

Women Entrepreneurs and Economic Development

(A Study on Women Entrepreneurs of Karbi Anglong District of Assam)

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is considered as an engine of economic development in both developed and developing countries. Economic development requires the generation of forces of economic change. The level of economic development also highly depends on the availability of natural resources, physical resources, human resources, capital accumulation, technological progress, etc. Since entrepreneurs co-ordinate all the factors of production, entrepreneurs are important agents for economic development. Economic development is defined as a process of sustained increase in real national income over a long period of time. There are three major components of economic development. They are (a) Process, (b) Real National Income and (c) Long Period; as a process, it implies the series of changes in social, technological and economic forces that are useful in accelerating the pace of development. It also implies the operation of certain forces which causes continuous changes in the economic system specifically optimum use of capital, modern technique of production, technical development, institutional reform, demographic and social frame work. **Real National Income** refers to the total output of final goods and services express in real terms but not in money terms. Therefore, it must be viewed as Gross National Product (GNP) or Net National Product (NNP). However, the best criterion is the Net National Product which consist only final consumer goods and services plus only the net additions to the capital goods, thus, making allowance for capital replacement such as wastage of machinery, etc. during the process of production. **Long Period** implies that the real national income should not only rise in the short period but it must also show upward trend in the long period to sustain the

process of economic development. Hence, the continuous increase in the real national income over a long period has become an indispensable condition for accelerating the pace of economic development. According to Berger and Herrick cited by Lekhi (2005) while defining economic development, it should include improvements in material welfare, specially for person with the lowest incomes, the eradication of mass poverty with its correlates of illiteracy, disease and early deaths, changes in the composition of inputs and outputs that generally include shifts in the underlying structure of production away from agricultural activities towards industrial activities, the organization of the economy in such a way that productive employment is general among the age population rather than the situation of a privileged minority; and the correspondingly greater participation of broadly based groups in decision making about the directions, economic and otherwise, in which they should move to improve their welfare.

From the above discussions, it is cleared that the entrepreneurs can play an important role in the economic development of a country. The term 'entrepreneur' is defined in varied ways. Sociologists, Psychologists and Economists have all attempted to give a clear definition of entrepreneur. Sociologists analyse the characteristic of entrepreneurs in terms of caste, family, social value and migration. Psychologists on the other hand attempt to isolate entrepreneurs from general population on various personality trials such as need for achievement, creativity, propensity to take risk, independence leadership, etc. Whereas, economists attempt to define based on situational characteristics such as occupational backgrounds access to capital business and technological experience, and managerial skills with economic gains considered as characteristic of entrepreneur.

According to Rao & Rao (2000), entrepreneurs are a special group of persons who enjoy a distinct status and play a crucial role in the success of any business and trade. These are the people having initiative enterprising ability, zeal and imaginative to break through the

traditional barriers of commerce and industry who can translate any business proposal into prospective reality. It is widely believed that the word entrepreneur is derived from the French word “entreprendre” which means to undertake, to attempt or adventure. It was Richard Cantillon, who first introduces the term entrepreneur in the early eighteenth century and defines an entrepreneur as a rational decision maker who assumes the risk and provides management for the firms.

According to Schumpeter (1911), an entrepreneur is a person who introduces innovative changes and he or she is an integral part of economic growth. Many scholars have described entrepreneurs in different ways - according to Frank H. Knight (1921) and Peter Drucker (1970), the person who bears risk and meet the uncertainty, likewise to Mc Clelland (1961), a person who has high degree of need for achievement motivation. To Jean-Baptiste Say, an entrepreneur is a person who shifts resources from an area of low productivity to high productivity.

For Schumpeter, the entrepreneur is the innovator par excellence and he makes a clear cut distinction between inventions and innovations. As innovator, the entrepreneur destroys the existing equilibrium state. While the entrepreneur cannot play a big role, he considers the role of entrepreneurs as a significant force in the economy. He develops an idea of recognising entrepreneur as a swash buckling business tycoon, and/or as someone who clearly contributes to human betterment by introducing a new product, or a new way of doing things that expands options and lower costs. The imagination behind Schumpeter’s entrepreneur is of a man who introduces striking changes into everyday economic activities. Further, entrepreneurs are not necessarily motivated by profit but regard it as a standard for measuring achievement or success. Schumpeter discovers that they are greatly value self-reliance, strive for distinction through excellence, are highly optimistic, and always favour challenges of medium risk (Schumpeter, 1883-1950). According to Gottlieb (2015), an

entrepreneur is someone who can take any idea, whether it be a product and, or service, and have the skill set, will and courage to take extreme risk to do whatever it takes to turn that concept into reality and not only bring it to market, but make it a viable product and, or service that people want or need.

From Schumpeter till today, there are a number of definitions, which show characteristics and activities about entrepreneurs. However, a common characteristic of entrepreneur which is found is that entrepreneur is that they are the key players in the process of economic development (Chanu & Terangpi, 2010).

For the purpose of the present study, an entrepreneur is defined as the person who is adventurous in creating a better tomorrow by providing new ideas, producing products, services and employment opportunities to the people. A number of definitions on women entrepreneurs are also mentioned in this section (Sudha 2007, Khanka 2008, etc).

Based on the above discussion, for the present study, women entrepreneurs is defined as those women who start and operate enterprises, take risk, produce products, and bear uncertainty.

According to Khanka (2008), in India, women's entry into business is traced out as an extension of their kitchen activities mainly from 3ps, which means pickles, powder and pappad, however, women have started shifting from 3ps to engross to 3 modern Es, which means Engineer, Electronics and Energy. Frederick Harbison (1956) has specified five functions of a woman entrepreneur: Exploration of the prospects of starting a new business enterprise; undertaking of risk and the handling of economic uncertainties involve in business; introduction of innovations or imitation of innovations; coordination, administration and control; and supervision and leadership.

The above definitions clearly indicate that women entrepreneurs can play an important role in economic development of a country. Hence, it is vital to look into details of this relationship between women entrepreneurs and economic development.

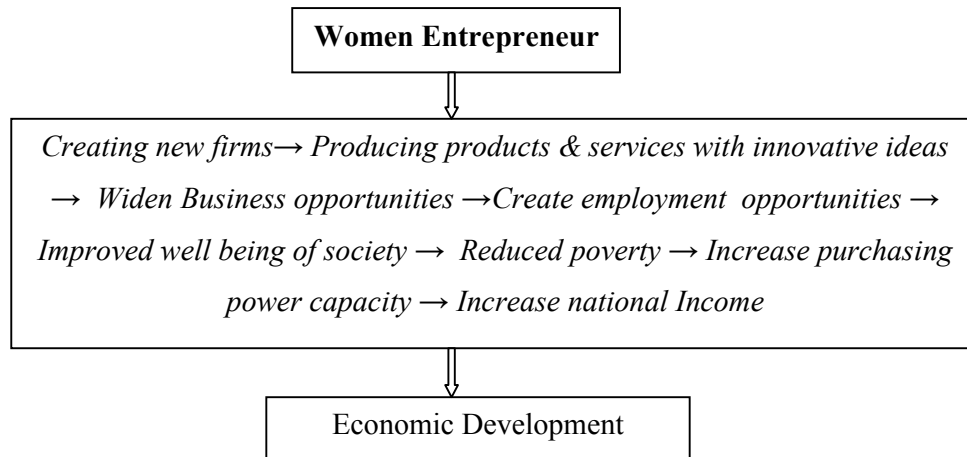
Entrepreneurship is an essential element for economic progress as it manifest its fundamental importance in different ways like identifying assessing and exploiting business opportunities, creating new firms and, or running existing ones by making them more dynamic and driving the economy forward through innovation, competence, job creation and by generally improving the well being of the society. It is also a purposeful activity indulged in initiating and maintaining economic activities for the production and distribution of wealth. It has been recognized as an essential ingredient of economic development and an integral part of socio-economic transformation. Hence, entrepreneurial promotion and growth among women can be considered as one of the key components of economic development strategy. There is an important role of human resources in the economic development; it includes many aspects like educational level, productive skills acquired by the labour force as well as social responsibility towards economic change on the part of the labour force. In the progress of entrepreneurship, financial, physical and infrastructural facilities are also important inputs. Entrepreneurs would enable all the resources of economy to be used to the maximum extent resulting in significant development. It has also been recognised that the entrepreneurial talents will accelerate the pace of India's development.

The level of economic development of a country can also be related with the abundance or scarcity of the entrepreneurship in any society. Entrepreneurship comprises all the productive functions that are not thought to be rewarded by wages, rent or interest. In other words, entrepreneurship may meant the function of seeking investment and production opportunity, organizing an enterprise to undertake a new productive process, raising capital, hiring labour, arranging selection of top managers for day to day operations of the enterprise

and so on. Entrepreneurship, in brief, calls for “enterprise” which is defined as an undertaking, take or adventure of a bold or different nature and as the ability to think and start a new scheme.

In a developing country like India, promotion of entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship in particular implies an acceptance of ideas of equalization, balanced development and elimination of disparities. Hence, entrepreneurship can be considered as a vehicle to mobilize the scarce resources from different sectors to provide utility to them to create value and bring balance regional development. In the present context, one of the important developments of entrepreneurship in India is the emergence of large number of women entrepreneurs. For the women section, such development may be seen as an employment possibility near their homes which provide autonomy, independence and means to increase social support as entrepreneurship stands as a vehicle to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities, and makes a healthy economy and environment. The development of women entrepreneurship may also be linked with different provision of women’s avenues like employment generation, increase self-confidence, which may lead to alleviating poverty and economic freedom, business venturing and creation of various small enterprises for women. Hence, entrepreneurship promotion and growth among women is one of the key components of economic development strategy. The following diagram shows the role of women entrepreneurs in economic development.

Figure # 1: *Diagram showing relation between women entrepreneurs and economic development*



Source: Compiled by the researcher

In recent period, entrepreneurship development among women has been recognised and accepted as one of the important tools for poverty alleviation; it is through social and economic empowerment of the poor. Many findings also show that in India, there are a number of women entrepreneurs who have been playing an important role in the development of various sectors including agriculture, banking, dairy, housing, which leads to poverty alleviation, food security and employment generation. Therefore, recognition of women's services in this sector is highly required in order to bring a change in the society. As women entrepreneurship by nature is focusing on women who establish enterprises and bring a positive change in women's life, such developments may help both urban and rural population in creating jobs and mitigate poverty; however, it is a big challenge for developing countries like India.

In the present study, the researcher has taken Karbi Anglong (Undivided) district of Assam as the study area because it is one of the most economically underdeveloped districts of Assam. Here, it is assumed that women entrepreneurship development in tribal areas like Karbi Anglong is an alternative means for employment generation.

Statement of the Problem

There is a perception that some culture or social groups are more conducive to entrepreneurial behaviours than others. According to this, the factors that contribute to the supply of entrepreneurs are an inheritance of entrepreneurial tradition, family position, social status, educational background, etc. In a country like India and in an underdeveloped region like North-eastern part of India, the government has to take up special steps to encourage women entrepreneur in order to create opportunities for involving them in economic activities and making them economically independent. There should be schemes and programmes at regional, national and international level to promote women entrepreneurs. Banks, Non-Banking Financial Institutions, etc are the primary institutions that finance the enterprises. It is widely accepted that the market forces are never static, rather always in the process of change. The entrepreneurs should try to adjust and cope with the changing situation.

One of the major problems of women entrepreneurs are marketing. Marketing involves not only the entrepreneurial skill but also the mobility with flexible timing, self-confidence and positive attitude, etc. Rural women may encounter many constraints when trying to take part in the transformational process. Rural areas tend to be more traditional concerning the gender issue. In rural areas, the gender issue is usually a much stronger hindering factor to potential women entrepreneurs than it is in urban areas, their self-esteem and managerial skills being lower when compared to urban women and access to external financial resources are more difficult than in urban areas. Therefore, special programmes of assistance (like technical and financial) to overcome these constrains should able to developed and designed to meet the needs of rural women, in order to facilitate them to take an active part in entrepreneurial restructuring of their communities. The underdeveloped economy creates many problems; it is also one of the root causes of growing anti-social elements in the society. By creating employment generation and improving living standard as

well as utilizing untapped local resources, an entrepreneur can help in the process of economic development. For this reason, women with potential and innovative ideas need to be encouraged and supported for skills development, either in rural or urban. As such, creation of entrepreneurial environment is very important. In this context, some of the incessant questions that may be raised are: what are the factors that motivates women of Karbi Anglong to become an entrepreneur; is the government of India really framing suitable policies to promote women entrepreneurship in backward districts like Karbi Anglong; and, whether the financial institutions provide timely support to these women entrepreneurs or not; or whether the women entrepreneur of Karbi Anglong can cope up with the changes in the market or not.

Many believed that open economy gives an opportunity to the entrepreneur. Is it true in case of women entrepreneurs of the Karbi Anglong district? Has the Karbi Anglong district been made environment conducive for entrepreneurial growth? Why do women often hesitate to approach government agencies? Are there any perceptual differences between women entrepreneurs and women entrepreneurship promoting agencies in Karbi Anglong district? Thus, in the study there are few issues which the researcher is going to study in the present researches.

Review of Literature

The researcher undertook extensive literature survey connected with the problem. In the process, it is found that one source lead to another, and the earlier studies, which are similar to the study in hand, has been carefully studied. For this purpose, the abstracting of journals, academic journals, books etc. has been tapped.

A depth review of literature is presented in the second chapter to highlight the studies conducted in the field of women entrepreneurship. The review is conducted on different dimensions of the present study is presented in the following manner.

(a) Review of Literature on the Concept of Women Entrepreneur and Role of Women Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Economic Development: here, the studies which have been reviewed are Knight, Frank H (1989), Drucker (1991), Rajani (2000), Khanka, S. S (2000), Palamichamy (2000), Choudhary and Sharma (2000), Lal and Clement (2005), Debnath (2006), Das (2006), Sudha (2007), Rao and Prasad (2007), Gupta (2007), Surengarajan and Narasimhan (2008), Khanka (2008), Kumar's (2008), Vasanthagopal and Santha (2008), Balamurugan (2008), Samata and Ratna (2010), Lavanya (2010), Pathak (2010), Elangbam (2010), Chanu and Terangpi (2010), Rome (2010), Kanchana; Yasodha & Sujatha (2010), Sorokhaibam and Laishram (2011).

(b) On Problems and Prospects of Women Entrepreneurship in India the following studies have been reviewed. They are Gurley and Shaw (1960), Kanitkar (1995), Lal (1998), Singla and Syal (1999), Saikia, S. K (2001), Ganesan, R.; Kaur, D. and Maheshawari (2002), Dhanalakshmi (2008), Sakthivel and Begum (2008), Ganesan and Bhuvaneshwari (2008), Dhar *et. Al* (2008), Das, S.K. (2011), Goyal, Parkash (2011), Palaniappan; Ramanigopal & Mani (2012)

(c) On Motivating Factors and Nature of Support on Women Entrepreneurs in India, the studies which have been reviewed are Lakhanpal (1984), Sarmah, R. A. and Mishra, P. N (1987), Chandra (1999), Batra, G. S (2000), Ashe and Parrott (2001), Mukherjee (2006), Patel and Gandotra (2007), Rani (2007), Gupta (2007), Agarwal (2008), Kalpana (2008), Pathar (2008), Saritha (2008), Mathivannan (2008), Rao (2008), A study on, "Entrepreneurship in India" conducted by National Knowledge Commission (2008),

Kamakar (2009), Shetty and Veerashkharappa (2009), Rajagopal *at al.* (2011), Naorem, Lonjam & Jayasurya (2012), Sahoo and Das (2012), Chanu and Terangpi (2012), Bal and Kulveen (2012), An expert committee with eleven members headed by Abit Hussain (1995) by Government of India, Sarkar & Baishya (2012), Das, S. K (2012)

Research Gap: Though there are numbers of literature available on women entrepreneurs, substantial studies have not been done on the women entrepreneurs of tribal communities and backward areas like Karbi Anglong district of Assam. From the available literatures, it is found that because of the discouraging social factors and male domination in the society, the pace of women entrepreneurial development in other parts of India becomes comparatively slower. However, in case of Karbi Anglong district, even though the society is a male dominated, sex discrimination is hardly found and women enjoy more freedom than other parts of the country. And the pace of women entrepreneurship development in this area is very slow. The existing studies do not show the reason behind this slackness. There are studies on perceptual differences between male and female workers; but the studies on the perceptual differences between the women entrepreneurs and government agencies are not found in the existing studies. Therefore, this study is an attempt to fill up this gap.

Objectives of the Study

The study focuses on the following five objectives:

1. To investigate whether the socio economic condition of women helps to pursue and continue entrepreneurship in Karbi Anglong district.
2. To find out women entrepreneurship promoting agencies in Karbi Anglong and to assess their nature of support system.

3. To analyse the extent of contribution of women entrepreneurs for the economic development upon their respective family.
4. To investigate the perceptual differences, if any, of women entrepreneurs and government agencies regarding problems and prospects of entrepreneurial growth in Karbi Anglong district.
5. To suggest measures to improve the condition of women entrepreneurs of Karbi Anglong.

Hypotheses

The working Hypotheses which have been considered for the purpose of this study are:

1. Socio-economic conditions of women do not help to pursue and continue entrepreneurship in Karbi Anglong district.
2. The women entrepreneurship promoting agencies in Karbi Anglong district are not providing adequate support to women for pursuing and continuing entrepreneurship.
3. Contribution of women entrepreneurs of Karbi Anglong district for the economic development of their respective families (measured in terms of income generated and contributed to the corpus of the total family income) is very less.
4. There exist perceptual differences between the women entrepreneurs and government agencies regarding problems and prospects of entrepreneurial growth in Karbi Anglong district.

Research Methodology

Research Design: For the purpose of the study, both descriptive and analytical research design has been applied.

Data Requirement and Collection Design: In this study, both primary and secondary data has been used.

(a) The primary data has been collected through schedule. Scheduled has specially designed for eliciting information relevant to the study. Schedule has been translated into the local language for the convenience of the respondent. A pilot study has been conducted in order to collect the required information and schedule has reframed accordingly. The respondents of the study are women entrepreneurs, designated officials of the various government agencies operating, and those involved in the promotion and development of women entrepreneurs in Karbi Anglong district.

(b) The secondary data has been collected from various related books, newspapers, periodicals, journals, websites, published and unpublished reports of District Industries Commerce Centre (DICC), Diphu, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), etc.

Population and Sampling Design:

For the study, stratified random sampling method has been applied. The first level of stratification was the administrative geographical locations. The administrative geographical locations of Karbi Anglong district are (a) Eastern Karbi Anglong and (b) Western Karbi Anglong.

In the second level of stratification, 20 percent of blocks have been selected randomly from each of these administrative geographical locations. There are 11 blocks in Karbi Anglong district comprising 7 blocks in East Karbi Anglong and 4 blocks in West Karbi Anglong. However, for the study, two blocks in East Karbi Anglong and one block in West Karbi Anglong have been considered.

According to the data compiled by the DICCC, Diphu, there are 560 registered women entrepreneurs in Karbi Anglong district (as on 31st March, 2012). Since, the Lumbajong Block and Bokajan Block of East Karbi Anglong and Rongkhang Block of West Karbi Anglong showed the highest number of registered women entrepreneurs in the district, for the study, registered women entrepreneurs have been selected from each of the 3 blocks.

There are 204 registered women entrepreneurs in Lumbajong block and 115 in Bokajan block. There are 27 registered women entrepreneurs in Rongkhang block.

Hence, Total N= 346

Sample size: 181

(based on K & M Model of sample size determination)

Table 1: Sample size determination of block-wise (based on proportionate distribution)

Name of the Blocks	Distribution of Sample	Results
Lumbajong	$204/346 \times 181$	107
Bokajan	$115/346 \times 181$	60
Rongkhang	$27/346 \times 181$	14
Total		181

According to K & M model, the sample size has to be 181, however, in the present study, 165 women entrepreneurs has been taken for analyses and interpretation; this is due to various reasons like close down of enterprises, marriage, death of entrepreneurs, etc. Further, to include the women entrepreneurs who were not under the fold of DICCC, the researcher has adopted snowball method of investigation by asking the known women entrepreneurs that helped in locating other entrepreneurs.

Table 2. Year-wise Distribution of Women Enterprises Considered for the Study

Year of Establishment	No. of Women Enterprises	Percentage
Before 1991	5	3
1991 – 2 001	58	35
2001 – 2006	67	41
*2006 – 2012	35	21
Total	165	100

Source: DICCC, Diphu, Karbi Anglong

Note:

- Year of establishment is taken as financial year.
- * MSME-DI Act was passed in 2006, hence, women enterprise registered under MSME-DI is maintained separately by District Industries Commerce Centre (DICCC), Diphu, Karbi Anglong, from 2006.

Analysis Design: The working hypotheses have been tested by using descriptive statistics tools like tabulation, charts, percentage, and median, etc. The five point scale has been used to study the perceptual differences between women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship promoting agencies.

Variables Considered: Age, community, marital status, educational qualification, family type, family income, reason for becoming an entrepreneur, category of the entrepreneur, location of the enterprise, types of enterprise, source of finance, support of family members and society were considered as variables to investigate whether the socio-economic conditions of women motivate to take up entrepreneurship in Karbi Anglong district. The four variables, which are form of financial assistance including, power concession, marketing assistance, training and schemes to encourage and help women entrepreneurs were used to assess the nature of support system of women entrepreneurship promoting agencies in Karbi Anglong.

In analyzing the extent of women entrepreneurs for the economic development of their respective families, the variables used are income of women before and after becoming an entrepreneur, contribution of women to the family in terms of money to the corpus of the total family income before and after becoming an entrepreneur, number of employment provided in the family after becoming an entrepreneur, investment and savings before and after becoming an entrepreneur.

In investigating the perceptual differences of women entrepreneurs and government agencies regarding problems and prospects of entrepreneurial growth in Karbi Anglong, the variables used are perceptions of women entrepreneurs and government agencies regarding educational qualification, social problems, economic problems, financial problems, marketing problems, problems in pertaining government assistance including attitude and behaviour.

Limitations of the Study

At present, there are 33 districts in Assam, however, this study covers only Karbi Anglong district. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be applicable to all. The study is also based on the perceptions of women entrepreneurs, government officials who are working in the government agencies to promote women entrepreneurs in Karbi Anglong. Their attribute may change with the change of times. Hence, the responses showed their contemporary views on the present situation.

Structure of Chapter

There are seven chapters in the present study; they are:

Chapter 1: Introduction:

Chapter 2: Review of Literature:

Chapter 3: Socio-Economic Condition of Women Entrepreneurs of Karbi Anglong:

Chapter 4: Role of Promoting Agencies for Women Entrepreneurial Development in Karbi Anglong district:

Chapter 5: Economic Contribution of Women Entrepreneurs in the Family.

Chapter 6: Perceptual Differences between Women Entrepreneurs and Promoting Agencies towards Women Entrepreneurship Development in Karbi Anglong.

Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusions.

As shown, the present study has seven chapters. The analyses and interpretations which are based on the findings of field survey have been shown in chapter three, four, five and six respectively. In chapter one of the present studies, an introductory background of the present study is given. The objectives, hypotheses, research design which has been followed in the present study are clearly written in this chapter. The existing literature on women entrepreneurship has been reviewed and research gap has also been drawn in the second chapter. In the third chapter, the socio-economic condition of women of Karbi Anglong district and how it has influenced the women entrepreneurs in the district is analysed and brought out. The chapter shows the background of the women entrepreneurs, socio-economic factors that motivate them to become entrepreneurs are examined. Entrepreneurship promoting agencies play an important role in women entrepreneurship development. The roles played by such agencies towards women entrepreneurship development in Karbi Anglong are examined in chapter four. In chapter five, the economic contribution of women entrepreneurs towards family is analysed and the perceptual differences and gap between women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship promoting agencies of the study area towards problems and prospects of entrepreneurial growth are found out in

chapter six. In the present chapter (seven), which is the last chapter of the present study, the major findings, scope of future research, etc. are presented.

Major Findings:

A. Finding with regard to Objective number 1. (Chapter 3: Socio-Economic Condition of Women Entrepreneurs of Karbi Anglong).

From the present study it is found that most of the women entrepreneurs enter into entrepreneurial activities after getting married. Schedule Tribe population has the highest number of women in performing the entrepreneurial activity in the study area. Majority of the women are from joint family; all the women entrepreneurs under study area are able to read and write and are educated in terms of modern education system. Majority of the women entrepreneurs are involved in manufacturing sector. Women have become entrepreneurs because of various reasons; however, the desire to attain economic independence has been the most important motivational factor to start the entrepreneurial activity. Maximum numbers of women entrepreneurs are from families that belong to below poverty line. Half of the total respondents have started their entrepreneurial activity from their own source of funds. Majority of the enterprises owned by women are located in urban areas. It has also been found that majority of the women entrepreneurs (58) get moral support from their families. Only a few number (33 percent) of the women entrepreneurs have family business background. The descriptive statistics test result shows that except two variables, (caste and family occupation background), there is less variation in all the socio economic variables.

Hence, the working hypothesis that the socio-economic conditions of women do not help to pursue and continue entrepreneurship in Karbi Anglong district is rejected.

B. Findings of Objective 2 (Chapter 4: Role of Promoting Agencies for Women Entrepreneurship Development in Karbi Anglong District)

It is found that the promoting agencies like District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Micro Small & Medium Enterprise–Development Institute (MSME-DI), Handloom & Textile do not provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs during the study period; however, trainings were conducted for women to take up entrepreneurial activities. Langpi Dehangi Rural Bank (LDRB) and State Bank of India (SBI) provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs. Handloom & Textiles department and Jirsong Asong provide other assistance such as supply of raw materials like looms and yarns to poor weavers; Jirsong Asong also provides livestock to women entrepreneurs like piglets, she-goats, etc. It is found that Promoting Agencies organise entrepreneurship development programme for women entrepreneurs of the study area. Langpi Dehangi Rural Bank (LDRB) and State Bank of India (SBI) organise financial literacy trainings for women, including women entrepreneurs. The findings also show the support which is not given to women entrepreneurs, though there are such provisions in the promoting agencies of the study area. These points are:

a) Not even a single promoting agency reimburse ISO-9001-2000 (QMS) certification fee.

b) Though there are provisions for trainings like skill upgradation, computer literacy training and project preparation training for women entrepreneurs, not a single promoting agency has conducted such trainings. It is found that though there are many marketing assistance provision like buyers-sellers meet, sub-contract exchange, export promotion, packaging, yet none of the promoting agency has actually implemented such marketing assistance in the study area. It is found that networking is done by DRDA, DICCC, MSME-DI

and Jirsong Asong; infrastructure is provided by Handloom & Textiles department. Raw materials like looms and yarns are supplied to the poor weavers by Handloom Textiles department and Jirsong Asong. Jirsong Asong also provides livestock to SHGs like piglets, she-goats, etc. On the other hand, none of the promoting agency under the study area provide expert consultancy to women entrepreneurs, which is one of the important components of entrepreneurship development. Though there are various forms of support which can be provided by entrepreneurship promoting agencies, their support to women in Karbi Anglong district is found to be very limited. Hence, *the working hypothesis which has been developed to test the women entrepreneurship promoting agencies in Karbi Anglong district do not provide adequate support to women for pursuing and continuing entrepreneurship is accepted.*

C. Findings of objective 3 (Chapter 5: Economic Contribution of Women Entrepreneurs in the Family).

For some of the women entrepreneurs, monthly income has increased considerably after engagement in entrepreneurial activities. It is found that 48 percent of women who had monthly income of less than Rs 5000 cannot increase their income even after becoming an entrepreneur. The finding shows that 24 percent women can earn Rs 5, 000 to 10, 000 monthly after becoming an entrepreneur and only 2 percent of women can earn Rs. 20, 000 to Rs 25000 after becoming an entrepreneur, which was absent among the respondents before taking up entrepreneurial venture. As women's income increases, their financial support to their respective family also increases, but at a very slow pace. It is also found that there is a change in annual savings of women before and after they become entrepreneurs. Employment generation is one of the important variables to measure economic growth of a country. It is found that after becoming entrepreneurs, 79 percent women could provide employment between 1–3 people; and 2 percent women could provide employment to 10 and above

people. The findings show that women entrepreneurship is an important means of women empowerment. The hypothesis testing result by using descriptive statistics reveals that there is very little change in income and financial support to family even after becoming entrepreneurs. *Hence, the working hypothesis 'the contribution of women entrepreneurs of Karbi Anglong district for the economic development of their respective families, which is measured in terms of income generated and contributed to the corpus of the total family income is very less' is accepted.*

D. Findings of objective 4 (Chapter 6: Perceptual Differences between Women Entrepreneurs and Promoting Agencies towards Women Entrepreneurship Development in Karbi Anglong).

The findings also show that there are perceptual differences between women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship promoting agencies of the study area with regard to educational qualification of women entrepreneurs, social problem, economic problem, marketing problem, etc. Majority of the women entrepreneurs perceive 'large amount of paper formalities', 'delay in government department' as other major problems, whereas the entrepreneurship promoting agencies do not think so. Hence, the working hypothesis that there is perceptual gap between women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship promoting agencies with regard to problems and prospects of entrepreneurial growth in Karbi Anglong, district of Assam is accepted.

Overall Conclusion

It is a known fact that entrepreneurs are important agents for economic development and through entrepreneurship development, women can increase their income level; hence, consumption level may also be increased. There are many studies which show the drastic change in income and savings of women after becoming entrepreneurs. The findings of the study, however, contradicts that there is little change in the income and savings of women

after becoming an entrepreneur. Here, the overall conclusion is drawn from the findings and analyses.

Though there are a good number of studies on various aspects of women entrepreneurship, there are hardly any studies with regard to women entrepreneurs of remote areas like Karbi Anglong districts (now Karbi Anglong is divided into two districts) of Assam.

The socio-economic condition has a great impact on moulding the women to become entrepreneurs. Since Karbi Anglong is one of the most backward districts, women entrepreneurship is required to utilise available resources and provide employment opportunities to the unemployed section of the society. Promoting women entrepreneurship development can only be possible when there is favourable environment for entrepreneurs. Such environment can be created when all the stakeholders of the society including Government, NGO's and various promoting agencies for entrepreneurship development are aware of the importance of the entrepreneurship development and encourage the entrepreneurial talents as well as activities.

The pace of entrepreneurship development in the district is not yet developed as compared to other districts of the state. This is due to several factors – like lack of infrastructural development, and entrepreneurial motivation, insurgency problem, existing social system. However, there exist perceptual differences between entrepreneurship promoting agencies and women entrepreneurs in this regard. It is clearly depicted in chapter six. The existing industrial structure in the district consists mainly of micro and small scale industries like ginger unit, citronella oil extraction unit, dairy food production unit, rice and flour mills, cotton ginning mill, coal mining, limestone mining, pottery and brick-making, stone crusher, saw mill, plywood making, handloom and textile, *gur khandsari*

manufacturing, fruit preservation and processing, carpentry, blacksmith, RCC pipe and ring-well making, ice-cream manufacturing unit, wooden furniture manufacturing unit, etc.

Hence, it can be concluded with the following statements that:

- (a) The socio-economic condition of women helps to pursue and continue entrepreneurship in Karbi Anglong district;
- (b) The contribution of women entrepreneurs of Karbi Anglong district for the economic development of their respective families, which is measured in terms of income generated and contributed to the corpus of the total family income is very less;
- (c) Though, there are many studies which show the drastic change in income and savings of women after becoming entrepreneur, the findings of the study, however, contradicts that there is little change in the income and savings of women after becoming an entrepreneur;
- (d) The women entrepreneurship promoting agencies in Karbi Anglong district do not provide adequate support to women for pursuing and continuing entrepreneurship; and,
- (e) There exist perceptual gap between entrepreneurship promoting agencies and women entrepreneurs with regard to entrepreneurial growth in Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

Suggestions and Policy Recommendations

The following suggestions and recommendations are forwarded based on the findings of the study.

The success of entrepreneurial promoting programmes also depend on proper selection, proper training, making suitable organisational arrangement for disseminating information, putting efforts to impart more technical and practical training and providing full assistance in preparation of project reports and meeting their financial requirements, and also follow-up actions by both Government and Non-Government Organisations. Hence, the central and state governments engaged in entrepreneurship development should have co-operation, liaison and closer working relationships.

Women entrepreneurs in backward and rural areas like Karbi Anglong district need special assistance from Government and NGOs. Marketing assistance, financial assistance, technical guidance, good transport facilities, information regarding different types of projects and schemes need to be provided. Such measures would strengthen the movement of women entrepreneurs. With such Government and Non-Government Organisations support and assistance, there is possibility of women to take up more entrepreneurial activities; it will also help women entrepreneurs to contribute income to their families which in turn leads to increase in the national economy. Some specific suggestions for different stakeholders are put forward here.

(a) For Entrepreneurship Promoting Agencies

1. The entrepreneurship promoting agencies should make an effort to provide basic facilities to promote women entrepreneurs in the district – establishment of industrial estates are strongly suggested in this regard.
2. Awareness on the importance of entrepreneurship development through media like talks on radio, television, conferences, seminars and other related activities should be organised to educate and encourage entrepreneurial activities among women in Karbi Anglong.

3. The promoting agencies should provide trainings on financial literacy, managing enterprises, market feasibility, upgradation of skill, etc. to the women entrepreneurs for the entrepreneurial growth.
4. The promoting agencies should provide easy procedures with regard to paper formalities, rules, regulations, delay in official procedures etc. for seeking assistance, subsidies, concession, relief etc.
5. The entrepreneurship promoting agencies should have a positive attitudinal change in the minds of their officers dealing with the entrepreneurial finance so that they adopt helpful postures from the pre-sanction stage and are able to win the confidence of credit customers.
6. The promoting agencies should support the entrepreneurs by providing information on the types of enterprise that can come up in the district. This will help new entrepreneurs in selection of the right kind of projects and locations.
7. Karbi Anglong district is endowed with various natural resources, which are available for investment opportunities. For the exploitation of these available natural resources, matching support is required from Government as well as the Banking Institutions in the form of providing needed infrastructural facilities and financial assistance from the banks.
8. The development of Industrial Sector in Karbi Anglong District is not up to the mark in spite of tremendous scope for development of this sector in the district. Hence, a specific policy should be framed for women entrepreneurship development.
9. The credit requirements of the district are determined with active involvement of all concerned in the credit planning exercise at the Blocks or District level to ensure flow of credit to different sector based on properly accessed potentials. While implementing the target, the banks should carry out special duties periodically to

ascertain the position regarding the implementation of these guidelines and is expected to introduce the innovative measure to ensure compliance wherever necessary.

10. Banks are supposed to improve their quality of advances to the entrepreneurial growth through better project assessment. The banks should also provide timely rehabilitation to potentially viable units, which get into difficulty.

(B) For the Society

1. In Karbi Anglong district, the society is not in favour of taking up entrepreneurship as a career option in spite of being aware that the job situation is saturated. It is felt that person with a job of a decent salary can attract high respect from the society. This attitude of the society towards entrepreneurship, particularly women has to be changed.

2. The social environment coupled with the environment in the family place an important role in the nurturing and development of entrepreneurship. Societies that encourage women to take up entrepreneurship as livelihood will find more entrepreneurs in their midst, compared to those that do not give due regards to that profession. Changing social environment may take time. Nevertheless, efforts in this direction are needed to create more women entrepreneurs.

- (3) Frequent *bandhs*, collection of donations, etc. create a constraining atmosphere for entrepreneurs. Hence, such activities should be discouraged.

- (5) Status of women should be enhanced by giving them equal participatory role in decision making by the society; thereby, showing due respect to them.

(C) For Women Entrepreneurs

- (i) Women entrepreneurs should develop their own management competencies in areas of deficiencies by participating in management programmes, seminars, workshops organized by

both Government and Non-Government Organizations and also by forging professional relationship with fellow entrepreneurs who are engaged in the same line of entrepreneurial activities.

(ii) Women entrepreneurs should give due importance on developing positive work culture by identifying the task, maintaining punctuality and discipline in their entrepreneurial activities.

(iii) Women entrepreneurs can conduct periodic market survey either on its own or with the help of expert to find out the trends, tastes and preferences of the customers for the purpose of fixing the competitive price of their products and services.

(iv) Women entrepreneurs should develop proper linkage both with Government departments, higher educational institutions and also NGOs within the district or outside the district for marketing their products and services, because once a linkage is developed, things will be more accessible for marketing.

(v) For improving their performance, women entrepreneurs should give due emphasis on putting innovative ideas into practice that will result in improvement of quality and products and increase turnover. It will ultimately help entrepreneurs to achieve cost reduction, save time and lead to all-round excellence.

(vi) Women entrepreneurs should follow the practice of optimistic business competition at win-win situation, with fellow entrepreneurs to avoid the pessimistic situation arising out of cut-throat competition.

(vii) Those women entrepreneurs who avail loans should repay the loaned amount to the bank as per the schedule of repayment of loan so that the bank get themselves encouraged to release more loans to the new women entrepreneurs for starting new entrepreneurial activities.

(viii) Women entrepreneurs should be in search of new avenues of investment on the basis of available resource potentialities of the district so that the available resources are properly exploited.

(ix) Women entrepreneurs should always remain alert to emerging opportunities so that they can assertively and proactively access their potential benefits.

(x) Women entrepreneurs should use the latest and modern technology in their production process.

(xi) The women entrepreneurs should be made aware of the legal rules and procedures available for them. They must be aware of their existing rights, access to judicial relief and redress, removing discrimination through legal reforms and providing legal aid, assistance and counselling.

It is felt by the researcher that the above recommendations and suggestions, directed to the various stake holders, that is, government, organizations, banks and financial institutions, NGOs, society at large and women entrepreneurs will strengthen the existing women entrepreneurship development strategy, and in the process will impart a new momentum to women entrepreneurship development in Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

Scope for Future Study

Some of the areas which can be considered as scope for further studies are mentioned below:

(A) The present study is limited to only Karbi Anglong district of Assam – a comparative study among the districts may be conducted.

(B) In the present study, only nationalised banks were considered as entrepreneurship agencies. However, there are many private commercial banks in the district. Their roles

towards women entrepreneurship development in the district may be examined and a comparative study between the role of private and nationalised commercial banks may be conducted.

(C) In the present study, only organised women entrepreneurs have been considered. However, there are a number of unorganised women entrepreneurs in the district. Hence, a study on unorganised women entrepreneurs may be conducted.

(D) A comparative study on organised and unorganised women entrepreneurs of the district may also be conducted.

(E) Change in the degree of women empowerment is out of the scope of the present study; a study on measuring the degree of empowerment among women after becoming an entrepreneur may be conducted.