

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY RURAL WOMEN TOWARDS CAREER ADVANCEMENT

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ABSTRACT

India is a country where women's status is equivalent to goddess, but the problems faced by them are contrary to the concept. In this study the challenges faced by rural women towards their development in career are analyzed with the help of data collected among 110 respondents from 3 various villages further analyzed using statistical tools such as chi-square, spearman rho's correlation using SPSS and percentage analysis. This study ultimately tried to understand the perception of rural women towards their career and the obstacles majority of them identified that their growth would have been easier if they have lived in city also the peer pressure of marriage and lack of financial support played a major role in their career path. Previous researches were not identified self-motivation as a factor inhibiting the growth, which has been analyzed in this paper. It has been found that rural women are still accustomed to the practices they have always been familiar with such as being a homemaker. Through this research, it has been found that early marriage is still an issue and women wanted to get married between the ages of 26-30. In conclusion it is safe to say that the society has progressed in many ways, but when it comes to women and her career it has always been a debatable subject matter. It is essential women must be seen as a productive member of the economy and society rather than just as reproducers, supplementary earners and homemakers.

KEYWORDS: rural women, challenges, career, work participation, marriage, growth.

INTRODUCTION

Lisa Unger Baskin said, "Women have always been productive and working people and this history has essentially been hidden."

According to the census of India, SRS & NFHS. The data reveals the literacy rate of women has been gradually increased from 39.29% in 1991 to 70.3% in 2020. Although when compared with men it is less in percentage which was 64.13% in 1991 to 84.7% in 2020. It has also shown that U.S. has 60% participation of women in Labor force and 55% in professional & technical work force whereas in India the rate is at 34% and 12%. Also with increasing education rate the employment rate of women does not seem to be increasing. This quantitative research was conducted in order to know the

barriers faced by rural women in their career development. With the help of this study the fundamental cause which acts as an inhibitor in the growth of rural women was made possible.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sania Khan (2022) the study ‘Analyzing the career development barriers faced by rural women in India’ was established using both qualitative and quantitative techniques and also the collected data was analyzed using Thematic Analysis (TA). The author unfolded and analyzed the career development barriers faced by rural women from their perspective by conducting interviews and by acquiring survey questionnaire collected from 148 respondents. The author noticed that the main barrier to the development of women was and still is marriage, further mentioned that women are forced to get married soon to scale back the burden of their parents. The study also found that the rural women still value and respect the ideas of their family by sacrificing their own life and personal interests even though they have the potential to accomplish things they are suppressed personally, financially, physically, mentally, and morally. The author suggested that females must be encouraged to get their education and employment.

Lakhwinder Singh Kang Et al. (2021) the study ‘Contextual support and career aspiration of working women’ focuses on how the support of the family members and organization will help working women grow mentally and career-wise. It was empirically examined by conducting a cross-sectional survey conducted among 438 female employees aged between 26 – 42 years of which 64.6% were married in which 52% women were working at middle level, 24% were working in sub senior, only 7.3% working in senior-level and 16.7% were working in the entry-level. The authors mentioned that marriage is a limiting factor for women in India as far as their career is concerned. The authors further covered the number of constraints that are impeding their career growth to the extent that some prefer to opt-out one such is the lack of career-related support available to women at their home and workplace. In the study, they found that career aspirations of married women are lower than unmarried women also that marriage has a multilevel effect because it restricts the entry of women into the workforce. Thus, the author suggested that Indian societies need to bridge a gap between urban and rural society. The author confirmed that family support will create positive impacts on women’s aspirations to advance to a higher position in the workplace.

Manjusha S. Molwane Et al., (2021) ‘A study on the challenges faced by rural women in accessing education’ The study was conducted to find out the various dimensions that contribute to the challenges faced by rural women for accessing basic education in rural areas by collecting 180 samples using non-random convenience sampling method later analyzing them with appropriate statistical tools like Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity. With the analysis, they found that the most vital and allied factor that contributed to the challenges

was family issues. Finally, they suggested that motivating the girl child and changing the perception of the family members about the importance of education through various campaigns will help in accessing education.

AnupamaSaha, Et al. (2021) the study is related to ‘Society, Patriarchy and women – An overview of the Gender scenario in India’. In a qualitative study conducted by the authors, they revealed that the Indian society still has a long way to go as far as the ideal of a gender-equal society is concerned, also that gender sensitization has to start in the family. They had mentioned various schemes and programs of the Government of India on recent efforts at women empowerment. They suggested that the process of de-socialization of gender biases and Re-socialization of gender equality is a must.

GitanjaliChaturvedi Et al. (2019) ‘understanding women’s aspirations: a study in three Indian states’ In a qualitative study relied on focus group discussions conducted in three states in India – Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha within which approximately 500 people participated in each state with women from different age cohorts, occupation and social groups, across four villages in two districts each within the three states. The author discovered that each and every woman has dreams and aspirations irrespective of whether or not they were able to fulfill them, also it is to be noted that a number of these aspirations were common to women in all states. The author strongly imposed the move to encourage women to work and to realize their potential begins with support from home. The author mentions that because of rapid transformation in urbanization, penetration of mobile, cable, and satellite in remote areas, and a dilution of societal norms that affect women. They further mentioned that India’s growth potential can only be realized if women are given options to participate equally in the labor force, and encouraged to stay on despite marriage and motherhood.

Pushpendra Singh Et al., (2018) ‘Economic status of women in India: paradox of paid-unpaid work and poverty’ the aim of the study is to grasp the dynamics of women’s labor and to know the precise meaning of unpaid work and to examine the nexus of work status of women and therefore the impact on poverty. The authors conducted an analysis using a set of data collected from the National Sample Survey. They found that the participation of women in paid activities has been consistently declined and the unpaid work activities of women have significantly increased especially it’s more intense for those women who are less educated and belong to poorer households. The researchers further suggested that the elimination of extreme poverty by 2030 (UN 2030 agenda of eliminating poverty) can only be achieved by changing the work status of women to paid from unpaid and providing an area within the mainstream of economic development in India.

FarzanaAfridi Et al., (2016) ‘Why are fewer married women joining the workforce in india? In a decomposition analysis over two decades’ (1987-1999 and 1999-2009), the authors used parametric and non-parametric decomposition techniques to estimate the proportion of the fall in

women's Labor Force Participation Rate. In which they found that the changes are positive between 1987 and 1999, and then between 1999 and 2009 because the labor force participation are declining over time. They further mentioned women are likely to withdraw from the labor force and engage in domestic work mentioning that this may be the most credible and vital factor in the long-term trend of declining women's Labor Force Participation Rate in India.

VarshaKumari (2014) 'Problems and challenges faced by urban working women in India' both quantitative and qualitative aspects are taken into consideration for the study, that is questionnaire-based survey among 75 working women and face to face interview was conducted among 30 different working women. From that the author found that molestation by male colleagues and mental harassment by female colleagues' maybe a reality and working women believe that they face more mental pressure in comparison with non-working women. The author suggested that providing child care facilities and flexible timing for working women may help in overcoming the challenges. The author concluded by saying that in an exceedingly patriarchal society like India boundary exists for women only.

RESEARCH GAP

As far as the challenges are concerned previous researchers considered only external factors but failed to recognize 'self-motivation' / 'self-driven' as one of the factors for the challenges faced. Therefore, the research gap was observed in the study.

IMPORTANCE OF RURAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Career advancement is subjective and genderless but it is vital to make women more independent, and powerful and to be self-aware of their own potential. So, it is only reasonable to agree that empowerment is indispensable for rural women since they are not much acquainted with all the opportunities available and are somewhat accustomed to the practices they have always been familiar with. Once rural women sensible of how crucial is it to be financially independent for one's own growth and for contributing to the country through paid work participation. It is mentioned paid because many researchers found that rural women are working jobs that provide less or no salary. Thus, to develop more skills, to exercise their potential to the fullest empowerment is supreme for rural women. Now is the right time to collectively move ahead on strategies and actions to address the challenges that rural women face in the world of work. Rural women at work, are the future of the rural economy. Action must be taken to bridge the gaps that rural women face in the pursuit of sustainable development and decent work.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the awareness of career opportunities

- To analyze rural women self–development to cope with their career development
- To know the barriers to rural women’s career development
- To examine the drawbacks faced by rural women due to gender sensitivity.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The study helps in identifying the fundamental cause which acts as an inhibitor in the growth of rural women career-wise.
- The study helps to recognize rural women’s mindset towards career advancement.
- The study assists us to explore the current status of the rural women collectively compared to their previous generation.
- The study helps in identifying the inverse relationship between marriage and labor force participation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive research design and probability random cluster sampling was used. Samples were collected from 110 respondents from women in three different villages namely thirumani, meyyur and kilkothur which are in the southern part of Chengalpattu district and Vellore district. Primary data was collected in a well-structured questionnaire in both Tamil & English through Google form. Secondary data was collected from the Government publications, scholarly journals, journal articles and various websites.

PERIOD OF STUDY The period of study ranges during January 2022 to Apr 2022

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study was limited to 110 respondents.
- The views of the respondents may be biased considering that some of the questions are subjective in nature.
- The responses were limited to 3 geographical areas only so, the outcome cannot be generalized to other rural women of the nation.
- Due to covid-19 not being able to collect the data in pers

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 1 Demographic Profile

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
AGE		
Below 20	5	4.5
21-30	64	58
31-40	21	19
41-50	15	14
Above 50	5	4.5
TOTAL	110	100
MARITAL STATUS		
Unmarried	52	47
Married	56	51
Widowed	2	2
Divorcee	-	
TOTAL	110	100
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		
Schooling	15	13
Diploma	3	3
Graduate	48	43.6
Post Graduate	39	35.4
Others	5	5
TOTAL	110	100

Source: primary data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows how the respondents defines their goals, whether their goal is related to career wise or family wise or sports wise or others.

Table 2 HOW THE RESPONDENTS DEFINES THEIR GOAL

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Career wise	42	38.1%
Family wise	62	56.4%
Sports wise	2	1.9%
Others	4	3.6%
TOTAL	110	100%

Table 3. Chi-square analysis was used to check the association between age and the goal defined by the respondents.

Ho: There is no association between age and goal defined by the respondents

H1: There is an association between age and goal defined by the respondents

TABLE 3			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	39.833 ^a	9	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	35.973	9	0.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	5.593	1	0.018
N of Valid Cases	110		

From the above table it is observed that the calculated value of $p = 0.000$, which is < 0.05 . Hence H_0 is rejected. Thus, there is a significant association between age and the goal defined by the respondents.

In **Table 4** using Spearman Rho's correlation the monotonic relationship between age and the obstacles faced by the respondents is measured. The null hypothesis (H_0) was set to there is no monotonic relationship between age and the obstacles faced by the respondents and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) was set to there is a monotonic relationship between age and the obstacles faced by the respondents. From the table it is evident the null hypothesis is accepted and hence there is no monotonic relationship between age and the obstacles faced by the respondents except accommodation away from home for work which sig level is less than 5% level thus, there is a monotonic relationship between age and the respondent's accommodation away from home for work.

TABLE 4 SPEARMAN RHO'S CORRELATION							
		Age	Financial Support	Family Support	Early Marriage	Accomodatio n	Lack of Knowledge
Age	Correlation Coefficient	1	-0.013	-0.187	-0.172	0.261	0.167
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.894	0.051	0.072	0.006	0.082
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Financial Support	Correlation Coefficient	-0.013	1	0.014	-0.223	-0.319	-0.240
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.894	-	0.888	0.019	0.001	0.012
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110

Family Support	Correlation Coefficient	-0.187	0.014	1	0.024	-0.471	-0.351
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.051	0.888	-	0.806	0.000	0.000
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Early Marriage	Correlation Coefficient	-0.172	-0.223	0.024	1	-0.241	-0.467
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.072	0.019	0.806	-	0.011	0.000
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Accommodation away from home	Correlation Coefficient	0.261	-0.319	-0.471	-0.241	1	0.308
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.001	0.000	0.011	-	0.001
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Lack of Knowledge on the opportunities available	Correlation Coefficient	0.167	-0.240	-0.351	-0.467	0.308	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.082	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.001	-
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110

FIGURE 1(Source: Primary data)

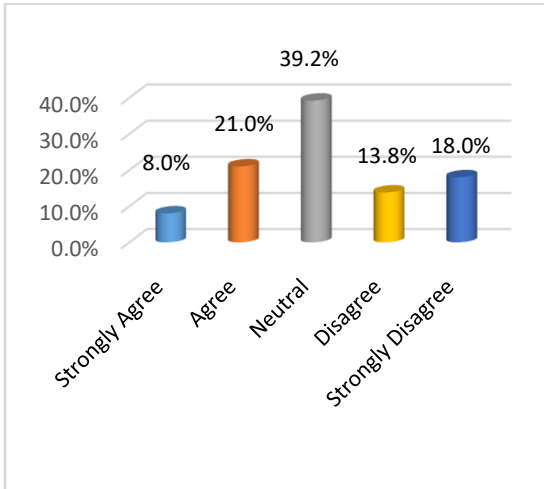


FIGURE 2(Source: Primary data)

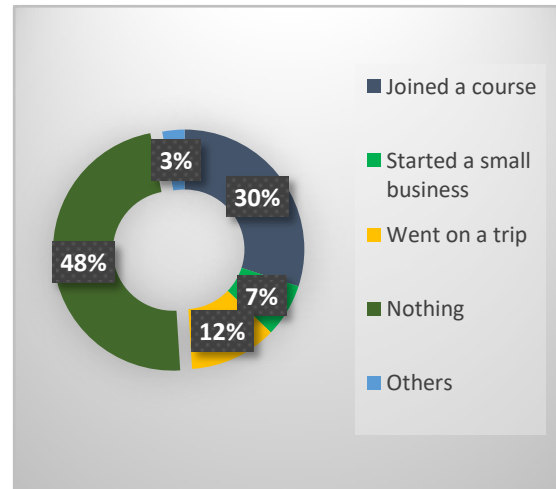


FIGURE 3(Source: Primary data)

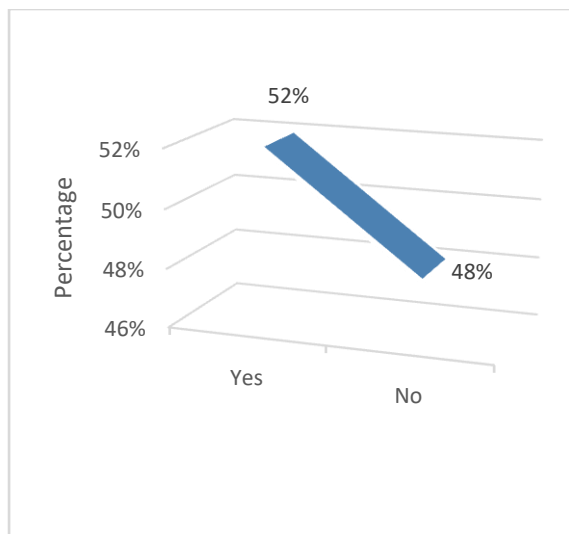


FIGURE 4(Source: Primary data)

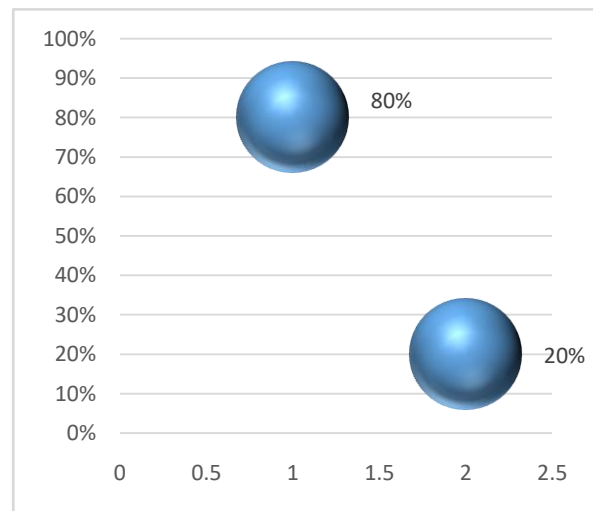


Figure 1 shows that most of the respondents i.e., 39.2% neither agreed nor disagreed i.e., neutral towards the statement marriage helped them grow as a person they always wanted to be. 19.6% of the respondents disagreed, 18% of the respondents agreed, 12.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 10.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This states that marriage in fact does not help in the growth of rural women.

Figure 2 depicts that 48% of the respondents have not done anything for themselves, 30% of the respondents have joined a course, 11.8% of them spent time on a trip, 7.2% of the respondents have started small business and the rest 3% falls under others category. This shows that majority of the respondents lack self-motivation.

From **figure 3** 52% of the respondents believes that their career development would have been easier if they lived in city. As inferred from **figure 4** the respondent's series shows that 80% of the women agreed that they are one step ahead in their education than comparing with their previous generation. The rest 20% of the respondents denied to the statement.

When respondents were asked an open ended question why they feel their development towards career would have been easier if they lived in city the answers were as follows

- “Easy to go important places”
- “Comfortable living in city”.
- “So much opportunities in city”
- “If I lived in city I may get more job offers with worthy of salary”
- “Easy access to transportation”.
- “City has more facilities”
- “For expansion of my business”.
- “Because of the differences in living practices”
- “May be my parents would have understand my ambition”
- “Job offers all I get is available only in cities which is too far away.”
- “Like-minded People and technology.”
- “City has all the facilities to learn more & acquire knowledge, of course there is internet we can access anywhere but city has many real-time organization where we can learn practically”
- “Everything would be easy to access”
- “Easier to get a job remote”
- “Good colleges, more exposure”
- “Easy education access”
- “would have studied more”
- “would have used technology optimally”
- “if I were in city I would have able to learn more skills and I might be stronger in my knowledge”
- “availability of basic facilities in city”

Source: Primary Data

FINDINGS

- ✓ 58% of the respondents are between the age group of 21-30 years.
- ✓ 51% of the respondents are married.

- ✓ 43.6% of the respondents are graduates.
- ✓ 34.5% of the respondents are Home makers.
- ✓ From the research it is inferred that 56.4% of the respondents define their goal as family wise.
- ✓ 39.2% of the respondents (married) are neutral towards the statement marriage helped them grow as a person they always wanted to.
- ✓ Nearly 66.4% of the respondents agreed that they are being treated equally in the family when compared with their brother or any male figure.
- ✓ Nearly 47.3% of the respondents would like to have a Government Job.
- ✓ 52.7% of the respondents opinion on household and financial decisions are considered 'sometimes' in the family.
- ✓ 53.6% of the respondents 'sometimes' make others listen to their point of view when their opinions are not being heard.
- ✓ 47.3% of the respondents' priority is family.
- ✓ The last thing the respondents did for themselves is nothing as the table shows majority of 48% result.
- ✓ 52% of the respondents agreed their development towards career would have been easier if they lived in city.
- ✓ 44% of the respondents ranked financial support as their main obstacles
- ✓ 48.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that being financially independent is important.
- ✓ 58% of the respondents suggested the appropriate age to get married is between 26-30 years.
- ✓ Nearly 62% of the respondents' area has no women development society.
- ✓ 54.5% of the respondents are involved in self-help group activities
- ✓ 40% of the respondents have developed self-confidence by being in the self-help group.
- ✓ 80% of the respondents are one step ahead in their education compared to their mother.
- ✓ 30% of the respondents are passionate in joining uniform services but they couldn't pursue as a career.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS:

- ✓ Spearman's rank correlation indicated that there is no monotonic relationship between age and the obstacles faced by the respondents except accommodation away from home for work which sig level is less than 5% level thus, there is a monotonic relationship between age and the respondent's accommodation away from home for work.
- ✓ Chi-square analysis indicated that, there is an association between age and goal defined by the rural women.

SUGGESTIONS:

Considering that marriage act as one of the barrier for rural women to thrive as an individual, it is important to create awareness among the women and their family members about the importance of individuality and the vitality of financial independency. The government should try to enact flexible work timings in every sector for the women in order to maintain work-life balance. Also should Increase vacancy for women in Government jobs. Traditionally, it is unavoidable to prioritize oneself over family but to prosper in career rural women should equally prioritize themselves and family. Educating the parents on the importance of education and pursuing career. Enlightening the parents to let the women decide on when to get married. It is also the responsibility of the women to stay motivated in their career path no matter what the situation turns out to be.

CONCLUSION:

Among all the challenges, women are growing and some even fighting for their rightful place in this most competitive world. When it comes to rural area, in this research it has been observed that lack of financial support desist the role of women in pursuing a career and in some cases, lack of self-motivation leads to not going forward with the goals. The most crucial and inevitable factor, 'marriage'. It is safe to say that the society has progressed in many ways, but when it comes to women and her career it is and has always been a debatable subject matter. A study found that two-third of Indians believe wife must always obey her husband.(Pew Research Center, 2022) because women are accustomed to certain things traditionally and a fair amount of population still believes and expect them to abide by those. Also the respondents in this study felt that, since a man has no peer pressure on early marriage he can explore and follow his career path as he deems to fit but it is not the case for women. It is essential women must be seen as a productive member of the economy and society rather than just as reproducers and supplementary earners and homemakers. In this study the major obstacles discussed was financial support, family support, early marriage, and accommodation away from home, lack of knowledge on the opportunities available, these challenges must be evaluated and removed in order to help rural women in career advancement. This can be done by creating awareness among the rural population regardless of gender and providing guidance through government officials. The government must take stringent action towards any anti-social elements against women.

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