



## Women Entrepreneurs-A Study With Special Reference to Floriculture in Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka

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### ABSTRACT

*The emergence of entrepreneurs in a society depends to a great extent on the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors prevailing in the society. In Dakshina Kannada, women have been entrepreneurs since ages particularly in the floriculture arena. Women from the past have been actively associated with the development of their families and this is a trend seen from a distance past.*

*The local flower producers/ sellers in Mangalore are a classical example of need based entrepreneurship. The aim of this research is to examine the reasons for women entering into the business of producing and selling flowers as a means of supporting their families and eradicating poverty in their homes.*

*The object of the study was to understand the reasons for women taking up the business of producing and selling flowers and to study the role of formal education in building entrepreneurial skills of women.*

*The study reveals that these women were solely responsible for eradicating poverty in their homes. They were entrepreneurs in a social and commercial sense and took up entrepreneurship with sole aim of eradicating poverty. The study further reveals that traditional producing and selling of flowers has declined for various reasons including the modern boutique shops and flower merchants which are operating in a large scale and selling exotic flowers which have longer shelf life and have caught the fancy and aesthetic sense of the customers. In this study the authors find that nearly half a decade ago women entrepreneurship in floriculture was flourishing. During those days there were other factors which forced women to become entrepreneurs in their own way.*

### KEYWORDS : Women Entrepreneurs, Social Reasons, Enterprising Skills

The emergence of entrepreneurs in a society depends to a great extent on the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors prevailing in the society. In barely one generation, our culture has experienced two momentous changes in tandem. Rigid work- structures that provided relative stability and prosperity for centuries have given way to a more fluid post industrial economy. Women are, for the first time, assuming positions of influence in business and public life, the conference of these transformations has enormous indications for the future. The study of women's lives assesses the impact that social and economic revolutions are having in at least three realms of public life- career development and training, commercial and social entrepreneurship and the new physical, social and spiritual communities that are reshaping cultures.

In this paper the focus is on women flower vendors of Mangalore city. Nearly half a decade ago many households of Mangalore were having their livelihood through the efforts of these women. Majority of them were from the catholic community. Today this trade has lost its charm and the numbers of women in this trade are declining at a drastic rate. During the yester years these women brought a revolution and were solely responsible for eradicating poverty in their homes. They were entrepreneurs in a social and commercial sense.

#### Objective of the study:

- To understand the relationship of education in the entrepreneurial skills of the women.
- To focus on women in business and evaluate the gender disparities in employment and entrepreneurship.
- To understand the reasons – Economic and Social, for women to take up Floriculture.
- To find reasons for the decline of traditional floriculture business avenues

#### Methodology:

A survey was conducted in Mangalore city during September/ November 2010, to study the behaviour of women flower vendors. The respondents were women who took up floriculture as their business in Mangalore city. Out of them some were now retired and some were still pursuing work. The study was done with the help of a questionnaire. The total numbers of respondents were 50. The study was an attempt to

understand the circumstances in which these women carried out work.

#### Findings:

- Women who took up floriculture as their business belong to the following age groups at present: 40-49 years- 3 respondents, 50-59 years- 15 respondents, 60- 69 years- 28 respondents and 70-79 years- 4 respondents.
- All 50 respondents were female. Out of them 90% of the respondents (45 women) are married and the rest 10% of them are unmarried.(5 women)
- 35 respondents in the study are uneducated. They do not know to read and right, but they are accurate in their calculations and conduct business with a professional touch. 10 respondents have education of 5<sup>th</sup> std and below, 4 of them have an education of 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> std and only one respondent in the study has completed her 10<sup>th</sup> std. This proves that a few decades ago there was no correlation between education and entrepreneurship. These women ventured into business to sustain their families.
- In the study all respondents have been to work for quite some time now. Below 10 years- 2 respondents, 11-20 years-8 respondents, 21-30 years-12 respondents, 31-40 years-9 respondents, 41-50 years-11 respondents, and 51 years and above 8 respondents. These women have dedicated their lives to this entrepreneurial cause.
- 22 respondents had their market space to sell flowers, 18 of them sold flowers on the road side and 10 respondents sold flowers near the bus stands. Majority of them started their work i.e. to sell flowers on the road sides but gradually moved to the market spaces i.e. the flower markets in Car street area, central market area and near the city bus stand area in Hampankatta.
- With regard to the economic status of their families before joining floriculture 8 of the respondents stated that their economic conditions were critical, 12 of the respondents stated it was bad, 20 said that it was fair, 10 stated it was good. When these women started their venture were not in very good economic conditions and so were forced to take up floriculture as their business.
- With regard to the economic status after they took up entrepreneurship many women stated that they moved higher in their economic status i.e. from bad to fair and good. 12 respondents stated that they had fair economic conditions, 25 of them said it was

good and 13 respondents said that the condition over the years became very good. Over the years they were in good business.

- 30 respondents in the study took up market vending of flowers as a livelihood due to compulsion. They were the sole earners of bread in their families. Two respondents took up this profession as a fascinating venture and 18 respondents carried on the legacy due to family business and knowledge of trade from childhood. Thus many came to this field because of necessity to work and due to economic poverty.
- 22 respondents took up this venture after they were married to the households that cultivated flowers and 28 of them have seen their elders toiling in this trade. Thus in many cases it was a family tradition which at present the young generation is not keen in.
- 38 respondents at present are not going to work due to their old age as a major reason followed by improved economic status of the family. But 2 respondents are still pursuing work. 10 respondents in the study were non-committal. This is because the trade in seasonal and the demand for the local flowers in declining.
- One interesting observation was the occupation of the husbands, i.e. the men in these families. 32 of them were unemployed but they used to give maximum domestic help in floriculture, 3 of them were drivers having their own rickshaws and 8 of them had private employment and two were government employees. Women of the household were going to the market everyday and majority of the men were self employed in the house. Floriculture requires huge manpower and labour which the men were doing.
- In the study 20 respondents have children above 10 in number. 14 respondents have 6-10 children, 8 of them have 3-5 issues, 2 of the respondents have 2 kids and only one respondent has one child. All the children of these ladies are now well settled and majority of them are working abroad. Out of these negligible percentage are continuing the business of their parents.
- 90% of the children of the respondents are not continuing this floriculture business and only 10 % have chosen to continue in this business.
- Reasons for not pursuing floriculture business
  - Low dignity of work
  - Low prestige in society
  - Education
  - Hard toiling is involved
  - No land to cultivate
  - No labour/ help at home is available
  - No holidays / no rest
  - Social life is dampened
  - Stagnant market
  - Low demand for local variety of flowers
  - Commercialization of floriculture

#### Limitations:

The study was conducted in a casual approach

- The respondents in the study were limited to 50. However at present it is difficult to locate these women due to their non availability in the market place.
- The respondents were not very forthcoming in their responses due to time constraint, ill health, old age and a few were more concentrating on their business
- They were quite old and found no meaning as to why these questions were asked to them

#### Suggestions:

- None of the respondents took external assistance for the floriculture business. If Institutional lending is provided to them, they might have become more successful
- Bigger players (florist), who import flowers from other places, have hampered their growth. Cooperative organizations could provide them some input to take the challenges posed to them.
- They depend on their own production of Jasmine and other local variety (abuli). So they are mostly in business from September to May.

#### Conclusion:

This study is a very interesting case wherein a generation of women took charge of their families and gave them economic freedom.

These women took up entrepreneurship and revolutionized their lives. But at present the trend is changing and we cannot see this traditional business in its original setup. Commercialization, bouquet shops all have thrown women out of place and their age is also a factor for them to stay at home.

In this study some interesting observations are done .i.e. education and entrepreneurship were inversely related some decades ago, women have revolutionised a generation, dedicated women folk are found in this business field and the present generation is not keen in taking up this field as an enterprising activity.

Thus we see in this case, women in the past have been entrepreneurs in their own special way and have contributed to the success of their families.