sector and also studies the factors.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

There are various attempts in the literature to develop a comprehensive understanding of empowerment through breaking the process down into key components. The frameworks suggest by various authors suggests that women's empowerment needs to occur along the following dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, interpersonal, legal, political and psychological. However, these dimensions are broad in scope and there is a range of sub-domains within which women may be empowered. Acharya, (1983) studied on Nepal women empowerment in different dimensions like role in farm management, domestic and resource allocation by taking the independent variables as market labour and unpaid family labour .They came to a conclusion that, bringing women into the market economy positively affects their influence in resource allocation and domestic decision- making. Entrepreneurs are willing to work hard and to achieve excellent despite the challenges and threats in the environment. The high needs of achievement presents in the entrepreneurs drive them to excel others. And strive to achieve the goals which are difficult to achieve by other ordinary people. The strong need to be independent or autonomous individual is another driving force associated with the entrepreneur. They dislike controls from outsider. Entrepreneurs also like to see the problem solved through their involved efforts. They do not like to avoid the problems but like to be effective and instrumental in solving problems. For an organization to be successful, Ayadurai & Ahmad (2006) believe that the entrepreneur must possess characteristics which are innovative, creative, far sighted, never give up attitude and independent as well as good network. Frankenberg & Thomas, (2001) studied on women empowerment in Indonesia the indicators of empowerment were the women role in household decision making, Control over cash, spending and time use. They have taken

independent variables as relative status of husbands and wife's at marriage, e.g., education, age, social status of family of origin. They found out that status influence financial arrangements and decision making power. Alam (2011) pointed out that family support, social ties and internal influencing have positively and significant effect on the success of women entrepreneurs in the small business of Southern Region of Malaysia. Shabir & Gregorio (1996) conducted a study of potential businesswomen in Pakistan to investigate the influencing factors behind their decision to start a new business venture. The study reveals that they are mainly influenced by personal freedom, security and satisfaction. The influencing factors may vary among different regions of the same country (Benzing, Chu, & Callanen, 2005). The entrepreneurs in major cities and relatively developed regions are generally influenced by their intrinsic needs while the entrepreneurs in country side areas are generally influenced by their extrinsic needs. Personal security and family security are also among the major factors that play influencing role for the entrepreneurs to start a new venture (Swierczek & Ha, 2003). Benzing, Chu & Kara (2009) suggest that the influencing factors can be divided into four categories i.e. (1) economic factors, (2) independence, (3) internal satisfaction, and (4) personal and family security. The economic situation in Pakistan may lead to a general perception that the major influencing of the small entrepreneurs would include financial aspects. High achievement influencing has been associated with some aspects of venture performance (Begly & Boyd, 1987). Stewart et al. (1998) also reported that entrepreneurs were higher in achievement influencing than both corporate managers and small-business owner managers. Estaw (1991) asserts that experience is the best predictor of business success, especially when the new business is related to earlier business experiences. Entrepreneurs with vast experiences in managing business are more capable of finding ways to open new business compared to employees with different career pathways. Typically, this experience is gained from parents, role models, or job experiences in small organizations. Undertaking the role of an apprentice helps the entrepreneur to develop a future strategy for establishing a personal venture. Carter et al., (2004) study indicated that perhaps the most popular reason for starting a new business, financial success involves reasons that describe an individual's intention to earn more money and achieve financial security. Hussain & Yaqub (2010) revealed that the major influencing behind entering into the micro-business venture was self-employment. Employment of family member is also an important factor that influences the micro-entrepreneurs to launch a venture. Kalyani & Kumar (2011) made a study on influencing factors and entrepreneurship. It revealed that emerging role of women in modern entrepreneurial ventures. The most important factor that influences any new business entrepreneur is the amount he or she needs to be invested in a new business venture. The requirement of capital for a business venture is same for all kind of businesses and it is not different from small and medium sector business ventures. Assessing success is somewhat complex due to a deficiency of agreement what comprises entrepreneurial success. Success can be measured in term of economic and non-economic factors. Business performance literature has said that financial performance is an important indicator of business success. Paige & Litetrel (2002) defined success as intrinsic criteria which include freedom and independence, controlling a person's own future and being one's own boss; whilst extrinsic outcomes are among others, increased financial return, personal income and wealth. Non-economic performance of small businesses has been granted importance in entrepreneurship studies (Brown & Hunlon, 2005; Dess & Robinson, 1984 & Huang, 2008). They suggest that subjective measure is as good as objective or economic measure with proven convergent and discriminate validity in entrepreneurship field of research (Dess & Robinson). Indrati (2010) identify success factors of Indonesian SMEs and the analyses concluded that education and source of capital were significantly related to business success.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

To investigate the objectives of the present study of women empowerment in Manipur, the following research methodology was employed in this study: The type of research followed in the present study is descriptive in nature as to portray the status of entrepreneurs and enterprises availing in Manipur and also to find out the influencing factors of entrepreneurs in starting their enterprise. Information was collected from the entrepreneurs of the SMEs using structured questionnaires and interview. The stratified random sampling method was used to construct the sample used for the study.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To examine the demographic profile of entrepreneurs in Manipur.
2. To analyse the influencing factors of entrepreneurs in Manipur.

**Null Hypothesis:**

Ho1: There is no relationship between the influencing factor and profile of entrepreneurs

Ho2: All the influencing factors are not equally important to the entrepreneurs

**Research Design :**

The study covered the valley districts of Manipur. The process of data collection was based on the research objectives 207 sets of questionnaires were usable for further analysis and were used as the primary data in the present study. The data were collected using interview schedule. The instrument used in the interview schedule was developed through a literature review, mainly based on the study conducted by Stefanovic, Prokic & Rankovic (2010) and several items were developed by the researcher in order to realise the research’s objective. The questionnaire consists of the items related to influencing factors in starting their enterprise. Every item used a 5 - point Likert Scale ranging from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree. To test the reliability of the items, reliability test has been conducted. The value of the Cronbach’s alpha is 0.653, we can conclude that the data has a good reliability.

**Statistical tools:**

Data analysis methodology used in the present study is descriptive. The data collected was tabulated and analysis has been made. The results were processed with simple statistical methods like percentage, mean and standard deviation. To measure the success, qualitative method was used. The respondents were asked to rate degree of the entrepreneurial influence of their enterprise. The present study follows the model used by to achieve the objective of the present study, factor and regression analysis were used. Principal- components method of factor analysis was used in the present study. For rotation of the variables, varimax method has been performed.

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION:**

Analyse and discuss the result of the data according to the objectives of the study.

**General profile of the respondents:**

Table 1 shows the profile of the sample entrepreneurs. Out of the 207 sample respondents, it is found that maximum of the respondents are male which accounted for 63.8%. Regarding the age of the respondents 42% respondents are in the age group of 41-50, followed by 22% respondents in 31-40 age group. Respondents included in the study includes 44% graduate and 23.2% of respondents have their educational qualification upto higher secondary. Regarding the type of family, it is found that 42.5% belongs to joint family. Regarding the age of the enterprise it is found that 36.2% enterprises are in the age group of 10 yrs and more which is followed by enterprise in the age group of 6-10 years. 84.1% of the enterprises are registered under sole proprietorship. The sample enterprises distributing over the main economic sectors, 27.5% firms are in handloom, 25.1% are in manufacturing sectors while 14.5% firms are in handicraft sector. It can be seen that maximum firms 42% are in handloom and handicraft sector. Regarding the origin of the enterprise, 58% of the enterprises are founded by the sample entrepreneurs themselves. 46.9% enterprises were started by the sample entrepreneur with their own capital and 19.3% enterprises were started with the loan from commercial banks.

**Table 1: Profile of Entrepreneurs**

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age of the entrepreneur	25-35	47	21
		36-45	60	23
		46-50	87	50
		51 and above	13	6
2	Educational qualification	Primary	11	5.3
		High school	26	12.6
		Higher secondary	48	23.4
		Graduate	91	44
		Post graduate	31	15
3	Family types	Nuclear	78	37.7
		Joint family	88	42.5
		Extended family	41	19.8

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
4	Average working hours	Less than 6 hrs	8	3.9
		7-9 hrs	77	37.2
		More than 10 hrs	86	41.5
5	Age of the enterprise	Below 2 yrs	13	6.3
		3-5 yrs	52	25.1
		6-10 yrs	67	32.4
		More than 10yrs	75	36.2
6	Type of business	Sole proprietorship	174	84.1
		Partnership	18	8.7
		Private company	7	3.4
		Co-operative	8	3.8
7	Type of industry	Handicrafts	35	16.9
		Handloom	57	27.5
		Agriculture and allied	10	4.8
		Service	31	15
		Food and beverage	22	10.6
		Manufacturing	52	25.1
8	Origins of business	Purchased	45	21.7
		Founded	120	58
		Inherited	37	17.9
		Others	5	2.4
9	Sources of start-up capital	Owned capital	97	46.9
		Commercial banks	40	19.3
		Family members	31	15
		Friends	24	11.6
		Others	15	7.2

Source: Survey Data

The researchers further conducted Chi square analysis to shows relationship between influencing factor and characteristics of entrepreneurs and enterprise.

In the present study area, it is found that age of entrepreneurs, gender and educational qualification of the entrepreneurs has significant relationship with the degree of influencing factor. The study inferred that average hour committed by entrepreneurs for their business has no significant relationship with the degree of influencing factor. Thus there is a significant relationship of education qualification and influencing factor in the present study. The study also reveals that length of business, type of business and source of capital have significant relationship with the degree of influencing factor. Type of industry and origin of enterprise are not significant with the degree of influencing factor for the sample.

**FACTORS INFLUENCING ENTREPRENEURS IN STARTING THE ENTERPRISE:**

In this present study, the literatures relating to influencing factors and identified 12 attributes that can influence entrepreneurs in starting the business. The respondents were requested to express their opinion on the influence of those attributes on a 5 point Likert-scale. The mean and standard deviation of each attribute are shown in Table 2. The calculated mean score is divided into high, moderate and low influencing factors. It is found that the most important reason to start the enterprise is to increase their income. This result is accomplished with the result of Stefanovic (2010). To be my own boss, to increase the income, to gain public recognition, to provide job for family members, for own satisfaction and growth and to have greater freedom to adopt own approach to work which have high influencing factors for starting the business. To be able to develop previous experience and training, to build a business to pass on, was dissatisfied with previous job, wanted to follow the example of someone I admired and wanted to continue a family tradition are attributes that have moderately influence entrepreneurs in starting the business in the study area.

A Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.644 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at 0.000. The value KMO is greater than 0.5. The factor analysis for data reduction is effective in this



present study. Table 3 also shows the factor analysis that lead to four factors, which accounts for 57.43% of the total variance. The factors are family concern factor, greater business achievement factor, independence factor and intrinsic factor. The first factor is referred as “family security” consists of influence attribute 10, 11 & 12. This implies that concern about their family and to follow someone they admires influence entrepreneurs. This factor explains about 21.71% of the variance. The second factor is referred to as “greater business achievement factor”. It consists of influences 2, 3, 4 & 5. This implies that entrepreneurs are influenced to increase their income and also to develop their previous experience. This factor explains 14.71% of variance. The third factor is referred as “independence factor”. It contains influences 7, 8 & 9. Entrepreneurs want to have more freedom and challenge themselves. This factor accounts for 11.83% of variance. The fourth factor is named as “intrinsic factor” that consists of influences 1 & 6. This factor accounts for 9.18% of variance. This signifies that entrepreneurs need to be their own boss and to achieve a significance level of satisfaction and growth.

**Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, Principal component factor analysis, factor loadings and communalities for influencing attributes**

Sl. No	Factors	Mean	S.D.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Communities
1	To be my own boss.	4.15	.915	.133	.137	.028	<b>.808</b>	.690
2	To be able to develop previous experience and training.	3.95	.805	-.157	<b>.315</b>	.246	.248	.246
3	To increase the income	4.51	.573	-.188	<b>.668</b>	.111	.112	.506
4	To gain public recognition	4.09	.712	.095	<b>.745</b>	-.031	-.206	.608
5	To provide job for family members.	4.19	.736	.171	<b>.723</b>	-.153	.133	.592
6	For own satisfaction and growth.	4.13	.905	.021	-.074	.082	<b>.838</b>	.715
7	Was dissatisfied with previous job	3.95	.907	.446	.255	<b>.451</b>	-.012	.468
8	To have greater freedom to adopt own approach to work.	4.16	.812	.032	-.124	<b>.844</b>	.094	.737
9	To challenge myself	4.05	.923	.263	-.012	<b>.723</b>	.025	.593
10	To built a business to pass on.	3.09	1.020	<b>.448</b>	.219	.356	.133	.393
11	Wanted to follow the example of someone I admired	3.31	.956	<b>.806</b>	-.054	.036	.103	.665
12	Wanted to continue a family tradition	3.01	1.119	<b>.803</b>	-.080	.160	-.025	.678
	% of variance			21.71	14.71	11.83	9.18	

Source: Survey Data

**Relationship between influencing factors and the overall influencing behaviour of entrepreneurs:**

After finding out the factors involved in starting business enterprise, the next step is to find out the relationship between the influencing factors and the overall influencing behaviour of entrepreneurs in the study area.

Table 4 shows the result of linear regression analysis between the influencing factors and the influencing behaviour. In model 1, the co-efficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.550 indicating that 55% of variation in the influencing behaviour of the entrepreneur can be explained by “family security factor” included in the model. The co-efficient determination ( $R^2$ ) in the model 2, 3 & 4 were 0.23, 0.509 & 0.259 respectively. The F-value in all the four (4) models indicates that the regression was significant at one % level and it is valid to draw inference.

The regression analysis predicted in Model 2 also inferred that influencing behaviour of entrepreneurs was significantly influence by “greater business achievement factor”. 1% increase in the factor 1 keeping all factors constant will increase the influencing behaviour of the entrepreneurs by 23%.

In Model 3,  $R^2$  of the “independence factor” also indicates that 50% of the variation in influencing behaviour is explained by independence factor. 1% increase in the factor 1 keeping all factors constant will increase the

influencing behaviour of the entrepreneurs by 50%.

In Model 4 that the influencing factor of entrepreneur was also influenced by intrinsic factor. The co-efficient of  $R^2$  was 0.259 which indicated that 25% of the variation in the influencing behaviour is explained by factor 4. 1% increase in the factor 1 keeping all factors constant will increase the influencing behaviour of the entrepreneurs by 25% from the mean value.

The result also shows that family security, greater business achievement, independence and intrinsic factors have a significant relationship with the overall influencing factor. It also indicates the Beta values that allow researchers to make comparisons regarding the relative importance of the independent variables. Based on the values, family security factor (beta=0.741) has a greater impact followed by “independence factor” (beta=0.713) which is then followed by “intrinsic factor” (beta=0.509) on overall influencing behaviour and “greater business achievement factor” (beta=0.480) has least impact on the influencing behaviour of entrepreneur in the study area.

**Table 3: Mean & standard deviation of the factors**

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 1	3.135	.780
Factor 2	4.183	.448
Factor 3	4.053	.660
Factor 4	4.137	.770
Overall mean	3.881	.399

**Table 4: Regression analysis of the factors**

Model	R	R Square	beta	t	F	Sig.
1	.741(a)	.550	.741	15.816	250.160	.000
2	.480(b)	.230	.480	7.829	61.294	.000
3	.713(c)	.509	.713	14.574	212.411	.000
4	.509(d)	.259	.509	8.474	71.810	.000

**Dependent Variable:** overall influencing behaviour

- a. Predictor: (Constant), family concern factor
- b. Predictor: (Constant), greater business achievement factor
- c. Predictor: (Constant), independence factor
- d. Predictor: (Constant), intrinsic factor

**IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY:**

We believe that the findings of this research have revealed some interesting implications for future practitioners and researchers whose aim is to study women entrepreneurs in general. The results show that most of the women entrepreneurs are middle-aged, married and concentrate on the handloom industry. While it is not fair to generalize these findings as surely women entrepreneurs are not a homogenous group, a clearer understanding of women entrepreneurs is needed. Zapalska et al. (2005) state that this is important in order for future researches to be able to improve the business environment in a way that fosters entrepreneurial growth. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents were founded to be origins of the business. Perhaps a better understanding of women entrepreneurs would be available if the characteristics of women entrepreneurs according to their position in the family were to be assessed. While the sum of small parts is important in differentiating different characteristics, it might be a good idea to ascertain the bigger picture in order to get a better view of the topic. Another implication that can be taken into consideration for future research is the fact that though the respondents valued being independent and being their own boss, they prefer own capital. This is an important implication as there are signs that in the future the values that women find important will be in demand. A study could be done on this as it is certainly a factor that affects success in business.

**CONCLUSION:**

Woman’s perceived interests linked to home life may adversely affect her empowerment outcomes. It is found from the study, women empowerment improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women today are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the preserve of men

and have proved that they are second to no one with respect to contribution to the growth of economy. Small units are not only vital for the survival of the women entrepreneurs but also for developing the economy. In a situation where employment opportunities have been stagnant, resurgences of entrepreneurship is inevitable. The study focussed on a brief profile of entrepreneurs; enterprise and factors that influence entrepreneurship. From the present study we can conclude that maximum of the sample entrepreneurs are male and most of the entrepreneurs are in the age group of 46-50 yrs. Women should be encourage to take up entrepreneur by giving proper training. The study also shows the educational qualification of the respondents and success has significant relationship. The study also depicted that most of the enterprise are of the age of 6 years and more. The success and longevity of the enterprise have significant relationship. The study further shows that need for increasing income is the most important factor that influences entrepreneurs to start their own enterprise. Family member security was also one of the important factors that influence entrepreneurship in the study area. From the results the concern authority can take up necessary steps to boost entrepreneurship in the state of Manipur. By influencing youth to become entrepreneurs, unemployment problem prevailing in the state can be solved and economic conditions of the people can be improved. Further research to verify the results of this study could be conducted through more empirical cross-cultural and cross-national studies in different parts of the world. In addition, further studies to investigate similarities and distinguishing characteristics of the entrepreneurs from various nationalities could be done.

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