WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AMONG THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN WEST BENGAL – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract: The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown-up over a period of time, especially in the 1990s. Microfinance programs have significant potential for contributing to women's economic, social and political empowerment. Access to savings and credit can instigate or strengthen a series of interlinked and mutually reinforcing 'virtuous spirals' of empowerment. Women constitute 70 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor and the very young (girl children) and old (old women) are more vulnerable to poverty. Women dominate in those occupations with low pay and are least protected. There is an increase in vulnerable types of work : house work/domestic work, migration etc. Women are increasingly migrating, both legally and illegally, for employment. Another area of debate surrounds the question of whether a woman's participation in a credit program raises her "bargaining power" or "empowerment" in the household. Hashemi et al. (1996) for example, attempt to measure a woman's empowerment using indicators such as level of mobility, ability to make large purchases, and political and legal awareness. Given this backdrop the objective of the paper is to examine the two basic research questions.

1. First, to study how a woman's tendency to invest in safer investment projects can be linked to her desire to raise her bargaining position in the households.
2. Second, in addition to the project choice, women empowerment is examined with respect to control of savings, control of income, control over loans, control over purchasing capacity and family planning in some sample households in the district of South 24 Parganas of West Bengal.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Empowerment, National Economy, Microfinance, Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment, Political Empowerment, Virtuous Spirals, Bargaining Power.

Introduction: The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown-up over a period of time, especially in the 1990s. Microfinance programs have significant potential for contributing to women's economic, social and political empowerment. Access to savings and credit can instigate or strengthen a series of interlinked and mutually reinforcing 'virtuous spirals' of empowerment.

Since the 1970s, many women's organizations world-wide have included credit and savings, both as a way of increasing women's incomes and to bring women together to address wider gender issues. The 1980s saw the emergence of poverty-targeted micro finance institutions like Grameen Bank. Many of these programmes see themselves as empowerment-oriented. In the 1990s, a combination of evidence of high female repayment rates and the rising influence of gender lobbies within donor agencies and NGOs led to increasing emphasis on targeting women in micro-finance programmes. Throughout the developing countries, innovative lending programs have emerged that specializes in supplying small capital loans to low-income entrepreneurs. In many of these programs it is common to find that a large percentage of borrowers are women. For example, based on a 1963 survey of microfinance institution around the world, the World Bank estimated that 61% of all clients were women (World Bank, 1997). In two rather well documented lending programs, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and Bancosol in Bolivia, the percentages are 95% and 72% respectively. These high female participation rates have raised a number of research questions and have in turn, inspired a growing number of empirical investigations. One question that is commonly raised is how a woman's borrowing impacts household consumption. For example, using data from Bangladesh, **Pitt and Khandke (1999)**[1] estimate how

participation in a credit program impacts household consumption, depending on the participant's gender. They conclude that household consumption increases more if a woman takes out a loan than a man. On the other hand, **Morduch (1999)**[2] finds that participation in a credit program in Bangladesh, everything else equal, tends to imply lower household consumption. It turns out that disagreement such as this is rather common in the literature.

Another area of debate surrounds the question of whether a woman's participation in a credit program raises her "bargaining power" or "empowerment" in the household. **Hashemi et al. (1996)**[3] for example, attempt to measure a woman's empowerment using indicators such as level of mobility, ability to make large purchases, and political and legal awareness. However, in other studies, such as **Goetz and Sen Gupta (1996)**[4] and **Rahaman (1999)**[5], evidence is offered that a woman's participation in a credit program reinforces her dominated role in the household, and in some cases, the loan ends up under the control of her husband.

Thinking about gender inequality against women and too much injustice to women who are nearly half of Indian population the Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles.

Statement of the Problem: After having a minute details of the available literatures and also after going through the types of analyses made on the literatures, we came to a specific conclusion that no such in-depth study had been made with respect to the district of south 24 Parganas or the greater Kolkata, which could put stress on the women empowerment on the basis of women entrepreneurship in the state of West Bengal, India. *In particular, the following problems are being identified from the pin-pointed literature review in respect of the aforesaid area of study:*

1. First, to attempt to study how a woman's tendency to invest in safer investment projects can be linked to her desire to raise her bargaining position in the households.
2. Secondly, socio-economic background of women entrepreneurs in the district of South 24 Parganas is to be identified. The socio-economic variables chosen for the study are education, age, father's / husband's occupation, family income, marital status, etc.
3. Nature of business of Women entrepreneurs is to be analyzed. Recently some entrepreneurs have shifted from traditional items like knitting, tailoring to non-traditional items involving sophisticated technology.
4. Effectiveness of services provided by Government, banks and other organizations relating to entrepreneurship development programmes is to be assessed.
5. Finally, we propose to find out the ways and means to have a healthy growth of female small entrepreneurs in West Bengal, particularly in the District of South 24 Parganas in the light of the models that may be prescribed for the application in the specific situations.

Brief review of the Available Literature: For the purpose of finding the appropriate research gap for the study I had to go through the following available literatures on the selected topic. For the convenience of the review of the available literature on the above mentioned topic, I have sub-divided the same into three segments i. e., (a) Microfinance and Women Empowerment, (b) women entrepreneurship and Women Empowerment and (c) Financial Inclusion and Women Empowerment. Further I have tried to study the above three major segments into three levels i. e., international level, National level (Indian Perspective) and State level (West Bengal perspective).

Therefore, from all the three sub-sections of the study it has been found that no comprehensive research work has been done to determine or point out the changing socio-economic conditions of rural women entrepreneurs in West Bengal, in the light of present microfinance and financial inclusion initiatives, although different policies in this regard has been adopted by the Government of India and Government of West Bengal for the Empowerment of Women, specially the Women Entrepreneurs. Therefore, we have shown interest to engage ourselves into this interesting as well as challenging and very sensitive research venture.

Research Questions or Hypotheses: The present study is basically trying to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the average Age of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
2. What is the Educational Qualification of the Sample Entrepreneur?
3. What is their Year of Entry into Entrepreneurship?

4. What is the Ownership Pattern of the Sample Enterprises?
5. What is the Occupational Background of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
6. What is the Marital Status of Women Entrepreneurs?
7. What are the Sources of Knowledge about Entrepreneurship?
8. What is the Origin of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
9. What are the Sources of Capital of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
10. What is the average Volume of Capital of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
11. What is the average Level of Income of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
12. What is the average Profit Margin of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
13. What is the sample Women Entrepreneurs' Contribution to the Family?
14. What is the Nature of Businesses of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
15. What are the possible Areas of Sale of the Sample Entrepreneurs?
16. Which Job Opportunities are being created by the Sample Entrepreneurs?
17. What is the Participation of Women Entrepreneurs in Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs)?
18. What are the Motivating Factors Encouraged to Enter into Entrepreneurial Venture?

Research Methodology: A systematic study in any branch of social science needs a pre-determined and well thought out methodology, surely to find out the truth. It helps a researcher to collect necessary information analyze the data and interpret the findings. There are, in fact, a number of methods that may be applied for the purpose of a research work. Of these methods the library work method, the observation method, the interview method, are the important ones.

Methods Used in the Study: In our study, we have combined three methods – the interview method, the observation method and the literature review method.

Nature of Data Collected: For the purpose of our study, both the primary and the secondary data have been used. The primary data has been collected by direct interview method using a pre-designed interview schedule. For secondary data text books, research articles, government policies and strategies regarding women entrepreneurship development, weeklies, dailies, magazines, newsletters, annual reports and publications published by the Central and State Government, District and State Industrial Research Centres and relevant websites have been used in order to present the fact and findings in the logical format.

Selection of the Study Area: The main reasons for selecting the district of South 24 Parganas for case study are the easy access of the researcher to the sample respondents in this district and the problem of time and resources provided to an individual researcher. Another important reason for selecting the district of South 24 Parganas is that some area of it is falling within the greater Kolkata, which is the capital of West Bengal and principal business center of West Bengal and eastern region in India. Moreover, number of educated women is, perhaps, maximum in this district and they are coming out from kitchen to participate in the entrepreneurial activities to all spheres including advanced technology like electronics, engineering etc. Again a good number of women entrepreneurs come daily from the neighbouring districts to Kolkata and engage themselves in entrepreneurial activities. Not only that, what Kolkata thinks today, the rest of West Bengal thinks tomorrow. As a result we think that the study will be made more representatives by selecting the South 24 Parganas and Greater Kolkata district as the study area for our case study purpose.

Sample Size for the Study: The district of South 24 Parganas comprises of five subdivisions: Baruipur, Canning, Diamond Harbour, Kakdwip and Alipore Sadar. Alipore is the district headquarters. There are 33 police stations, 29 development blocks, 7 municipalities and 312 gram panchayats in this district. Other than municipality area, each subdivision contains community development blocks which in turn are divided into rural areas and census towns. In total there are 21 urban units: 7 municipalities and 14 census towns.

We have selected 6 municipalities and 20 gram panchayats in all, due to paucity of time. We have selected 40 women entrepreneurs from each of these municipalities and gram panchayats by stratified systematic random sampling procedure in order to avoid any bias in our sample selection process, i.e. 1040 respondents. **But, out of our research interest and also out of passion to find something new, we have finally collected data of 786 filled-up questionnaires, completed in all respect.** Therefore, the design of sampling method adopted for the purpose of our study has been four-stage sampling design with some permitted purposive bias.

These four stages are - the selection of the district at the first stage, the selection of sub-division at the second stage, the selection of municipalities and panchayats at the third stage and the respondent women entrepreneurs at the fourth and final stage.

Empirical Data Analysis and Exploratory Study: ***Analysis of Reliability & Validity and Exploratory Factor Analysis:*** **Reliability Test:** Any study, depending on primary data, must be backed up by a proper test of reliability and validity. The evaluation of questionnaire reliability and internal consistency is possible by Cronbach's α **(Cronbach, 1984)**[6], which is considered to be the most important reliability index and is based on the number of the variables/items of the questionnaire, as well as on the correlations between the variables **(Nunnally, 1978)**[7]. The reliability of the instrument means that its results are characterized by receptiveness' **(Psarou and Zafiropoulos, 2004)**[8] and these results are not connected with measurement errors **(Zafiropoulos, 2005)**[9], was evaluated by Cronbach alpha coefficient. The index alpha (a) is the most important index of internal consistency and is attributed as the mean of correlations of all the variables, and it does not depend on their arrangement **(Anastasiadou, 2006)**[10]. So, we have conducted the reliability test on standardized items and the **Cronbach's alpha based on standardized item found at .743 (shown in Table-2) which proved the reliability of the questionnaire and data.**

Table 1 : Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	779	99.1
	Excluded[a]	7	.9
	Total	786	100.0

Table 2 : Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.721	.743	25

Table 3 : Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
47.45	54.782	7.402	25

Validity Test: Further, for testing the validity, we have conducted the Friedman test and the Tukey test. In statistics, **Tukey's test of additivity**, named after John Tukey, is an approach used in two-way ANOVA (regression analysis involving two qualitative factors) to assess whether the factor variables are additively related to the expected value of the response variable. It can be applied when there are no replicated values in the data set, a situation in which it is impossible to directly estimate a fully general non-additive regression structure and still have information left to estimate the error variance. The test statistic proposed by Tukey has one degree of freedom under the null hypothesis, hence this is often called "Tukey's one-degree-of-freedom test." **Tukey's test** for nonadditivity was also found to be significant (shown in Table 4.40), **signifying that there are no replicated values in the data set.**

Table 4 : ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity

			Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig**
Between People			1704.830	778	2.191		
Within People	Between Items		5732.596	24	238.858	287.687	.000
	Residual	Nonadditivity	133.988[a]	1	133.988	162.776	.000
		Balance	15368.856	18671	.823		
		Total	15502.844	18672	.830		
	Total		21235.440	18696	1.136		
Total			22940.270	19474	1.178		
Grand Mean = 1.90							
a. Tukey's estimate of power to which observations must be raised to achieve additivity = .019.							

Then we have conducted **Hotelling's T-squared test for inter-class correlation coefficient which was also found to be significant.** (Shown in Table 4.41)

Table 5 : Hotelling's T-Squared Test

Hotelling's T-Squared	F	df1	df2	Sig
7648.973	309.285	24	755	.000

The covariance matrix is calculated and used in the analysis.
Source: calculated through SPSS 21

Further, we have also conducted Intraclass Correlation Coefficient, which is presented below:

Table 6 : Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation[b]	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.062[a]	.053	.072	2.639	778	18672	.000
Average Measures	.621[c]	.582	.658	2.639	778	18672	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

a. The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
b. Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition-the between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.
c. This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

Since p-value > α (or $F < F_{crit}$), we can't reject the null hypothesis, and conclude **there is no significant difference between the mean vectors for the simple measures and average measures.**

Test for Normality: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test: The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test can be modified to serve as a goodness of fit test. In the special case of testing for normality of the distribution, samples are standardized and compared with a standard normal distribution. This is equivalent to setting the mean and variance of the reference distribution equal to the sample estimates, and it is known that using these to define the specific reference distribution changes the null distribution of the test statistic, as below. Various studies have found that, even in this corrected form, the test is less powerful for testing normality than the Shapiro–Wilk test or Anderson–Darling test. The result of one-sample K-S Test was found to be **.000, i.e., significant.**

Perception Study of Empowerment by the Respondent Women: Exploratory and Confirmatory Data Analysis through Structural Equation Modelling [SEM]:
Backdrop: As we were not at all satisfied with the results of Exploratory Factor Analysis done in the previous section of the study, therefore, we, with the help of 27 pin-pointed research questions *[mentioned in the Appendix]*, tried to do a more specific Exploratory as well as Confirmatory Data Analysis through SEM. The present section of the study uses structural equation modeling (SEM) as one of the analytical tools that allows for the simultaneous estimation and testing of the relationships of interest. In SEM, causal processes are represented by a series of structural equations that can be modeled graphically to aid in conceptualizing a theoretical framework **(Byrne, 2001)[11].**

Variables Defined: The specific and pin-pointed research questions relating to the empowerment asked to the respondent women are converted into the following Scale variables and entered in the SPSS Spreadsheet as follows :
x1 = I have control on the allocation of monthly expenditure of my family
x2 = I have control on the purchasing decisions of my family
x3 = I make decisions on cooking
x4 = I make decisions on the family planning incl. the no. of children
x5= I take decisions on children's education
x6 = I take decisions on family festivals
x7= I take decison on children's marriage

x8 = I have control in preparing family budget
x9 = I have control on family household expenditure and cash dealings
x10 = I have control on family savings and investment
x11 = I make arrangements for sales of goods and marketing
x12 = I visit my friends and relatives alone without permissions of my husband/head of the family/family members
x13 = I go to festivals and ceremonies alone without permissions of my husband/family
x14 = I go to shops for purchase/marketing without permissions of my husband/family
x15 = I enjoy love and affection in my family
x16 = I get due importance and recognition in my family and local area
x17 = My suggestions are sought by young members of the family in their decisions
x18 = There is violence in my family
x19 = I am appreciated by my family for my efforts
x20 = I got/get offer for leadership in different family/local programs
x21 = The sense of respect of others about me has changed since I joined the venture
x22 = I feel the necessity of further education for the sake of my work
x23 = I am motivated/inspired by my family members for my work
x24 = I am aware of the schemes provided by Central/State Government for the women entrepreneurs
x25 = I have the ability and courage to meet different people for the sake of my work
x26 = I am able to do banking and other subsidiary activities for my venture on my own
x27 = I am able to do all the applications/other secretarial work on my own
All the above variables were converted into Scale variables.

Study Design: The study design was the survey method using structured questionnaires with Likert Scale ranging from strongly agrees to strongly disagree coding 5 to 1 respectively. And the direct personal interview also was conducted with the individuals as a research tool. Out of sample population of selected women self employed persons in South 24 Parganas District we had selected 786 respondents who had more than 2 years experience continuously on their self employment activities and not getting any micro finance facilities from Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) .

Specified Hypotheses for the Study: In this study, the following hypotheses have been developed:
H1. Local Leadership, Intellectuality and Esteem have significant association with women empowerment in rural areas of South 24 Parganas District.
H2. There is a relationship between Appreciation and women empowerment.
H3. There is a significant impact of Awareness on women empowerment.
H4. There is no significant impact of violence and Sales and Marketing on women empowerment.

Exploratory Factor Analysis: The Exploratory factor analysis technique was employed to load the number of variables to find out the influence of women empowerment and regression and correlation analysis has been used to find out the impact and relationship among the variables.

Data Analysis: The descriptive statistics table, i.e. Table 10 simply provides mean, standard deviation, and number of observation for each variable included in the analysis.
The mean value of the variables is more than 3 except *I have control in preparing family budget, I go to shops for purchase/marketing without permissions of my husband/family, I have the ability and courage to meet different people for the sake of my work and I am able to do all the applications/other secretarial work on my own.* And also the standard deviation is high (more than 1.0) for the all the variables. Further, the correlation Matrix table provides correlation coefficient and p-values for each pair of variables included in the analysis. A close inspection of these correlations provides insights into the factor structure.

Table 11 : KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.699
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1343.256
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

The data was verified through Cronbach's alpha and result is 0.871 prove internal consistency of the data. The adequacy tests and KMO and Bartlett's test result is 0.699 which supports for factor analysis.

Factors Associated with Rural Women Empowerment: The principal component range from .559 to .745, thus most of the variance of these variables was accounted for by this seven dimensional factor solution which were **Intellectuality, Sales & Marketing, Local Leadership, Decision Making & Control, Awareness and Allocation of Finance, Violence and Esteem**, which were found out after 3 iterations and which included 17 variables and 10 other variables were found to be redundant having negligible factor loading. The extracted factors accounted for 60.271% of total variance explained.

Brief Explanation of the Factors coming out of EFA:

1. **Intellectuality:** this factor is composed of the variables x19, x6 and x17 with factor loadings of .668, .644 and .596 respectively and they explain 9.877 per cent of the variance.
2. **Sales & Marketing:** this factor is composed of the variables x11 and x22 with factor loadings of .786 and -.543 respectively and they explain 9.137 per cent of the variance.
3. **Local Leadership:** this factor is composed of the variables x8 and x20 with factor loadings of -.725 and .689 respectively and they explain 9.053 per cent of the variance.
4. **Decision Making & Control:** this factor is composed of the variables x4, x9 and x26 with factor loadings of .724, .661 and .522 respectively and they explain 8.734 per cent of the variance.
5. **Awareness and Allocation of Finance:** this factor is composed of the variables x24 and x1 with factor loadings of .749 and 587 respectively and they explain 8.383 per cent of the variance.
6. **Violence:** this factor is composed of the variable x18 with a very negligible factor loading of -.721 and it explains only 7.986 per cent of the variance.
7. **Esteem:** this factor is composed of the variable x23 with a high factor loading of .852 and it explains only 7.100 per cent of the variance.

Table 14 : Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component						
	Intellectuality	**Sales & Marketing**	**Local Leadership**	**Decision Making & Control**	**Awareness and allocation of Finance**	**Violence**	**Esteem**
x19	.668						
x6	.644						
x17	.596						
x2							
x11		.786					
x22		-.543					
x8			-.725				
x20			.689				
x4				.724			
x9				.661			
x26				.522			
x24					.749		
x1					.587		
x18						-.721	
x12							
x23							
x21							.852
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]							
a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.							

Moreover the factor scores those extracted with the help of factor analysis has been used to Multiple Regression Analysis. The multiple regressions have been used to find out the influence of micro finance services on women empowerment. To meet the objective, the impact of influencing factors on women

empowerment through microfinance activities has been investigated. The following model was used to investigate the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

$Y = a + \beta_1 Z_1 + \beta_2 Z_2 + \beta_3 Z_3 + + \beta_4 Z_4 + \beta_5 Z_5 + \beta_6 Z_6 + \beta_7 Z_7 + €$ **(1)**

Where, Y is the Dependent Variable; (Women empowerment). Intercept terms β_1, β_2, β_3 are regression coefficients. Z_1, Z_2, Z_3, Z_4, Z_5, Z6 and Z7 represent Independent variables, which are nothing but the factors mentioned in the above table; (Intellectuality, Sales & Marketing, Local Leadership, Decision Making & Control, Awareness and Allocation of Finance, Violence and Esteem). ε represents the error term.

All the variables extracted could explain 60.271% of the variation in the women empowerment through the above factors. The rest of 39.729% of the variation in the women empowerment is explained by other factors such as education, occupation, experience, income and savings etc.

Table 15 : Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.139	.031		69.945	.000
	Sales & Marketing [x2]	-.022	.037	-.023	-.595	.552
	Local Leadership [x3]	.035	.034	.038	1.006	.315
	Decision Making & Control [x4]	-.148	.038	-.138	-3.870	.000
	Awareness & Allocation of Finance [x5]	.003	.033	.004	.104	.917
	Violence [x6]	-.036	.033	-.039	-1.065	.287
	Esteem [x7]	-.127	.036	-.125	-3.552	.000
	Intellectuality [x1]	.264	.038	.250	6.906	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Level of annual Income of the woman entrepreneur						

The estimated regression equation is:

$Y = 2.139 + .264 Z_1 + -.022 Z_2 + .035 Z_3 + + -.148 Z_4 + .003 Z_5 + -.036 Z_6 + -.127 Z_7 + €$ **(2)**

The significant t–value of each variable confirms the significant contribution of each independent variable to the model. The value of Beta coefficient is highest in case of Z_1(Intellectuality) explaining that 26.4 percent of the variation in the women empowerment can be explained by this variable. Similar result is shown in other variable of Z_3 (Local Leadership) explaining that 3.5% of the variation in the women empowerment is explained by this variable, and Z_5 (Awareness & Allocation of Finance) explaining that only 0.03% of the variation in the women empowerment is explained by this variable but in case of Z_2 (Sales & Marketing) i.e. -.022 has negative impact on women empowerment, X_4 (Decision Making & Control) i.e. -.148 has negative impact on women empowerment, Z6 (Violence) i.e. -.036 has negative impact on women empowerment. and Z7 (Esteem) i.e. -.127 has negative impact on women empowerment. The smallest Beta in case of Z5, i.e. 0.003 shows that the decision making contributes least to the empowerment of women clients at household level.

From the analysis it could be concluded Intellectuality has significant association with empowerment (P=.000 which is less than 0.05 at 0.05 significant level) along with Decision Making and Control and Decision Making and Sales and Marketing has weak association with microfinance (P=.552 which is greater than 0.05 at 5% significant level). However, there is significant positive, weak and negative association between women empowerment and Intellectuality, Local Leadership and Esteem in respectively the H1 has been accepted.

The null hypothesis explains mean values of regression coefficient are equivalent to zero, Hence the null hypothesis is accepted which was explained that there is no significance differences between mean values of co-efficient. It is evident that the value of one or more regression coefficient is not equal to zero.

Table 16 : ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	82.911	8	10.364	14.104	.000[b]
	Residual	570.973	777	.735		
	Total	653.884	785			

a. Dependent Variable: Level of annual Income of the woman entrepreneur

b. Predictors: (Constant), REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1, REGR factor score 7 for analysis 1, REGR factor score 6 for analysis 1, REGR factor score 8 for analysis 1, REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1, REGR factor score 5 for analysis 1, REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1, REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1

In the above Table all the variables favourably support the argument that the model is significant [P-value<0.001] and can predict the outcomes.

Confirmatory Factory Analysis using Structural Equations Modelling (SEM): But we were never satisfied with the results of the constructs obtained by EFA and therefore, we relied on CFA with the help of SEM through SPSS Amos 22. We had the following assumptions for CFA :

Assumptions:

a. In case of CFA researchers have preconceived idea about the number of dimensions that should underline the data.
b. The number of factors is specified beforehand. Here the number of factors is 7 as found out through EFA.
c. The purpose of CFA is to test hypothesis or to determine the extent to which new data fits the expected structure.

Here, after 3 iterations, we finally got 6 factors with 14 variables and these 6 factors are interrelated to each other where the degree of association between the first two factors, i.e., Intellectuality and Local Leadership is very high, as evident from the following Path Diagram:

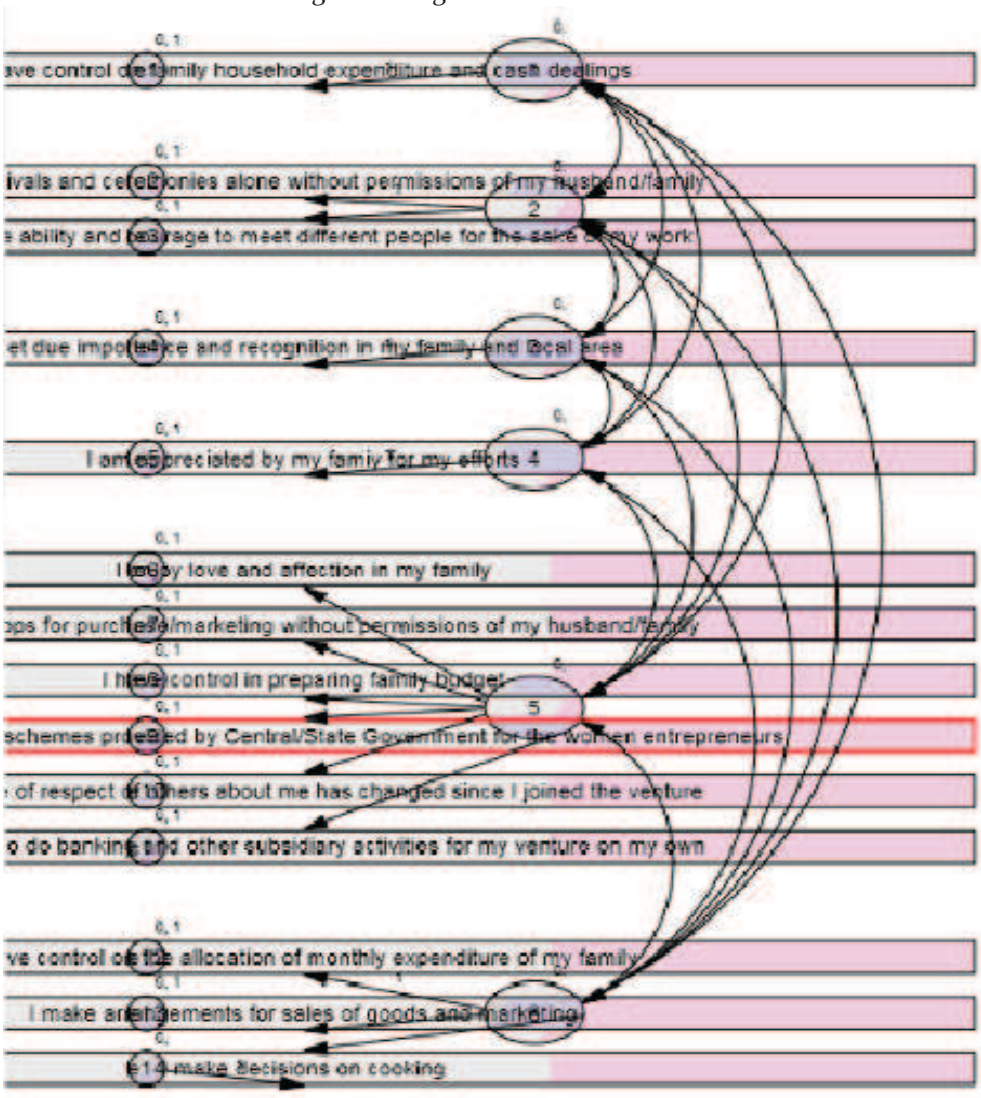

Figure 1: Path Diagram

Source: Extracted Primary Data from SPSS 24 compiled through SPSS AMOS 24

According to the above path diagram, after 3 iterations, we found out 3 confirmatory factors **Intellectuality, Sales & Marketing, Local Leadership, Decision Making & Control, Awareness and Allocation of Finance and Esteem involving 14 factors** and excluded the variable 'Violence', which is not a confirmatory Factor.

Further, from the data analysis, the following Indicators were found out:

Indicators:

- ***CMIN:*** Minimum value of the discrepancy between the data and model. **It was found out to be 0.689.**
- ***RMR*: Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)** is the square root of the average squared amount by which your model's estimated sample variances and covariances differ from the fractural values in the data. The smaller the RMR, better the fit. **It was found out to be 0.568 (<0.08).**
- ***GFI:* Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)**, tells you what proportion of the variance in sample variance co-variance matrix is accounted for by the model. This should exceed 0.9 for a good model. **It was found out to be 0.912 after the improvement.**

Baseline Comparisons

- ***Normed Fit Index (NFI)*** shows how far between the (terribly fitting) independence model and the (perfectly fitting) saturated model the default model is. **It was found out to be 0.912.**
- ***Comparative Fit Index (CFI)*** does the same. These values should exceed 0.9 for good fit. **It was found out to be 0.967.**
- ***RMESA:*** The ***Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMESA)*** estimates lack of fit compared to the saturated model. RMESA of 0.05 or less indicates good fit, and 0.08 or less adequate fit. **It was found out to be 0.051.**
- ***HOELTER:*** If the sample size are larger than this, you would reject the null hypothesis that model fit the data just as well as does the saturated model. **We could not find it.**

Therefore, the above path diagram gives us six confirmatory factors as mentioned above involving 14 variables.

Conclusion: Therefore, the study findings strongly depict that in spite of the fact that the respondent poor women entrepreneurs are never sponsored by any MFIs nor by any large bank or sponsors, even then they are proceeding aggressively towards different facets of empowerment, including, of course, economic and financial empowerment, with the factors identified above.

Problems faced by Women Entrepreneurs:

1. As found out of the answers given by the respondent women entrepreneurs in response to the open-ended question made at last part of the interview, participation of women in entrepreneurial activities has been increasing day by day. In spite of that number of women entrepreneurs in relation to their counterpart men entrepreneurs is very low particularly in any developing country like India. Now the planner realizes that women entrepreneurs have vast entrepreneurial talents that could be narrated to create employment opportunity.

Observations from the Case Study and Our Findings:

The cases examined in our study indicate the emerging trend of women entrepreneurial development in small and tiny business and industry. Developing entrepreneurship among women is very important for the all-round economic development of West Bengal because women comprise nearly 50 per cent of total population of West Bengal. However, it should be admitted that we have selected South 24 Parganas District as case study and the number of cases examined is small so no claim can be made to have the entire picture of women entrepreneurs of West Bengal. Yet our case studies identified that the emerging women entrepreneurial classes consist of people from various socio-economic strata, motivated by different objective and by various persons and in their functioning of their enterprises they face various problems. Now, we can sum up different important points that have come out from the analysis of performance of the women entrepreneurs.

One major observation that emerges from the sample survey is that in the District of South 24 Parganas women in the low and middle income groups with some educational background and moderate experience in

specific line of manufacture or trade entered into the entrepreneurial activities in the area of **handicraft, ladies garments, beauty parlour, soft doll and toys, ladies tailors, electrical equipments, fashion designing, imitation ornaments, traveling agency, photocopy centre, STD booth etc.** that are matched with their social status. On the other hand illiterate or semi-illiterate women from very poor families enter into another type of entrepreneurial activities. **They purchase rice, fruit, fish, cut-flower, vegetable, etc. from village market and sell them in South 24 Parganas and Greater Kolkata. They also set up tea stall and other very small size shop in Kolkata greater.** It would be fruitful to identify and develop women entrepreneurs with such background.

Generally, women are very shaky to take institutional loan. They do not like to take the risk of paying the installment in due time. As a result they depend on their family for the required amount of capital for starting an enterprise. We have observed that most of the women entrepreneurs procure capital from their previous savings and contribution from their family.

Proper motivation encourages the women to enter into entrepreneurship. Our study shows that most of the women entrepreneurs have been self-motivated or motivated by their family members where they have come from business families. Encouragement from the personnel associated with EDP course also motivated the women to start a business.

Suggestions for Development of Women Entrepreneurs: Women possess sufficient talents with all the qualities and abilities required for successful entrepreneurs. A favourble environment is to be created which can motivate, encourage and provide required facilities to women to be successful entrepreneurs. To create the favourable environment to meet the requirement of women entrepreneurs or prospective women entrepreneurs we may put forward the following suggestions:

1. Effective efforts should be taken by the State Government and different Chambers of Commerce to provide necessary information on entrepreneurship to all women of West Bengal through television and other media.
2. Women Entrepreneurship Organizations and all other non-government organizations (NGOs) should take necessary steps in the implementations of income generations schemes evolved by the State and Central Governments.
3. Efforts should be taken to introduce Diploma or Certificate course on Entrepreneurial Management and Development for women with the commerce and industrial establishments and universities.
4. State Government should set up trade centres exclusively for the benefit of women entrepreneurs and it should be linked up with the trade centres of all the foreign countries and make arrangement for exporting the quality product of the women entrepreneurs to abroad.
5. State Government should take the responsibility of marketing the product of women entrepreneurs particularly the product of new entrants.
6. State Government should make arrangement with the banks and other financial institutions to provide term loan and working capital loans to the women entrepreneurs in more liberal and easier term and the State Government should be the guarantor.
7. The family members of women entrepreneurs should cooperate and extend all possible supports for running the enterprise set up by women entrepreneurs and also share the loan of family work with women entrepreneurs.
8. Women entrepreneurs themselves have to take the entrepreneurship seriously and not casually and give all out efforts for the development of their units. They should be confident that they have sufficient talents and good qualities that their counterpart male entrepreneurs possess. In order to be 'successful women entrepreneurs' they have to develop entrepreneurial personality and train themselves on various aspects of management to overcome the various problems faced by them.

Epilogue: Since women constitute nearly half of human resources of West Bengal as well as of India, overall development of the State or India cannot be possible neglecting the women.

Both the Central as well as State Government has to introduce women-friendly economic policies that can enhance both social and economic position and make them self-reliant. Though development of women has always been the central focus of planning since independence but it has not yet been actively implemented. Empowerment is a major step in this direction and it removes the obstacles to the path of women's emancipation. But the Government as well as women themselves should take active role to remove those

obstacles. All our efforts should be directed towards all round development of each and every section of women of West Bengal as well as of India by giving them their due share.

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