

## SELF-EMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN IN URBAN SLUMS: SOCIOECONOMIC DYNAMICS AND EMPOWERMENT PATHWAYS IN RAICHUR KARNATAKA INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigates the socio-economic conditions and motivations behind women's participation in self-employment within slum areas. Through a survey of 490 women across various slum localities, the study identifies the predominant roles these women occupy in their self-employment ventures, categorizing them into own-account workers (70%), employers or sole proprietors (13%), and helpers in family-based enterprises (17%). The research further explores the type of family occupations, revealing that 50% of respondents' families are involved in industry, business, or self-employment, with agriculture and animal husbandry contributing to 33%. Key findings highlight that 82% of the respondents earn below Rs. 24,000 annually, underscoring their economic vulnerability. Before engaging in self-employment, a significant portion of the women (87%) were housewives or unemployed, with economic necessity—particularly family income scarcity (75%)—being the primary reason for their transition into self-employment. The study also delves into the motivations driving these women, with family influence, particularly parents or parents-in-law, cited by 42% of respondents. Expertise in self-employment is primarily gained through the observation of similar enterprises (72%), although formal education and training play a role for 15%. Ownership structures of enterprises were predominantly sole proprietorships (44%) and cooperative societies (36%), with family-based enterprises comprising a minor share (4%). Training programs provided by NGOs, SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association), and other cooperative associations were instrumental in skill development, with 55% of the women receiving support from these groups. The research sheds light on the challenges and motivations behind self-employment in marginalized communities, offering critical insights for policy interventions aimed at enhancing the socio-economic status of women in slum areas.

**KEYWORDS:** Raichur, Self-Employment, Women's Empowerment, Microenterprise Development, Socio-Economic Factors