



**Full Length Research Article**

**AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF RURAL MICRO ENTERPRISES AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN  
SALEM DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU**

**\*Dr. R. Asokan**

Department of Economics, DDE, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002, India

**ARTICLE INFO**

**Article History:**

Received 06<sup>th</sup> December, 2013  
Received in revised form  
18<sup>th</sup> January, 2014  
Accepted 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2014  
Published online 05<sup>th</sup> March, 2014

**Key words:**

Micro enterprises,  
Empowerment,  
Gender inequality,  
Micro loans,  
Self-help groups.

**ABSTRACT**

The present study is concerned with factors determining women empowerment through micro enterprises. More specifically this study makes an attempt to analyze the enterprises activities in Salam District by covering five blocks. Further, the study has found that micro enterprises activities made enormous change in generation of employment, income, social mobility, communication skills, entrepreneurial skills and that ultimately resulted in women empowerment in Salem District.

Copyright © 2014. Dr. R. Asokan. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

**INTRODUCTION**

Micro enterprise involves identification of innovative and creative activities suited to the specific environment in which the poor people are living, which try to solve the problems faced by the community and also by using the technological knowhow already available. Micro enterprise development is a means for empowering women, especially economic empowerment. These Micro enterprises are carried out on a group as well as on an individual basis at the rural and urban areas (Ram 2009). Micro enterprises are an integral part of planned strategy for securing balanced development of the economy of the poor women. Empowering women particularly rural women is a challenge. Micro enterprises in rural area can help to meet these challenges (Shobana & Junofy 2009). Micro-enterprises not only enhance national productivity, generate employment but also help to develop economic independence, personal and social capabilities among rural women (Prabha 2009). Economic empowerment of women by micro entrepreneurship led to the empowerment of women in many things such as socio-economic opportunity, property rights, political representation, social equality, personal right,

family development, market development, community development and at last the nation development (Lipi 2009). In India, the trickle down approach of macroeconomic policies has failed to resolve the problem of gender inequality. Women have been the vulnerable section of society and constitute a sizeable segment of the poverty-struck population. Women face gender specific barriers to access education health, employment etc. Micro enterprises deal with women below the poverty line. Micro loans are available solely and entirely to this target group of women through government programmes like SGSY. There are several reason for this: Among the poor, the poor women are most disadvantaged –they are characterized by lack of education and access of resources, both of which is required to help them work their way out of poverty and for upward economic and social mobility. The problem is more acute for women in countries like India, despite the fact that women's labour makes a critical contribution to the economy. This is due to the low social status and lack of access to key resources. Evidence shows that groups of women are better customers than men, the better managers of resources. If loans are routed through women, benefits of loans are spread wider among the household. Since women's empowerment is the key to socio economic development of the community; bringing women into the mainstream of national development has been a major concern of government. The ministry of rural development has special

**\*Corresponding author: Dr. R. Asokan**

Department of Economics, DDE, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002, India

components for women in its programmes. Funds are earmarked as "Women's component" to ensure flow of adequate resources for the same. Besides Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Ministry of Rural Development is implementing other scheme having women's component. They are Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Restructured Rural Sanitation Programme (RRSP), Accelerated Rural Water Supply programme (ARWSP), Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), the (erstwhile) Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and the Jowahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). In view of the factors observed above, the present study makes an attempt to analyse the factors determining women empowerment under different types of micro enterprises viz., agriculture oriented, business oriented and service oriented in Salem Districts of Tamil Nadu.

### Review of Literature

A study by Hisrich and Bruch (1994) has described the role of informal sector and micro enterprises in the development of rural areas. The study has found that all in the rural areas, informal micro enterprises have shown a remarkable position in generation of employment and women empowerment and further helps achieving overall development. Agnilar (2000) has made an observation that micro finance is a way of providing the opportunities to take a productive and active role in the rural economy. The essence of the study lies in pointing out the fact that micro finance creates income and bargaining power among rural women and thereby encouraging empowerment. Sixna (2001) has analysed the micro enterprises of silk weaving units managed by women entrepreneurs in Karnataka and West Bengal. The author has noticed that the activities of women entrepreneurs are very much limited and the activity is undertaken as household unit. Further, income derived from the silk industry under micro enterprises is very meager and marginal. Therefore, author have emphasized that the silk industry under micro enterprises has wider scope for generating employment and in work which will enhance the empowerment of Women. in the rural areas of both the states.

Guptha and Srivastava (2001) have revealed that SHGs are considered as one of the most significant tools and a great participatory approach for the economic empowerment of women. In short the authors found the positive relationship exists between micro credit and micro enterprises by way of establishing micro enterprises. As far as the role of institutions in rural development is concerned, SHGs are the important institutions for improving the life of women in rural areas on various socially and economically empowering components. World Development Report (2001-2002) pointed out that the evolution of micro finance has taken due to concern of developing countries for empowerment of the poor women and the alleviation of poverty. In addition, it may be observed from the report that access to credit has led to avoid distress, and encourage the rural poor women in terms of income, saving and investment which in turn influence the empowerment of the women. Mohanan (2002) has focused on the functioning of NGO SEVAL established in Tamil Nadu. This has been in operation in major districts of Tamil Nadu viz., Thiruchirapally, Karur, Erode and Nagapattinam. The study has found that organizational development and human development is far effective and they seem to be the two sides

of the same coin for SEVAI (Society for Education Village Action and Improvement). Finally, the study pointed out that SEVAI has indeed made a creditable performance in the process of social mobilization and women empowerment under SHGs by horizontally linking the communities and vertically linking the villages. Jothi and Sundar (2002) are of the view that micro enterprises are greatly involved in production and marketing activities. This has resulted in generation of employment, income and empowerment of rural women in Tamil Nadu. Ramachandran and Seilan (2005) have analyzed the socio-economic empowerment of women under micro enterprises in Kanyakumari district. These micro enterprises involve in rearing milk animals, pot making, cottage industries, and handloom enterprises. The authors concluded that the activities of the micro enterprises have played a vital role in women empowerment, social solidarity and socio-economic betterment of the poor women in the district. Suman Jain (2006) has noted that NGOs play a significant role in the income generation of women in rural areas. The author has made an observation that many NGOs have started special entrepreneurial development programmes to motivate the rural women and improve their skills and efficiency. Thus, the study pointed out micro enterprises can serve four objectives viz., employment generation, poverty reduction, empowerment of women and enterprise development as an end.

A study made by NABARD (2006) revealed that among the SHG members the loan provided for productive purposes has been utilized mostly for unproductive purposes as compared to productive purposes. But under the enterprises activities at later stage the scenario has entirely changed. Now the loans are properly utilized for productive purpose and the end result is there is increase in employment among rural women and income and women empowerment. Kalpana Shankar (2007) pointed that family-based micro enterprises established through loans from SHGs seem to be the most successful experiences from the Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project, supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Further, it is an interesting observation to be made here is that they are able to reap the benefits of their hard work and get access to cheaper credit and it leads to women empowerment. Therefore the study concluded that the need of the areas of food processing, textiles, vegetable cultivation, etc. In addition, it is suggested that women need ideas in terms of expanding their business and skills training to become successful business entrepreneurs. It is clear from the above discussed literature that micro enterprises activities are capable of improving women economic status along with empowerment.

### Objectives

- To analyse the factors determining women empowerment through rural micro enterprises
- To probe into the factors determining women empowerment under different categories of urban accesses in the different types of micro enterprises viz., agriculture oriented, business oriented and service oriented.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey design of the present study is based on multistage disproportionate stratified random sampling incorporated at

four different stages viz., selection of the district, selection of five blocks in the district, selection of ten villages from five blocks and selection of micro entrepreneurs are identified from the selected villages. In the first stage of the survey design, Salem district is selected. The rationale behind the selection of this district is that Salem is one of the successful districts for implementing micro enterprises development related programmes viz., SGSY, DWCRA, TADCO and TWDC and it is one of the top five districts in terms of Gender Development (GDI-0.625). Further, under gender development programme the prime objective is developing rural micro enterprises. Since these programmes focus on group approach, the major beneficiaries of these programmes are women. The next stage is to select five blocks in Salem district. The reasons for selection of those blocks are predominantly rural blocks and there is no townships covered from these study area. Further, the Researcher find even in the Head Quarters of blocks are considered as Town Panchayats. So, the researcher selected these predominantly covered rural blocks and the present study sharply covered these rural blocks. The sample blocks are Vazhapady, Peddanaikkan Palayam, Panamarathupatty, Thalaivasal and Gangavalli. Among those blocks Paramarathupatty block situated in high urban access area, Vazhapaddy block situated in moderate urban access area. Other blocks viz., Gangavalli, Peddanaikanpalayam and Thalaivasal are situated in low urban access area.

In the third stage, ten village panchayats were selected. Two villages namely Seshamchavadi and Thukkiampalayam are coming Vazhapaddy block and the villages Vadukatham patty and Periyakrishnapuram come under Peddanaikkan Palayam block. Further in Panamarathupatty block, Thasanaikkan patty and Gajjalnaikken Patty villages were selected and two villages Sathapady and Deviakurichi were selected from Thalaivasal block. In Gangavalli block, Nakiampatty and Kodamalai villages were selected. The reason for selection of those villages, there are more number of micro enterprises activities developed by Women Self Help Groups. The crucial stage in the sampling process is the selection of sample micro enterprises from the selected ten villages. From all the sample villages, micro women entrepreneurs are interviewed for the present study. In which, 15 samples from each villages were selected. The primary data are collected from the selection of micro enterprises households through well structured interview schedule. The primary data of the present study relate to demographic particulars like caste, family size, age, education, occupation etc., and economic parameters like land, buildings, live stock, income, saving, income from micro enterprises activities, Institutional loan and training availability are recorded. Since the urban access is a major factor in determining the successful functioning of rural microenterprises, the access to urban area is taken in to the study. As a yardstick, on the basis of distance it is classified in to three categories viz., Low Urban Access, Moderate Urban Access and High Urban Access. Further, it is brought under the whole analysis of the present study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to examine various factors, which cause variation in determining the women empowerment and spatial mobility under different types of micro enterprises, the linear multiple regression model has been employed.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_{14} X_{14} + \epsilon$$

where

Y	=	Ability to purchase
X <sub>1</sub>	=	Age (No. of years)
X <sub>2</sub>	=	Community
X <sub>3</sub>	=	Educational Status
X <sub>4</sub>	=	Employment
X <sub>5</sub>	=	Income
X <sub>6</sub>	=	Savings
X <sub>7</sub>	=	Business and Service
X <sub>8</sub>	=	Decision Making Power
X <sub>9</sub>	=	Higher Urban Access
X <sub>10</sub>	=	Moderate Urban Access
X <sub>11</sub>	=	Agency
X <sub>12</sub>	=	Amount of Loan borrowed
X <sub>13</sub>	=	Family Occupation
X <sub>14</sub>	=	Participation in Training Programme

$\epsilon$ , are normally, identically and independently distributed with mean '0' (zero) and variation ' $\sigma^2$ '.

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_{14}$  are the parameters to be estimated.

The above model has been applied separately for the ability to purchase and spatial mobility by the method of least squares.

The result of linear model on the ability to purchase is shown in Table- 1. The value of co-efficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that all the fourteen independent variables have jointly exhibited 0.11 per cent variation in the purchase of food grains under micro enterprises. It is followed by live stock which recorded 0.10 per cent of variation, household and utensils 0.08 per cent, cloths for children 0.02, and it is least for the purchase of cloths for self at 0.01. Further, it is found that the ability to purchase jewel has also improved. It implies that out of 100 per cent of variation, food grains contribute maximum to the tune of 0.11 per cent, 0.10 per cent for live stock, 0.08 for household utensils, 0.02 for cloths for children 0.01 per cent for cloths for self and purchase of jewels also shown 0.01 level of variation among the micro enterprises.

The 'F' ratios are found to be statistically significant, which are based on  $R^2$  in the ability to purchase food grains are found to be significant at 5 per cent level, house hold utensils at 1.89 per cent level of significance, and livestock is found to be at 5 per cent level of significance. In addition, purchase of cloths for children has also been found to be significant at 5 per cent level. Therefore, it may be revealed that this model is suitable to analyse the factors determine the mobility to purchase among the women entrepreneurs. Out of 14 independent variables, higher access to urban areas is found to be statistically significant at 5 per cent level. Similarly, moderate urban access and family occupation have been found to be statistically significant at 5 per cent level. It implies the fact that when higher urban access and moderate urban access increase, that lead to an increase in the ability to purchase under the micro enterprises in the study region. Similarly, it is highly encouraging to notice that where the family occupation is fully concentrated on micro enterprises there is an upward trend in the ability to purchase among the micro enterprises. Further, it derived from the results that age group of the women entrepreneurs is negatively correlated to the ability to purchase and in the case of community also, it is positively

**Table 1. Determinants of Perceived Improvement in Ability to Purchase: Regression Estimates**

S. No	Variable	ABILITY TO PURCHASE					
		Food Grains	Household Utensils	Cloths for Children	Cloths of Self	Jewels	Livestock
1.	Constant	2.24 (2.61)	1.84 (2.49)	1.99 (2.18)	2.04 (3.27)	2.65 (2.70)	2.56 (2.59)
2.	Age Group	0.08 (0.69)	0.11 (1.15)	0.05 (0.42)	0.02 (0.47)	0.03 (0.24)	0.04 (0.33)
3.	Community	0.01 (0.11)	0.11 (1.45)	0.03 (0.29)	0.00 (0.37)	0.07 (0.28)	0.05 (0.46)
4.	Educational Status	0.01 (0.11)	0.09 (1.49)	0.04 (0.50)	0.00 (0.23)	0.07 (0.28)	0.00 (0.05)
5.	Employment	0.09 (1.29)	1.56 (0.90)	2.13 (0.98)	3.12 (0.43)	0.09 (1.09)	0.89 (0.18)
6.	Income	0.08** (0.64)	1.18** (2.21)	1.27** (1.27)	0.56 (0.68)	1.13 (0.86)	1.22 (0.95)
7.	Saving	0.02 (0.10)	0.53 (1.31)	0.03 (0.21)	0.00 (0.06)	0.02 (0.08)	0.88 (0.12)
8.	Business and Service (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	0.16* (0.93)	0.17* (1.42)	0.08 (0.51)	3.11 (1.42)	0.05 (0.39)	0.20 (1.25)
9.	Decision Making Power	0.04 (0.27)	0.24 (1.68)	0.01 (0.08)	0.02 (1.51)	0.12 (0.72)	0.20 (1.25)
10.	High Urban Access (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	1.05 (2.01)	0.48** (-2.69)	0.35** (1.35)	0.00** (0.35)	2.09 (1.48)	0.25 (1.30)
11.	Moderate Urban Access (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	0.36** (2.12)	1.47** (2.26)	2.12 (1.65)	0.1** (0.56)	0.03 (0.13)	0.05 (0.32)
12.	Agency (TWDC = 1:0 Otherwise)	0.17 (1.13)	0.09 (1.69)	0.20 (1.24)	0.00 (0.70)	2.15 (1.76)	0.30 (1.55)
13.	Amount of Loan Borrowed	0.02 (0.42)	0.03 (0.70)	0.02 (0.39)	0.40** (2.78)	0.27 (1.59)	0.46** (2.65)
14.	Family Occupation (Yes = 1)	0.45** (2.61)	0.23** (1.54)	0.33** (1.76)	0.03* (0.29)	0.00 (0.70)	2.05 (1.03)
15.	Participation in Training Programme (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	0.07 (0.46)	0.16 (1.25)	0.03 (0.20)	0.00 (0.03)	1.03 (0.46)	2.11 (1.64)
	Adjusted R Square	0.52	0.08	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.10
	F	2.29**	1.89**	1.76**	1.01	0.70	2.1**

\*-Significant at 1 %

\*\*-Significant at 5 %

Source: Computed

Figures in Parentheses are ratios

**Table 2. Determinants of Perceived Improvement in Special Mobility: Regression Estimates**

S. No	Independent Variable	MOBILITY TO			Spatial Mobility
		MARKET	HOSPITAL	CINEMA	
1.	Constant	2.08 (2.07)	1.97 (2.36)	2.76 (2.30)	8.82 (2.51)
2.	Age Group	0.09 (0.72)	0.06 (0.54)	0.03 (0.21)	0.27 (0.61)
3.	Community	0.05 (0.53)	0.02 (0.25)	0.03 (0.25)	0.10 (0.28)
4.	Educational Status	0.07** (2.85)	0.09 (3.34)**	0.09 (2.89)	0.31 (1.86)**
5.	Employment	0.09* (0.61)	0.07* (0.55)	0.05 (0.26)	6.20 (2.38)
6.	Income	1.07** (2.25)	1.14** (0.74)	0.12 (0.43)	5.27 (2.63)
7.	Saving	0.04* (0.29)	0.08* (0.71)	0.17* (1.03)	2.32 (1.68)
8.	Business and Service (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	1.05** (2.03)	0.05 (0.36)	0.06 (0.30)	5.14 (2.17)
9.	Decision Making Power	2.03** (1.12)	1.07 (0.45)	0.12 (0.51)	3.12 (1.13)
10.	High Urban Access (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	0.46* (2.07)	1.05** (0.39)	0.08 (0.42)	4.11 (2.21)
11.	Moderate Urban Access (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	2.05** (0.24)	0.09* (0.60)	0.10 (0.42)	3.39 (2.13)
12.	Agency (TWDC = 1:0 Otherwise)	0.25 (1.44)	0.08 (0.55)	0.32 (1.55)	0.90 (1.48)
13.	Amount of Loan Borrowed	0.78* (2.04)	1.08 (1.84)	0.02 (0.25)	3.17 (2.95)
14.	Family Occupation (Yes = 1)	0.31* (1.51)	0.37* (2.27)	0.06* (0.23)	5.06 (1.47)
15.	Participation in Training Programme (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	1.08** (0.47)	0.02 (0.16)	0.02 (0.10)	6.12 (1.20)
	Adjusted R Square	0.56	0.08	0.05	0.06
	F	1.77**	1.83**	0.51**	1.45**

\* - Significant at 1 %

\*\* - Significant at 5 %

Source: Computed Figures in Parentheses are t ratios

related to purchase of household utensils and cloths for children and a negative correlation is found with the purchase of food grains, cloths for self, jewel and live stock. It implies the fact that community has not shown much variation in the purchase of such items. As far as educational status is concerned, it negatively correlated with the purchase of food grains, household utensils, cloths for children, jewels and live stocks. It shows that since their main occupation is micro enterprises, educational status has not brought any change in the ability to purchase such house hold related items.

But it is positively related to the purchase of cloths for self. Regarding the employment, it is positively related to the purchasing ability. It exhibits the fact that when the rate of employment increases, it leads to an increase in the ability to purchase all the house hold items i.e., food grains, household utensils, cloths for children, cloths for self, jewels and live stocks has enhanced. With regard to income, it is observed that it is positively related to purchasing of food grains, household utensils, cloths for children, cloths for self. Plays a vital role in purchase of all essential items except live stock and jewel which is negatively related to income. Since, rearing live stock is much time consuming activities, it is not highly opted by the respondents. The same negative trend is observed for purchase of jewels with income, since the price of jewels is exorbitant. As regards the saving, it is positively related to all items namely, purchase of food grains, household utensils, cloths for children, cloths for self, jewels and live stocks. It exhibits the fact that saving plays a prominent role in the purchase of the house hold related items. Further, possession of saving is leading the generation of additional income of the respondents in the study region.

Referring to business and service oriented micro enterprises, they are positively related to the purchase of food grains, cloths for self, and live stocks. And it is negatively related to the purchase of household utensils, cloths for children and jewels. It may be inferred from the results that the business and service oriented micro enterprises have been playing a prominent role in purchase of most essential house hold items rather than the other items with which is negatively correlated. With regard to decision making power, it is positively related to purchase of food grains, household utensils, cloths for children, cloths for self, and jewels. Further, it is negatively correlated only to the purchase of live stocks. It shows of live stock, since its role is meager among the respondents. Similarly, age has not brought any influence among the respondents to purchase of the household items and it is negatively correlated with all items except live stock. Regarding the higher access the urban areas, it is positively related to the purchase of food grains, cloths for self and jewels. And it has negative relation with the purchase of household utensils, cloths for children, cloths for self and live stocks. The same trend is observed in the case of moderate access to urban areas. It shows that it has a limited influence to purchase of a few household items among the respondents. Further, it is important to point out that the low access to urban areas is highly discouraging in purchasing ability of such items among the respondents in the study regions. Regarding agency wise provision of loan to the respondents, it has not shown any variation in the purchase of the items and it has negative correlation with the purchasing ability. In the case of amount of loan borrowed, it is positively related to the purchase of

food grains, household utensils, cloths for children, and jewels. Further, it is negatively correlated with the purchase of cloth for self and buying live stocks. However, it has a role to play with most of the items purchase among the respondents in the study region. With regard to family occupation it may be brought out that, it has greater influence in the purchase of all items selected for the study. Further, in the case of participation in training, it has a positive impact on the purchase of food grain, house hold utensils, cloths for children, cloths for self and as against this the negative trend is observed with the purchase of jewels and live stocks. At this juncture, it may be inferred from the results that family occupation and participation in training programme have a greater bearing on the purchasing power of respondents in the study region.

Table-2 exhibits the factors determining spatial mobility among the micro enterprises. It is noticed from the results that the value of co-efficient of determinations ( $R^2$ ) indicate that all the fourteen independent variables have jointly exhibited 0.12 per cent of variation in the market followed by hospital 0.08 per cent, spatial mobility 0.06 per cent and the least variation has been found for cinema which recorded 0.05 per cent of variations. It denotes the fact that market contributes at the rate of 0.12 per cent, which is due to mobilize the product, the market and purchase of raw materials. It is followed by mobility for hospital, and cinema. Further, it is observed from the results that 'F' ratios are significant at 5 per cent level for market and hospital. It exhibits that the model is suitable to analyze the factor determining the spatial mobility under micro enterprises. Out of 11 independent variables selected for this model, employment, income, decision making power, higher urban access, moderate urban access, amount of loan borrowed and participation in training programme are found to be statistically significant at 5 per cent level. It implies that the rate of family employment in micro enterprises activities increased.

When all family members are actively involved in the enterprises activity that has led to an increase in employment among the women respondents in the study region. One may notice that the increase in employment among women micro enterprises in the study region has really led to an increase in the degree of women empowerment in the study region. Similarly, income and decision making power has also increased as a result of increase in employment. When women household income increases, that will pave the way for the increase in decision making power of the women respondents in the region. Further, it may be observed that the women entrepreneurs are in a position to purchase the house hold items viz., groceries, utensils, and raw materials for their enterprises from the market. Since, they are able to decide on their own they purchase many items. Thus, it may be inferred from the results that the rate of women empowerment has really improved in the study region as a result of micro enterprises. Further, it is seen that, amount of loan borrowed and higher urban access have played a vital role in the successful functioning of micro enterprises and they are found to be statistically significant at 5 per cent level. Regarding participation in training programme, it could be revealed, that the training provided by NGOs, SGSY and TWDC have improved the skill and productive efficiency of the women respondents in the study region. In addition, the amount of

**Table 3. Perceived Impact of Micro Enterprises**

Perceived impact	Access to Urban Area			Total
	High = 30	Moderate = 30	Low = 90	
Worse off Than Before	3 (10.00)	3 (10.00)	11 (12.22)	17 (11.33)
No Change	12 (40.00)	4 (13.33)	38 (42.22)	54 (36.00)
Better off Than Before	15 (50.00)	23 (76.67)	41 (45.56)	79 (52.67)
Total	30 (100)	30 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)
Mean Perceived Impact Score	0.40 ± 0.67	0.40 ± 0.67	0.33 ± 0.69	0.41 ± 0.69

Source: Computed Figures in Parentheses are t ratios

**Table 4. Determinants of Perceived Improvement in Special Mobility: Regression Estimates**

S. No.	Independent Variable	Co-efficient	t - value	p - value
1.	Constant	0.63	0.67	0.50
2.	Age Group	-0.05	-0.43	0.67
3.	Community	-0.01	-0.15	0.88
4.	Educational Status	-0.02	-0.24	0.81
5.	Employment	2.10	0.68**	0.03
6.	Income	3.30	1.35**	0.027
7.	Saving	-1.05	-0.40	0.69
8.	Business and Service (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	2.01	0.01	0.99
9.	Decision Making Power	0.02	0.02	1.00
10.	High Urban Access (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	3.02	0.11	0.91
11.	Moderate Urban Access (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	5.7	1.58	0.12
12.	Agency (TWDC = 1:0 Otherwise)	-0.14	-0.88	0.38
13.	Amount of Loan Borrowed	2.03	0.70**	0.04
14.	Family Occupation ( Yes = 1)	2.30	-1.58	0.12
15.	Participation in Training Programme (Yes = 1: 0 Otherwise)	3.08	-0.48	0.63
	Adjusted R Square	0.59		
	F	9.37		

\* - Significant at 1 %      \*\* - Significant at 5 %

Source: Computed Figures in Parentheses are t ratios

loan borrowed has enabled them to purchase raw materials, productive equipments, tools and house hold items from the market. Further, higher urban access has been seen as a major success full factor, that is to say when the rate of urban access increases that causes the increase in marketing activities and the respondents are in a position to keep good health since they are accessible to well equipped and primary health care services, hospital in the study region. This exhibits the fact that the policies designed to develop infrastructure even in the rural areas have helped the development of micro enterprises and women empowerment in the study region.

Further, it could be derived from the results that amount of loan borrowed, participation in training programme and family occupation are positively correlated with market and hospital. It is due to the fact that when the borrowed amount of loan is adequate, they are able to purchase the required raw materials and market their produce in the neighboring area. These factors have greatly influenced the spatial mobility among the respondents. It is also observed that regarding hospital and medical expenditure that since the income of the respondents are adequate, they are able to spend for their health in turn there is, spatial mobility. As against is, where variables have shown reverse trend with spatial mobility for cinema. This shows that even though their family members are fully employed in enterprises activities and their income is adequate, they are not willing to go for cinema. As a result income and participation in training programme are having adverse, trend with spatial mobility for cinema. Regarding age group and educational status, it is revealed that these variables have exhibited a negative trend with spatial mobility. Among the respondents age and educational status have no influence on spatial mobility, whereas it may be pointed out that community has positive correlation with market and hospital

and negative trend with cinema. By and large, spatial mobility has an influence on community. With regard to spatial mobility, it could be revealed from the results that as a result of increase in employment and income, the purchasing power of respondents has increased. In turn this has increased the magnitude of spatial motilities. In addition to this, it is also interesting fact to note that among the business and service, oriented micro enterprises and due to decision making power, higher urban access, moderate urban access agency wise provision of loan, amount of loan borrowed, family occupation and participation in training programme has also led to an increase in spatial mobility among the respondents in the study region. As against this, age group, community and educational status have not shown any influence on spatial mobility. Table-3 exhibits perceived impact of micro enterprises of the respondents under three aspects viz., worse off than before starting micro enterprises, after starting no change in the impact and better off than before starting micro enterprises.

When compared to worse off than before and no change in the impact, the highest portion is recorded under better off than before category at 52.67 per cent. It shows that micro enterprises are the major livelihood earning source of ways and means among the respondents. It may be pointed out that 36 per cent of the responses have recorded under no change in the impact of micro enterprises. It shows that the immediate development and betterment could not be seen among them, but later the transmission may take place from no change to better them before among them. And it is seen that only 11.33 per cent of the respondents revealed that the perceived impact is worse than before starting enterprises. It is obvious to attribute that this shows the inefficiency and low level of skill in the enterprises activities. Further, some of the enterprises producing the items like candle and embroidery could not be

marketed in the neighbouring area and it involves much transport cost and bring to produce and market it elsewhere, namely faraway places. This is the reason for the worsening of micro enterprises. Regarding access to urban area, it is observed that 10 per cent of respondents have high urban access and another 10 per cent have moderate urban access and 12 per cent of them have low urban access under worse off than before category. This shows that when the low urban access is this might have led to worsening of the positive impact of micro enterprises greater, under no change condition, it is seen that low urban access is high at 42.22 per cent, followed by high urban access at 40 per cent and moderate urban access is at 13.33 per cent. It is evident to point out that for the no change in the impact of micro enterprises on the respondents, the low urban access could be seen as a major reason. When urban access is very low to respondents are unable the market their produce at reasonable price. Yet, it is seen that high urban access is also at encouraging portion in the no change category. This exhibits a positive trend for the development of micro enterprises from no change category to better off than before.

In moderate urban access it is also found to be very low in the no change category. In better off than before category, the major portion is seen in the moderate urban access area and it is calculated as 76.67 per cent, followed by high urban access area. However, when the urban access is moderate and high, this will enable the micro enterprises to develop more and more. By and large, urban access has a major impact on the successful functioning of micro enterprises. Table-4 delineates the determinants of perceived improvement among the micro enterprises. It is seen that the co-efficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is found to be higher for all the 14 independent variables selected for the study. It means that out of 100 per cent of variation of women empowerment, the given 14 independent variables contribute maximum to the tune of 59 per cent. On the whole the 'F' ratio is found to be statistically significant at '5' per cent level, which are based on  $R^2$ . It is discernible from the table that employment, income, decision making power and amount of loan borrowed are found to be statistically significant at '5' per cent level. It implies the fact that these variables are positively correlated to women empowerment under micro enterprises. Yet, it reveals that the increase in employment, income and amount of loan borrowed could cause an increase in women empowerment through the successful functioning of micro enterprises.

Further, it is worth noting that the increase in employment and income have played a prominent role in augmenting the decision making power of the women among micro enterprises. Therefore, it is evident that the micro enterprises activities have really been encouraging the overall economic and social empowerment of women. Similarly, higher urban access, moderate urban access, family occupation, participation in training programme are having positive trend with determinants women empowerment. It shows that the provision of training by NGOs, District Industrial Centre, Small-scale Industries Development Corporation and Block Development Office for the entrepreneurial activities has really helped the success of women micro enterprises. In addition, the increase in urban access under high and moderate urban access and have also been playing a key role under business oriented and service oriented micro enterprises.

Under service oriented micro enterprises, Shamiana hiring, vessels hiring, chair hiring, tailoring and laundry are the major service oriented activities and encouraging women development. In the same way, family occupation has positive correlation with women empowerment. It implies that when all the family members are actively involved in enterprise activities, they get high income, decision making power and empowerment. As against this, agencies wise provision of loan does not are any positive correlation. It shows that there is no significant variation by different agencies viz., commercial banks, co-operatives and Regional Rural Banks. Similarly, the other independent variables age group, communities and educational status are negatively correlated with enterprises activities and empowerment of women in the study region.

## Conclusion

The following conclusion is drawn from the foregoing discussions of the present study. Micro enterprises activities generate more employment opportunities in the study region. As a result of increase in employment there is an increase income of the micro women entrepreneurs. Further it results in the ability to purchase of all household items viz., food grains, household utensils, cloth for children cloths for self-Jewels and live stocks. Thus, it shows that micro enterprises activities generate more employment, income, education and finally it leads to empowerment as women micro entrepreneurs in the study region. It may be seen that the performance business service oriented enterprises are highly encouraging. Under these in micro enterprises the purchasing food grains, income generation and saving are high in the study region. When saving is found to be high, this is quite natural that the saving leads to additional income of the women entrepreneurs and that result in empowerment of women in the study region. It is seen that under all types of micro enterprises, the rate of family employment has significantly increased through micro enterprises activities. It reveals the fact that when all family members are actively involved in the enterprises activities that led to an increase in employment, income and empowerment in the study region. Similarly under the micro enterprises activities, when the income increases the decision making power of women respondent has also increased. By and large all these factors unflustered women entrepreneurs to achieve high levels of empowerment in the study areas.

## Acknowledgement

The author is highly grateful to Dr D. Murugan, Assistant professor of Economics, Department of Economics, Annamalai University for his continuous encouragement and for providing necessary advice to complete this research work.

## REFERENCES

- Asian Development Bank 1997. "Micro Enterprises Development: Not by Credit Alone", *Asian Development Bank Report*.
- Asian Institute of Technology 2000. "Empowering Women through Self Help Groups: A Case of Three Naga Villages", Manipur, IFAD Technical Assistance Grant Study, Rome.
- Harper, M. 1998. "Profit for the Poor: Cases in Micro Finance", Intermediate Technology Publications, London.

- Hisrich, R.D. and Bruch, C.G. 1984. "The Women Entrepreneur: Management Skills and Business Problems", *Journal of Small Business Management*, 22: 30-37. [http://planning.up.nic.in/dev\\_ind/devind\\_main.htm](http://planning.up.nic.in/dev_ind/devind_main.htm)
- Lipi 2009. "Women Empowerment: Globalization and Opportunities" in *Empowerment of Rural women in India Gannishka New Delhi*.
- Nicolas Gennrich, 2002. "The Impact of Micro Enterprises on Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas: The Case of EI Quiche" (Guatemala), Deutsche, Gosellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit-GTZ", Project of PRODEQ, Guatemala.
- Prabha Singh 2009. "Rural Women and Development of Entrepreneurship with special reference to Punjab" in *Empowerment of Rural Women in India*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
- Ram Naresh Thakur 2009. "Rural Women Empowerment in India" in *Empowerment of Rural Women*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
- Shobana Nelasco & Junofy Antorozarina 2009. "Rural women empowerment through Self Help Groups *Women in India*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
- Hisrich, R.D., and Bruch. C.G., 1994. "The Women Entrepreneur: Management Skills and Business Problems", *Journal of Small Business Management*, 22, pp.30-37.
- Parveveronica Gonzalez Agnilar 2000. "Is Micro Finance Reaching the Poor? An Overview of Poverty Targeting Methods", *Women Aid International*, 3 White Hall Court, London SWIA 2EL.
- Sixna 2001. "Women in Silk Industries in Karnataka", In Amithabh Kundu and Alakh Sharma (eds) *Informal Sector in India: Perspectives and Policies*, Institute of Human Development, New Delhi.
- Guptha, S.K and Srivastava. A 2001. "A Study of Working Self Help Groups in Madya Pradesh", *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol.56, No.3, July – September, p. 470.
- World Development Report 2001-2002. Washington, D.C., U.S.A
- Mohanan, N., 2002. "Working together for Sustainable Rural Change: A Study of SELVAI", *Case Studies Serious – 14, NIRD*, Hyderabad - January.
- Jothi. K and Sundar. I, 2002. "Self – Help Groups under the Women's Development Programme in Tamil Nadu: Achievements, bottle necks and Recommendations", *Social Change*, Vol.32, No.34, September – December, pp. 195-204.
- Ramachandran, T.A., Seilan, 2005. "Socio-economic Empowerment Self Help Groups", *Social Welfare*, Vol.52(6), pp.3-7.
- Suman Jain 2006. "Empowerment of Women Through NGO – The SEWA Bank Experience", NGO and Socio-Economic Development Opportunities", and *Deep and Deep Publications Private Ltd*, New Delhi, pp. 112-119.
- NABARD Evaluation Study 2006. Micro Finance for Micro Enterprises, An Impact Evaluation Study of Self-Help Groups, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Andhra Pradesh Regional Office, Hyderabad, No:13.
- Kalpana Shankar 2007. The Sustainability of Micro Enterprises, Hand in Hand, Vol:1, Issue:2, July, PP:5-6. Retrived from the Web:<http://www.hihseed.org>.

\*\*\*\*\*