



# The Economic Activity of Cooperatives and Women's Empowerment: A Study

\*<sup>1</sup>Dr. Muzamil Jan

\*<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Research Department of Commerce, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur, Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, India.

## Abstract

For the requirements of women who want to help one another without the formality of bureaucracies and hierarchies, cooperatives are especially well adapted. The liberation of women improves not just the nation as a whole but also the family, making women's empowerment essential and crucial for a country. In the present day, women are excelling in the fields they choose. Even if they make money, the majority of them still lack economic independence. Instead, they manage enterprises, look after their families, and conduct scientific research. The income of married women aids in raising a family. The majority of their income goes toward the growth of the family. But there are numerous times when people are unable to carry out these duties and make important financial decisions in their lives. The investigation of women cooperatives' roles in the economic empowerment of women in India is the article's main goal.

**Keywords:** Women's employment, economic empowerment

## Introduction

It is challenging to choose between several solutions to affirm more mobility in social contacts because of the old social and cultural traditions that are prompted by the interpretations of religious punishments and illiterates. Stereotypes that reduce them to merely performing reproductive tasks and prevent them from accessing resources that could enhance their social and economic contributions to society. Women have embraced alternative economic strategies such as work in the informal sector and fundamental economic institutions, such as cooperatives, to live in a constricting sociocultural context that supports gender inequity. Whatever the goals, self-help organizations and cooperatives are two organizational techniques that underprivileged women frequently utilize to earn a living.

The requirements of many women who desire to help one another without bureaucratic and hierarchical structure are specifically catered to by cooperatives. Women have formed informal, less structured networks as a response to the lack of organization and their exclusion from resources and services. Sharing knowledge and experiences, making the most of local activity, and removing obstacles that seem to separate women in various contexts are all part of networking.

## Government's limitations when it comes to fostering strong cooperatives

The cooperative system was developed by the state and did

not start in India. The government subsidized the entire project. It was forced upon society as desirable and necessary. It's interesting to note that the Co-operative system developed as a basic remedy for some of the industrial revolution's ills in other nations, such as England. Ironically though, this was used by the government as a supply-side model when it extended it to its colonies. The result is that co-operatives that started as grassroots movements had a lot more success potential, according to study. A colonial administration or the democratic government of a free country may have planted them there.

## Issues with cooperation in India

Cooperatives' poor reputation and the general public's and policymakers' indifference to them can also be attributed to governance concerns. The primary governance problems that cooperatives now encounter are as follows: Federal organizations' inability to respond to the requirements of their affiliates

The absence of precise guidelines for adjusting strategic objectives to changes in the external environment.

Cooperatives' reputation and image are directly impacted when these issues are brought up in the media as a result of corruption cases. Cooperative professionals are aware of the issues and difficulties they confront; thus, help should be given in the form of useful instruments to address governance issues.

**Literature Review  
Women Empowerment**

Women's empowerment entails developing self-assurance in our skills. Options, choices, control, and power are some of the primary overlapping phrases that are most frequently used to define empowerment. Make choices and have an impact on outcomes that are important to them and their family. It is common to stress having control over one's own life and resources.

Regardless of whether they are employed or not, all women work. Household work replaces goods and services that would otherwise be available on the market, such as fetching water, gathering fuel and fodder, grinding grain, raising cattle, gardening, weeding, windsurfing, harvesting and a host of other tasks like building, maintaining the structure of the house, and repairing. It can be said with great assurance that there is less labor available due to women's work in these areas.

There exist differences between men and women, but a more comprehensive strategy should be undertaken to increase awareness of women's gender, provide them with access to community resources, and empower and support them in challenging the conventional norms that breed these differences. The women came to the conclusion that they should increase their control and access to economic resources, as well as give them the opportunity to settle down. They also believed that asserting their legal rights was a crucial part of enabling them to have more autonomy in making decisions (Acharya *et al.*, 1983, p. 112). Using involvement in microcredit and the contribution of women to the home as independent variables, it evaluates indices of empowerment in the household and community sectors (Hashemi *et al.*, 1996).

The biggest obstacles to women making a significant turnaround in their lives continue to be power dynamics in families and communities. All interventions must deal with the confronting of profoundly ingrained patriarchal structures and practices. Once the knowledge is available, responses to everyday problems can be taken either collectively or individually (Kamau, 2010).

In the non-unionized sector, working conditions and the situation of employees, particularly women employees, are exceedingly difficult; their ignorance, illiteracy, and poverty have made their suffering worse; the vast majority of them did not benefit from protective regulations in important sections of the economy. Social security, wages, and maternity and child care benefits (Singh, 2005). Unorganized manufacturing sector employees endure dangerous and precarious working conditions. The majority of the time, local circumstances dictate wages (Jenna, N.D.).

**Research Gap**

Comparing the levels of empowerment in the six areas of empowerment—economic empowerment, educational awareness, health awareness, decision-making ability, media contact, and social contact—between women working in cooperatives and women working in non-organized sectors will reveal how empowered each group is. The goals for the research study are established based on the research gaps that were noted in the review.

**Objectives**

To compare the contribution of cooperative women to the

political, socioeconomic, and economic empowerment of women with that of independent contractors in the unorganized sector.

- i). To give permission for research and comparison in the field of education in co-ops with women who work in the non-organization sector.
- ii). To investigate how cooperatives help to increase women's confidence in their roles as family heads.
- iii). Research the relationship between women's health and their capacity for making decisions

**Methodology**

The purpose of the research project is to compare the levels of self-determination among women's cooperative members, independent contractors, and dependent workers who are not cooperative members.

**Research Design:** To gauge women's levels of self-determination, a field research was conducted. Simple random sampling was used to create a representative sample for both the data records of the women who belong to women's cooperatives and the women who work in the unorganized sector. Women working in co-operatives in India and women working in unorganized sectors in their individual states, as well as secondary data from information in published articles and online databases. Magazines, books, reports, newspapers, and the internet were used to obtain secondary data.

**Sample Design:** The core of pattern planning is the sample design pattern. The pattern specifications specify how each member of the sample will be chosen, taking into account both theoretical and practical factors (such as time, cost, labor, and organization) (Tull and Green, 2003). A representative sample and a straightforward random sample should be used to evaluate the level of women's empowerment.

**Type of Sample:** A straightforward random scan was employed to guarantee that the population was represented fairly.

**Data Analysis and Interpretations**

**Descriptive Statistics:** There has been a lot of research done on describing characteristics, functions, and the strength of relationships between two or more variables. The researcher is in charge of outlining the respondents' socioeconomic and demographic traits.

**Interpretation**

In the table 1, 35 respondents who work for cooperatives are classified into four age groups, with 22.9% of respondents in the 21–30 age group and 25.7% of respondents in the 32–42 and over age groups. According to the author, 22.9% of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 31.

**Table 1:** Ag of the Respondents

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Below20	9	25.7	25.7
21-31	8	22.9	22.9
32-42	9	25.7	25.7
Above 42	9	25.7	25.7
Total	35	100.0	100.0

**Interpretation**

Table 2 demonstrates how the 35 respondents who work for cooperatives are classified into four groups based on their marital status. 28.6% of respondents were in the group of

married people, followed by 28.6% of unmarried people, 25.7% of separated people, and 6% of widows. According to the author, 17.1% of respondents were widows.

**Table 2: Marital Status of the Respondents**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Married	10	28.6	28.6
Unmarried	10	28.6	28.6
Separated	9	25.7	25.7
Widow	6	17.1	17.1
Total	35	100.0	100.0

**Findings**

According to the author's findings (Table 1), 22.9% of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 31. According to the author's findings (Table 2), 17.1% of respondents were widows. Author discovered that 14.3% of Respondents belonged to the SSC group.) According to the author's findings 14.3% of respondents had monthly incomes of \$5001 or more. Only 11.4% of respondents did not have a bank account, according to the author's research. According to the author's findings, more than half of the respondents were from joint families. According to the author's findings, more than half of the respondents did not receive family assistance.

**Conclusion**

When it comes to social justice and morals, women hold half the sky. By giving Indian women equal rights and opportunities, we can help them reach their full potential from a long time ago. Equality has been actively pursued by the government and other international organizations. A successful strategy to accomplish these objectives has shown to be cooperatives. The cooperative corporate structure assures that any group of people has the ability to effectively pool their resources, regardless of how few, and to support them in meeting their regular economic and social demands. According to the survey, all women work and engage in productive employment outside the home in order to support their families and take care of the house, but this labour is unacknowledged and unnoticed. As unpredictable as the monsoons was the activities. The quest for an alternate source of income is constrained to a few occupations since these women have lower levels of education and experience. Cooperatives that provide people with a second source of income educate them about new technology and pay them fairly for their job.

**References**

1. Appendini K. Economic Liberalization, Changing Livelihoods and Gender Dimensions in Rural Mexico. In FAO, IFAD and ILO Report Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways Out of Poverty Part III Rome: FAO, IFAD and ILO, 2010.
2. Aslam M. Empowering Women: Education and the Pathways of Change. Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All. United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization, 2013.
3. Asraf SW, Ahmed A. Muslim Women Education and Empowerment in Rural Aligarh (A Case Study). International Journal of Scientific and Research Publication, 2012, 2(4).

4. Basu AM, Kaushik B. Women's Economic Role and Child Survival: The Case of India. Health Transition Review. 2001; 1(1):1-20.
5. Batliwala S. The Meaning of Women's Empowerment: New Concepts form Action. In G. Sen, A. Germain and L.C.Chen (Eds.). Population Policies Reconsidered: Health, Empowerment and Rights. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994, 127-138.
6. Bose A. Empowerment of Women: How and When. Economic and Political Weekly. 2000; 35(34):3005-3007.
7. Devi MDU. Research Perspective for Understanding Women's Education. Economic and Political Weekly. 1992; 27(24/25):1279-1282.
8. Batilwala S. Taking the Power out of Empowerment: An Experimental Account Development in Project. In T Wallace and C March (Eds.) Changing Perceptions: Gender & Development. Oxford, 1997, 49-157.
9. Gandhi K. Education Challenges of the Twenty First Century. The Global Context. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt.Ltd, 1999.
10. Jayakarani A, Hennink M, Kiiti N, Pillinger M, Jayakaran R. Defining Empowerment :Perspective from International Development Organisation. Development in Practice, 2012, 22(2).
11. Jejeebhoy S, Sather ZA Women's Autonomy in India and Pakistan: The Influence of Religion and Region. Population and Development Review. 2001; 27(4):687-712.
12. Kabeer N, Mahmud S, Tasneem S. Does Paid Work Provide a Ppathway Women's Empowerment? Empricial Findings from Bangladesh. Institute of Development Studies, 2011.