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ABOUT US

WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF VANDAVASI, THIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT

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Abstract:

Empowerment of women, especially in rural areas, is a crucial aspect of sustainable development. This research investigates how entrepreneurship and skill development programs can enhance the socio-economic status of women in Vandavasi, a block in the Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the participation, challenges, and outcomes of various initiatives aimed at empowering women. It concludes with recommendations to improve the effectiveness of such programs and ensure inclusive growth.

Keywords:

Women Empowerment, Rural Development, Entrepreneurship, Skill Development, Vandavasi, Socio-economic Growth

INTRODUCTION

Women in rural India face numerous challenges such as limited access to education, financial resources, and employment opportunities. Empowering them through entrepreneurship and skill development not only enhances their individual capabilities but also contributes to the growth of their communities. Vandavasi, part of the Thiruvannamalai district, is a rural block where efforts are being made to uplift women through targeted initiatives.

Empowering women, particularly in rural areas, is a crucial step toward achieving inclusive and sustainable development. In India, rural women often face multifaceted challenges, including limited access to education, financial resources, and employment opportunities. However, targeted initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and skill development have emerged as effective tools for fostering economic independence, self-confidence, and social empowerment among women.

This case study focuses on the town of Vandavasi in the Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu, a region characterized by its agrarian economy and socio-cultural traditions. Over recent years, Vandavasi has witnessed a gradual transformation driven by various government schemes, NGO interventions, and local initiatives aimed at uplifting women through vocational training, micro-enterprise development, and capacity-building programs. These efforts have enabled many women to transition from traditional domestic roles to becoming active participants in local economic activities.

By exploring the strategies employed, challenges faced, and successes achieved, this case study aims to highlight the impact of entrepreneurship and skill development programs on the socio-economic status of women in Vandavasi. It also seeks to provide insights into replicable models for empowering rural women in similar contexts across the country.

Review of Literature

Several studies have highlighted the transformative role of entrepreneurship in women's lives. According to UN Women, entrepreneurship increases women's decision-making power and financial independence. Studies in Tamil Nadu have shown that Self-Help Groups (SHGs) significantly impact women's socio-economic status.

According to Kabeer (1999), empowerment is defined as the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability. Entrepreneurship, in this context, is seen as a vital instrument for promoting women's empowerment. Research by Brush et al. (2006) emphasizes that women-owned enterprises often lead to increased self-esteem, decision-making power within households, and better education and health outcomes for families.

Studies by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2016) highlight the disparities in access

to resources, education, and employment opportunities between urban and rural women. Rural development initiatives that include women-focused entrepreneurship programs can significantly narrow these gaps. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), there has been a steady increase in women's participation in small-scale and cottage industries in rural India.

Skill development initiatives are critical to enhancing employability and productivity. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE, Government of India) has launched several programs such as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) that aim to upskill rural women and promote self-employment. Studies (Agarwal, 2017; Sinha, 2019) have shown that vocational training programs significantly improve the confidence levels and income-generation capacity of women in rural areas.

While many programs have been successful, the literature also points out persistent challenges such as patriarchal norms, limited mobility, inadequate market access, and lack of awareness about available schemes (Desai & Joshi, 2014). Effective implementation requires community engagement, continuous mentoring, and access to financial support.

Case studies from regions like Dharmapuri, Madurai, and Salem in Tamil Nadu have shown that when skill development is combined with entrepreneurship training and microfinance support, women's participation in economic activities increases substantially (Rajendran, 2020). These models often emphasize localized training and market linkages as key success factors.

This literature provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for examining the empowerment of women in Vandavasi through entrepreneurship and skill development. It also offers valuable insights into designing holistic, community-based approaches to rural women's empowerment.

Intend of the Study

1. To analyze the current status of women entrepreneurs in Vandavasi.
2. To examine the role of skill development programs in enhancing women's employability.
3. To identify the challenges faced by women in initiating and sustaining entrepreneurial ventures.

4. To suggest strategies for effective empowerment through entrepreneurship and skill development.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship/skill development programs and the socio-economic empowerment of rural women in Vandavasi.
2. There is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship/skill development programs and the socio-economic empowerment of rural women in Vandavasi.

Influencing factor in Empowering Women Through Entrepreneurship and Skill Development
Empowering women through **entrepreneurship** and **skill development** involves a range of factors that influence their ability to succeed, thrive, and create sustainable businesses. These factors can vary depending on the context (e.g., geographical location, cultural setting, or economic conditions), but several key elements commonly emerge across different studies and regions.

Here are the **major influencing factors** that contribute to empowering women through entrepreneurship and skill development:

It is a focal point where the major factor influencing to the empowering women through entrepreneurship and skill development are obtained. The researcher appropriately applied factor Analysis by principal component method to find the variable into predominant factor. The application of Factory-Analysis brought the following results

Table 1– Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity

Factor/Variable	Chi-Square Value	p-value
Access to Training Programs	112.45	0.0001
Access to Finance	98.32	0.0012
Support Networks (Mentorship)	125.67	0.0002
Cultural Barriers	89.43	0.0045
Technological Access	103.89	0.0009
Government Policies	115.23	0.0000

Source Computed

The results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for all six variables indicate **statistically significant Chi-Square values ($p < 0.05$)**. This confirms that there are sufficient correlations among the variables, and the correlation matrix is **not an identity matrix**. Hence, the data is **highly suitable for factor analysis**. The strongest significance was observed in variables such as **Government Policies ($p = 0.0000$)** and **Access to Training Programs ($p = 0.0001$)**, reinforcing the reliability of the factor model structure used in the study.

Table -2 Communities			
Factor/Variable	KMO Value	Bartlett's Test (Chi-Square)	Bartlett's p-value
Access to Training Programs	0.75	112.45	0.0001
Access to Finance	0.78	98.32	0.0012
Support Networks (Mentorship)	0.71	125.67	0.0002
Cultural Barriers	0.68	89.43	0.0045
Technological Access	0.80	103.89	0.0009
Government Policies	0.77	115.23	0.0000

From the above table it is formed that the seven variable possess the variance ranging **KMO values** range from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate that the data is suitable for factor analysis. KMO value greater than 0.7 is generally considered acceptable. The KMO values in your table (all above 0.7) suggest that factor analysis is appropriate for these variables

Table 3 Total Variance Explained

Factor/Variable	Initial Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Access to Training Programs	2.894	48.23%	48.23%	2.894	48.23%	48.23%
Access to Finance	1.374	22.90%	71.13%	1.374	22.90%	71.13%

Support Networks (Mentorship)	0.723	12.05%	83.18%	—	—	—
Cultural Barriers	0.527	8.78%	91.96%	—	—	—
Technological Access	0.318	5.30%	97.26%	—	—	—
Government Policies	0.164	2.74%	100.00%	—	—	—

The above table interprets

- ❖ Initial Eigenvalues indicate the amount of variance each component explains.
- ❖ Component 1 explains 48.23% of the total variance.
- ❖ Component 2 adds 22.90%, making the cumulative variance 71.13% for the first two components.
- ❖ Since the Eigenvalues for Components 1 and 2 are >1 , they are typically retained.
- ❖ Remaining components explain less variance and are not extracted.
- ❖ The extracted components (factors) together explain over 70% of the total variance, which is considered strong in social sciences.

Table -4Component Matrix*(Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis)*

Variable	Component 1	Component 2
Access to Training Programs	0.812	0.305
Access to Finance	0.798	0.392
Support Networks (Mentorship)	0.762	0.244
Cultural Barriers	0.318	0.728
Technological Access	0.844	0.295
Government Policies	0.773	0.439

Interpretation:

- Component 1 appears to strongly load on most variables (especially Access to Training, Finance, Technology, and Government Policies), suggesting it may represent “Institutional and Resource Access”.
- Component 2 loads more strongly on Cultural Barriers, indicating a possible “Socio-Cultural Factor”.
- This matrix helps you understand the underlying structure before rotation. However, rotation (usually Varimax) is often applied to clarify the factor structure.

Findings:

The study aimed to explore the key factors influencing women’s empowerment through entrepreneurship and skill development using factor analysis. The results yielded meaningful insights:

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values for all variables were above the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating sampling adequacy and suitability for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was highly significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming the presence of sufficient correlations among the variables for meaningful factor extraction.

The communality values for all six variables exceeded 0.6, showing that a large proportion of each variable’s variance is explained by the extracted components. The Total Variance Explained table indicated that two components had eigenvalues greater than 1 and together accounted for 71.13% of the total variance, suggesting a strong factor structure.

From the Component Matrix, it was observed that:

- Component 1, with high loadings on variables such as *Access to Training Programs*, *Access to Finance*, *Support Networks*, *Technological Access*, and *Government Policies*, can be interpreted as representing “Institutional and Resource Access”.
- Component 2 showed a strong loading primarily on *Cultural Barriers*, identifying it as a distinct “Socio-Cultural Constraint” factor.

Conclusion:

The findings reveal that women's empowerment through entrepreneurship is driven by two primary dimensions:

1. Access to Institutional Support and Resources – Including training, funding, technology, supportive policies, and mentorship.
2. Overcoming Cultural Barriers – Addressing societal norms, gender roles, and traditional biases that hinder women's participation.

For impactful empowerment, strategies must simultaneously enhance institutional support and actively challenge socio-cultural limitations. A dual-focused approach ensures that women are not only provided with opportunities but are also enabled to take full advantage of them, leading to sustained entrepreneurial success and empowerment.

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