



## SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN SERICULTURE ENTERPRISE IN UTTARAKHAND

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**Abstract:** *The economy of Uttarakhand is predominantly agrarian. It is abundantly clear from the micro level picture that women are involved in most of the agricultural operations in its broadest sense, including subsidiary enterprises like dairy, poultry, sericulture, silviculture, pisciculture and the like. The 1991 census had recorded high female workforce participation rate in hill districts. Entrepreneurship among women has come a long way in Uttarakhand. However the proportion of women entrepreneurs in small scale industries reveals abysmally low at ten percent. As there is very good scope for development of enterprises in Uttarakhand. Sericulture is one of the most labour intensive sector of the Indian economy combining both agriculture and industry which provide means of livelihood to a large section of the population. It is the only cash crop in agriculture sector that give returns within 30 days. Sericulture is area where women have performed better than men. The present study has been carried in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand state. The study indicated that majority of women engaged in sericulture were found to be of middle age group, married, had 10 -20 years of experience in the enterprise, skilled, marginal farmers, belonged to other backward caste, involved in social and political institutions without hold any post and had medium level of socio economic status.*

**Keywords:** *Socio personal characteristics, socio-economic characteristics, sericulture enterprise, women entrepreneurs, socio economic status*

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The economy of Uttarakhand is predominantly agrarian. More than 80 per cent of working population is engaged in agriculture. They are over burdened with heavy workload. Women in hills on an average work for 15 hours in a day. Most of the men folk in hill region have migrated to plains to earn their livelihood; therefore the women have to manage both their home and farms. Though the maximum work in agriculture is done by women, they have lesser role to play in decision making in various agricultural and non agricultural activities as compared to their male counterparts.

Women are engaged in various farm and nonfarm activities. As far as crop husbandry is concerned, women participate in almost all the activities right from preparatory tillage to harvest and even in post harvest tasks like processing, storage and marketing. The important factors behind being workable are socio economic and personal characteristics of women in hills.

**Kadlag (1994)** concluded that a majority of farm women had actively participated in decision making belonging to age group (35 years and above), small size of family, low economic status and low annual gross income. He further revealed that there is positive impact of participation of farm women in decision making process on productivity of crops. Major reasons for low participation of farm women in decision making are dominance of men in the family, illiteracy of farm women, less exposure to the outside world, lack of confidence, shyness and lack of knowledge regarding improved agricultural technologies. About 90% beneficiaries' farm women reported that the scheme was useful for the upliftment of socio economic status of farm women. About 8.34 per cent farm women viewed it as less useful and 1.67 per cent farm women reported that the scheme was not at all useful for farm women. The beneficiaries' farm women were asked about the way of scheme implementation. Out of them 93.33 per cent responded positively and they were happy about the way of existing pattern of scheme implementation (**Wasnik 2006**).

Sericulture is one of the most labour intensive sector of the economy combining both agriculture and industry which provide means of livelihood to a large section of the population i.e. mulberry cultivation, silk worm seed production, rearer, reeler, twister, weaver, hand spinner of silk waste, traders etc. In sericulture, women can effectively undertake production of silk as well as processing of raw silk. Therefore, keeping in view the



present study was planned with the objective to study the socio-personal and socio-economic characteristics of women engaged in sericulture enterprise.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study has been carried out in Doiwala and Sahaspur blocks of Dehradun district of Uttarakhand state. These blocks were selected purposively, because maximum number of women engaged in sericulture enterprise belonged to Dehradun. The data for the socio personal and socio economic characteristics were collected from 120 respondents who were engaged in sericulture either in pre cocoon stage or post cocoon stage. The salient findings of the investigations have been summarized as follows:

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The Socio personal characteristics and Socio economic characteristics of the women engaged in sericulture (in terms of age, marital status, year of experience, source of earning, land holding, caste, education, social participation, family size, possession and house) were studied using appropriate measurement procedures and results have been presented under following heads.

## **SOCIO PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to their Socio Personal Characteristics**

S.No.	Variables	Categories	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
1.	Age	Young (<21 years)	16	13.33
		Middle (21-41 years)	87	72.50
		Old (>41 years)	17	14.16
2.	Year of experience	Young (0-10 years)	20	16.66
		Middle (10-20 years)	51	42.50
		Old (> 20 years)	49	40.83
3.	Marital status	Married	17	14.16
		Unmarried	95	79.16
		Widow	6	05.00
		Divorced	2	01.66

The Table reveals majority of the respondents (72.50%) belonged to middle age group followed by old (14.16%) and young (13.33%) age group, (42.50%) belonged to middle category of experience (10-20 years) in the enterprise, followed by 40.83 per cent were in high category (more than 20 years). While only few respondents (16.66%) come under young category (less than 10 years). It indicated most of the respondents practiced



sericulture as an enterprise from a longer time. The reason why maximum number of respondents were found to be in young and middle category of experience as they inherited it as family occupation. It is evident from the Table that majority of the respondents were married (79.16%), followed by unmarried (14.16%). Very few percentages of the respondents come under the category of widow and divorcee (5.00% and 1.66 % respectively). Thus the study clearly indicates that the women engaged in sericulture in newly formed state Uttarakhand were relatively middle age group, having experience of 10-20 years and married. However the sericulture enterprise is commonly practiced in each family of the rural areas reason being to add in family income. Since the enterprise is inherited it was easy for them to take same enterprise and to make it continue after her marriage. **Palmurugan (2006)** in their study indicated that majority of the respondents had medium level of experience in enterprise followed by high and low level of experience in enterprise.

## SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

### 1. Source of earning

**Table 2: Distributions of Respondents according to their Source of earning**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)*	Percentage
1	Agriculture	50	41.66
2	Unskilled	24	20.00
3	Skilled worker	74	61.66
4	Business	47	39.16
5	Service	45	37.50

**\*Multiple responses were allowed**

The **Table 2** indicates that majority of the respondents (61.66%) were skilled workers followed by 41.66 per cent, who were engaged in agriculture, business (39.16%) and services (37.50%) as their source of earning. Only 20 per cent were unskilled worker. Some of the respondents were not confined to one category but were engaged in other jobs as well. It may be because of the fact that the social status of an individual is directly linked with the source of earning which mainly depended upon the factors like higher education, higher income, high ambition, and multiple avenues for employment.

### 2. Land holding

The data presented in **Table 2** inferred that majority of 61.66 per cent respondents were marginal farmers having land holding less than one hectare followed by landless category



(35 %). Only 3.33 per cent belonged to small farmer with land holding of 1-2 hectares of land.

**Table 3: Distributions of Respondents according to their Land holding**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Landless	42	35.00
2	Marginal (<1 hac)	74	61.66
3	Small (1-2 hac)	4	03.33
4	Medium (2-4 hac)	-	-
5	Large (>4 hac)	-	-

The reason may be that this enterprise requires less land as well as the respondents were poor and they adopted this enterprise just to meet their livelihood needs or for support to their other economic resources. None of the respondents were found in large and medium category.

### 3. Caste

**Table 4: Distributions of Respondents according to their Caste**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Scheduled Caste	45	38.33
2	Scheduled Tribe	-	-
3	Other Backward Caste	57	47.50
4	General	17	14.16

In India the social stratification in rural communities is generally based on caste distribution. The caste distribution of the women engaged in Sericulture activities according to the classification mentioned in **Table 4** showed that 57 respondents (47.50%) belonged to other backward caste (which included *Muslims*, *Ahirs*) followed by Scheduled caste (38.33%), which included *Gorkhaali*, and *Jatav*. Only 1.16 per cent of respondents belonged to general category which included *Rajputs* and *Thakurs*. An analytical perusal of data revealed that respondents of all the selected villages were highly associated with the membership of Other Backward Caste and Scheduled Caste. Some social factors which accounted for the ascendancy of lower caste in the sphere of sericulture enterprise that might be because of traditional power inherited to them maximum exposure to the work of that particular enterprise, low earning and labour intensive business. Another reason for lower caste women adopting sericulture as an enterprise was that they were socio economically down



trodden and it provided additional income for their livelihood. They were perfect to earn bread adopting this enterprise rather than through education and status and hence they have considerable strength performing in the Sericulture enterprise. On the contrary the low representation of the general caste did not commensurate with their proportion in the population.

#### 4. Education

**Table 5: Distributions of Respondents according to their Education**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Illiterate	36	30.00
2	Primary	60	50.00
3	High school	24	20.00

The data relating to the educational status of the respondents as depicted in **Table 5** made it clear that fifty per cent of the respondents were having primary education followed by illiterate (30%) and high school (20%). None of the respondents had education up to intermediate or graduation and above. It emerged from the above analysis that the entrepreneurship is highly associated with the educational status of the individual, this proposition may not hold true in this case. Similarly **Anna (1990)** found that 49.02 per cent of women entrepreneurs started their own units between 26- 35 years and majority (44.12%) of them was having matriculation as their highest qualification. Nearly 82 per cent and 91 per cent women entrepreneurs were from independent and farm family background respectively.

#### 5. Social participation

**Table 6: Distributions of Respondents according to their Social Participation**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	With out any post in social and political institution	40	33.33
2	More than one post in social and political institution	36	30.00
3	Hold official post in social and political institution	9	07.50
4	To collect money to distributed for social upliftment	35	29.16

The data related to the representation of respondents in different levels of social participation has been presented in **Table 6** ahead. It is evident from the **Table 6** that 33.33 per cent of the respondents were involved in social and political institutions without holding



any post followed by 30 per cent of them held post in social and political institution and 29.16 per cent of the respondents collected money to be distributed for social upliftment. Meager 7.5 per cent of respondents held official post in social and political institutions. Thus, results of the study indicate that women were socially and politically more active. Because they worked in groups so they have more opportunities to interact with organizations. Another reason is that, it was because of the fact that the entrepreneurs had more zeal and enthusiasm to participate in public activities and they have greater interaction with outside agencies.

## 6. Family size

**Table 7: Distributions of Respondents according to Family size**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Small (1-4 members)	13	10.84
2	Medium (4-6 members)	53	44.16
3	Large (More than 6)	54	45.00

The data pertaining to the family size of the respondents (**Table 7**) were collected under three categories viz. small (1-4 members), medium (4-6 members) and large (more than 6 members), which reflected that most of the respondents (45%) belonged to large family size followed by medium(44.16%) and small family size(10.84%). The reason of this type of findings can be expressed as in case of the large family size, attention is more diverted towards earning the bread and butter for the family rather than giving importance to other public welfare activities.

## 7. Possession

**Table 8: Distributions of Respondents according to Possession**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	1-2 animals	41	34.16
2	Sericulture instruments/ electrical instruments/ animals	50	41.66
3	2-4 animals/ two wheeler	27	22.50
4	More than four animals/ tractor	2	01.66



A perusal of the **Table 8** reveals that 41.66 per cent of the respondents possessed sericulture instruments/ electrical instruments/ animals followed by 34.16 per cent were having 1-2 animals and 22.50 per cent had 2-4 animals/ two wheeler. Only 1.66 per cent had more than four animals/ tractor. The reason because most of the respondents involved in allied sectors like sericulture so they did not had more possession.

## 8. Type of House

**Table 9: Distributions of Respondents according to House**

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Hut	12	10.00
2	Kachcha	54	45.00
3	Pucca	46	38.33
4	Mixed	8	06.66

The above **Table 9** reveals that maximum number of the respondents (45%) had kachcha house followed by pucca (38.33%) and hut (10%). Very few of them had mixed type of house, the reason might be their poor socio economic status.

## 9. Socio Economic Status

**Table 10: Distributions of Respondents according to Socio Economic Status**

S.No.	Level of SES	Categories	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
SES <b>Mean=18.39</b> <b>S.D.=3.23</b>	Lower class	Less than 15	21	17.50
	Middle class	15-21	80	66.66
	Upper class	More than 21	19	15.83

On perusal of **Table** it is clear that about 66.66 per cent of the respondents came under the medium level of socio economic status (SES) group. Next to this 17.50 per cent respondents came under the lower SES category, where as 15.83 per cent respondents belonged to upper level of SES. Thus the analysis of the figures brought out the fact that the entrepreneurship concentrates more on medium level of SES, when rapid growth of development takes place in all spheres. The reason of this finding can be enumerated as the people having medium level of socio economic status, have more risk bearing capacity over low level of socio economic status people in carrying out some assignments. Similarly **Pathak (2006)** reported that better socio economic background of entrepreneurs encourages their participation in entrepreneurial world. Entrepreneur possessed moderate achievement motivation and risk taking willingness and was doing substantial enterprise.





Socio economic characteristics like age, educational status, marital status and family occupation of the entrepreneurs creates an impact on entrepreneurial behaviour.

On the other hand the upper levels of socio economic status respondents are gradually losing their supreme dominance over others because of introduction of democratic grouping system in the sector of particular enterprise.

## CONCLUSION

Hill agriculture is dominated by the women farmers and lack of mechanization makes their life miserable. Therefore a concerted efforts needs to be made for reducing drudgery of the women farmers. Introduction of farm implements will help in improving energy efficiency, which will in turn help in timely farm operations.

The study indicated that majority of women engaged in sericulture were found to be of middle age group, married, had 10 -20 years of experience in the enterprise, skilled, marginal farmers, belonged to other backward caste, involved in social and political institutions without hold any post and had medium level of socio economic status.

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