CHAPTER THREE
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION
The major portion of Barpeta district belongs to rural area and accordingly the study has been focussed basically on rural women. In this Chapter, the entire design of the study has been highlighted including the objectives of the study, rationale of the study, methodology of the study clearly stating the hypothesis, sampling design and scheme of investigation and use of statistical techniques for analysis of data. Also the research queries investigated, chapter plan and the limitations of the study have been highlighted in this Chapter.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The study has been undertaken in order to fulfil the following objectives:

1. To analyse the nature of self-employment among the women population of Barpeta district.
2. To assess the impact of self-employment on the economic empowerment of rural women.
3. To assess the impact of self-employment on the social status of self-employed women.
4. To evaluate the various factors motivating self-employment and the problems faced by self-employed women.
5. To examine the awareness of women about government policies and programmes for self-employment and their effectiveness.
6. To examine the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in promoting self-employment and women’s feedback in this regard.

RATIONALE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

As observed in the above discussion, the Millennium Development Goals of the UN are contemplated to improve the conditions and status of women all over the world. Goal 3 is specially directed at promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. At the same time, employment planning in India after the 1980s has taken several steps to encourage self-employment in order to remove the daunting problems of poverty, unemployment and imbalanced regional development in the country. The present study is a humble attempt to assess the socio-economic position of self-employed women in the district of Barpeta, Assam. The aim of the study is to investigate the issues and challenges faced by self-employed women, especially in Barpeta district. At the present age of changing society, economy and demography, women’s entrepreneurship needs to be studied for two main reasons. The first reason is that women entrepreneurs have been recognized during the last two decades as an important untapped source of economic growth. Secondly, the topic of self-employment of women has been largely neglected in the society in general and in the area of social sciences in particular.

The district of Barpeta is an important commercial hub of the state of Assam. It has been the epicentre of different trade and industrial activities since centuries. The people of the district are well known for their business acumen and
entrepreneurial knowledge. The district is famous not only all over Assam but also all over the country for bell metal industry, crackers industry, cane and bamboo products, agriculture, weaving, animal husbandry, pisciculture, poultry farming, etc. In this context, when we stand at the threshold of the second decade of the 21st century, there is the need to determine and analyse where the women population of Barpeta stands in the self-employment scenario of the district. The district is composed of people belonging to different religions as well as ethnic and linguistic communities. 92% of the rural population of the district resides in rural areas and 59% of the population are Muslims, the numerically strongest minority religious group in the district.

In the light of the above factors, the need of the study may be enumerated as follows:

1. It will help to identify if the empowerment of women has improved through gainful self-employment.
2. It will focus on the chief areas in which women in the district are engaged for self-employment.
3. It will help to determine community wise performance of women in self-employment.
4. It will attempt to identify other viable options of entrepreneurship in which women can be profitably engaged.
5. It will throw light on social security issues of women and determine if the women in the district are aware of their social and economic rights.
6. It will help in evaluating if education and self-employment patterns are positively correlated.

7. It will facilitate the Government as well as other authorities to take steps for further promotion of self-employment among women and also undertake measures to minimize the problems faced by the self-employed women.

8. It will help to highlight how NGOs are acting as facilitating agents for promotion of self-employment among women.

**METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The following methodology was adopted according to the objectives and need of the study:

**Hypothesis Framed**

Let the null hypothesis be-

1. That women are not optimistic about their role in the society

2. That awareness of women about Government’s promotional measures and their implementation for self-employment are fulfilled.

**Sampling Design and Scheme of Investigation**

The study is concentrated on self-employed women in the district of Barpeta. In the scope of self-employed women that section of working women had been included who had a consistent source of livelihood by doing something by dint of their own enterprise.

7.12% of working women are self-employed in the district of Barpeta [as per official records of DRDA, DICC and DC Office, Barpeta] which is
8000 (approx.). The district was at first segmented under blocks. There are twelve Rural Development Blocks (RDBs) in the district.

Two stage sampling procedure was used for the purpose of the study. At the first stage, purposive sampling technique had been adopted. Out of 12 Rural Development Blocks (RDBs), 7 Blocks viz., Barpeta, Bhawanipur, Chakchaka, Chenga, Gobardhana, Mandia and Rupshi had been demarcated for the field study (FSU).

At the second stage, Stratified Random Sampling Technique had been applied to select the respondents (i.e. sample) from each of these blocks on the basis of probability proportionate to size (PPS), size being the population of self-employed women. Average 110 sample respondents were selected from each of these 7 blocks (SSU).

The sample design of each of the 7 blocks is shown hereunder:

Table 3.1: Sample Selection from Seven RDBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Rural Development Block</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhawanipur</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakchaka</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chenga</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gobardhana</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandia</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupshi</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources of Data

ii. **Primary data** on the subject were collected from the selected self-employed women with the help of questionnaire prepared for the purpose, personal interviews with self-employed women and exchanging views with Government officials. However, while designing the questionnaire, it was taken into account that all the required information for the present study could be collected.

iii. **Secondary data** to support the primary information were obtained from various offices and publications of Central as well as State Government departments. Besides information had also been obtained from reference books, journals, newspapers, magazines, websites of different organizations, research papers and articles. The main sources of secondary data were:

2. Planning Commission of India’s Five Year Plan Documents
3. Reports of Central Statistical Organisation
4. Documents of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
6. Reports of the Department of Women and Child Development
7. Documents of Registrar of Firms and Societies, Assam
9. UNDP Human Development Report
10. CSWI Report
11. Document on National Policy for Empowerment of Women
14. Employment Policy for Assam, 2010
15. Official records of DRDA, Barpeta
16. Official Records of DICC, Barpeta
17. Official Records of Deputy Commissioner’s Office, Barpeta
18. Local and national newspapers and magazines
19. National and international journals
20. Different books related to the topic.

**Analysis of data and Statistical Techniques Applied**

The analysis of data for the purpose of the study has been made using tables, diagrams, graphs and charts using MS Office Excel software. Further as required during the process of data analysis, various statistical techniques like Karl Pearson’s co-efficient of correlation, Rank correlation and Chi square test have been used.

**RESEARCH QUERIES INVESTIGATED**

The research queries investigated during the course of the research work are stated hereunder:

1. Whether the economic status of self-employed women has improved?
2. Whether there is a change in the social status of self-employed women?
3. Whether women are aware of Government’s programmes and social security measures for them?
4. Whether self-employed women face problems in their pursuits?
5. Whether changes are necessary in policy implementation for self-employment?

CHATER PLAN

Following is a brief summary of the various chapters into which the entire study has been divided:

Chapter one is related to introduction to the study. The significance of MDGs for women empowerment has been depicted here. At the same time, a thorough profile of the district of Barpeta has been highlighted with respect to historical background, geographical location and demographic profile.

Chapter two deals with review of literature related to the current study. Books, research papers and journals, both national and international, have been referred to during the research. Besides, several newspapers, magazines, online articles as well as websites of different organisations and agencies have been visited to understand the activities undertaken or undergoing in this field of study.

Chapter three highlights the entire design of the study including the objectives of the study, rationale of the study, methodology of the study clearly stating the hypothesis, scheme of investigation and use of statistical techniques for analysis of data. Also the research queries investigated, chapter plan and the limitations of the study have been highlighted.
Chapter four emphasises on definitional and conceptual background to self-employment, differences between self-employment and wage employment, concept of entrepreneurship, concept of empowerment, significance of self-employment for empowerment of women, characteristics of self-employed women.

Chapter five is an attempt to determine the nature and growth of self-employment among the women community. It shows the distribution of population by workers and non-workers, age wise and marital status wise classification of self-employed women in Barpeta district, nature of organisations of self-employed women, administrative structure of ventures, classification of self-employment areas in the district, factors motivating the present trend of women into self-employment and problems faced by self-employed women.

Chapter six throws light on the impact of self-employment on the economic empowerment of women. It attempts to assess the pattern of economic living and its impact on economic empowerment of self-employed women. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to show the source of initial investment of women in the district, profits re-invested by self-employed women, standard of living of self-employed women in Barpeta district and contribution of self-employed women in financial as well as non-financial decisions of the family.

Chapter seven focuses on social changes and development of self-employed women in the social platform. It undertakes community wise performance with respect to its effect on self-employment and self-employment structure of women in the district. It also studies the social approach towards self-employed women,
level of education of self-employed women, family planning and birth control measures used by self-employed women.

Chapter eight deals with Government policies and programmes and their impact on self-employment. It highlights the perspectives on advancement of women through five year plans, international policies and India’s constitutional provisions, policies and programmes for women and other supportive measures of Government of India as well as Government of Assam to promote self-employment among women and analyse the feedback of self-employed women regarding their awareness and effectiveness of such programmes.

Chapter nine is on the role of NGOs in promoting self-employment among women. It illuminates the role of NGOs in self-employment and empowerment of women with respect to training and skill development, legal awareness and property rights, women empowerment, fair trade, obtaining finance/credit/micro-credit, skill training, capacity building and linkages. It also throws lights on the objects of NGOs in the district of Barpeta and the response of self-employed women in Barpeta district towards the role that NGOs play in women self-employment.

Chapter ten is concerned with conclusion and suggestions. The analysis of findings of the research work undertaken has been done in this chapter. The major findings of the study reveal that women self-employment can be instrumental in improving the cause of women themselves and facilitate development for others too in the district.
Attempt has been made to provide suggestions for sorting out the loopholes in the process of self-employment of women and measures that may be undertaken for enhancement of self-employment of women and removing the problems in the self-employment of women in the society.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study undertaken may be vested with the following limitations:

• The anomalies, if any, in the responses of the sample self-employed women may bring variations in result.

• The study is limited only to self-employed women in Barpeta and it does not highlight the differences in socio-economic empowerment of self-employed and wage employed women in the district.

• The results could have varied if the study would have been conducted over a longer period of time with a bigger sample in different districts of Assam or all over India.