3.0 Introduction

The ultimate aim of feminist research is to capture women’s life experiences in a respectful manner that legitimates women’s voices as sources of knowledge. It intends to disclose oppressive social structures in women’s lives, placing gender in the centre of social inquiry. Feminist methodology argues the process of research is as important as its outcome. To uncover the distortions related to women’s experiences, it is all the more necessary to use methods instrumental to realize the objectives. The researcher concurs with Nicole Westmarland, Mary Maynard and Jennifer Bryton that both the qualitative and quantitative methods can be employed successfully in a feminist research. Use of both makes the analysis value-laden and rich in data, accepting at the same time empiricism critically.

There was not much of study being conducted in the empowerment process of disadvantaged women, especially in the field of entrepreneurship development. Though earlier it was mandatory to cover 18% of SC’s / ST’s in each of the EDP’s, their participation is less. At present under Special Component Plan, 100% coverage of SC/ST beneficiary oriented Schemes have been implemented by the Central and State Government through their Specified Boards / Corporation. Due to Social-economic, cultural backgrounds the active participation of these women remain low. The holistic analysis demands the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods so as to bring about a qualitative change in the lives of these women. Hence the input to the research is maximized using both quantitative and qualitative methods which give breadth and depth to the analysis.

Quantitative methods include questionnaires, surveys, variables and the relationships between social factors. Qualitative research commonly refers to the collection and analysis of material that seeks to uncover meaning and understanding of experience. While quantitative research collects and analyses social facts, qualitative research strategies traditionally include ethnographics, fieldwork, participant observation, content analysis, interviews and oral histories. In the latter, women’s experiences are ordered so that they can be theorised with a view to social change. For example, a quantitative data can tell us that the disadvantaged women
were economically backward, suffering from inferiority complex, but do not explain their experiences of being marginalised in the society. Qualitative methods like Focus Group Discussions, Case Studies, and quantitative personal interviews will make the invisible part of their lives visible and debatable.

Feminist research does not accept objectivity without criticism. It discards the false dichotomisation of ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’. Both research processes start from the interests of the researcher. What to study as a topic, for what purpose, what questions are to be asked, how to collect them, how to interpret them, and the theoretical stance are determined by the researcher’s interests. But in a quantitative research, there is a built-in and unquestioned emphasis on objectivity and neutrality. In the qualitative research, it is possible to remove the subjective bias by removing the distance between the researcher and the researched. The study therefore employs the Survey Method, Focus Group Discussion and Case Studies for more insights into the lives of the disadvantaged women to know the impact of the entrepreneurship development programmes and their empowerment process.

3.1 Liberal Feminism as a Validating Theoretical Base

Increasingly philosophers and scientists have affirmed that all knowledge is theory-laden and that methods are theory-driven. The methods, methodology and epistemology should be grounded in a theory which expands our knowledge about the respondents’ experiences from a disciplinary perspective.

Liberalism, the school of political thought from which liberal feminism has evolved, is in the process of reconceptualising, reconsidering, and restructuring itself, which makes it difficult to determine the status of liberal feminist thought. Although many nineteenth-century liberal feminists fit the libertarian mould, most twentieth-century liberal feminists fit the welfare, or egalitarian mould. Liberal feminists usually are, however, committed to major economic re-organisation and considerable redistribution of wealth, since one of the modern political goals most closely associated with liberal feminism is equality of opportunity, which would undoubtedly require and lead to both. According to Wollstonecraft most wanted reform for
women is personhood. She did present a vision of a women, strong in mind and body, who is not a slave to her passions, her husband, or her children. Presumably, a real education- that is, the same education as is provided to a man - will allow a woman to assume responsibility for her own development and growth. But unless society also provides the equally educated women with the same civil liberties and economic opportunities a man has, she will be able to exercise her hard won autonomy only within the private, or domestic realm. Even in this study entrepreneurial abilities in women were dormant due to social cultural restriction Govt. introduced entrepreneurship development programs exclusively for women, a marginalized sector of the society. The two decades of researchers experience revealed that socially and economically marginalized section among women did not benefit from this programme. Hence the study focuses exclusively on women who underwent EDP and also faced multiple marginalization due to social and economic factors.

3.1a Subjectivity of the Researcher

The social location of the researcher plays a role in shaping the research process. The researcher has been an insider to the environment. She had worked in the field for more than 25 years and organised many entrepreneurship development programmes, Training of trainees programmes for the promotion of micro enterprises. Her affiliation with the training institutes was advantageous in a way that the respondents felt comfortable with her and established an “inter- subjectivity”. Thus the researcher was able to interact with the target group and establish a close rapport. This helped in collecting qualitative data to a great extent.

The researcher was motivated to do her research on what has been the subject of her field activities. Hence her active involvement in the field for the last two and half decades, helped her to understand the change in the priority of women from welfare to development and to empowerment having understood overall women empowerment the researcher felt the need to focus on the disadvantaged women, who faced multiple marginalization among the (Marginalized) women.
3.2 Qualitative Research Process

While the data collected through quantitative analysis can be counted, the qualitative data is experiential.\(^8\) To capture and convey accurate reality, the empirical research should be critically handled. The value-neutrality of the quantitative social facts should be corrected by the value-laden qualitative methods. Experiential qualitative methods renders flexibility and relate to women respondents in subjective ways on their terms rather than in objective ways on the researcher’s terms\(^9\). Two such qualitative methods-Focus Group Discussion and Case studies-are used as part of research methodology in this study.

3.2.a Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative method. Its purpose is to obtain in-depth information on concepts, perceptions, and ideas of a group. The FGD aims to be more than a question-answer interaction. The idea is that group members discuss the topic among themselves, with guidance from the Facilitator / moderator.

A significant strand of thought among feminist researchers is that the focus group method can be a very appropriate way of doing feminist research, because of its empowering possibilities. The voices of the target groups is of primary value and meaning to their livelihood from their point of view. A person friendly environment’s created through a qualitative FGD\(^{10}\)

The focus group discussion was conducted for the SHG assisted respondents. Tailoring on 21.8.2010, agarabathi & candle making on 22.9.2010 and sanitary napkins on 24.9.2010.

3.2.b Case Study

According to Stake the case study is defined by ‘interest in the individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used’\(^{11}\) He suggests that the key feature of case study is its boundedness and specificity. suggests case studies are ‘about real people and real situations’. Two group activity and powered stitching machine v.i.z tailoring, agarabathi .Individual service based activities like bangle selling, networking service
(cable connection), napkin making, dairying were considered (both failure and successful activities).

### 3.2.3 Focus Group Discussion Team

The groups were led by the Research scholar, two investigators - Tulasi, Pille Gowda and one group moderator. The discussions were informal but guided. The women felt free to interact.

### 3.3 Quantitative Research Process

The disadvantaged women candidates who were trained under the entrepreneurship development programme from 2000 to 2010 were selected. Bengaluru rural district has been selected purposively for the study due to proximity to collect data. In Bengaluru rural district EDP trained candidate list was obtained from the training centres & from concerned sponsor department. The female disadvantaged women were shortlisted and identified candidates were interviewed using the survey method. They numbered 495. But on verifying the addresses provided by institutions only 210 were available for study and all of them were personally interviewed.

The interview schedule has 143 items spread over the broad headings of demographic particulars, social - economic conditions, components of entrepreneurship development programme and its impact on the process of empowerment of disadvantaged women in establishing the enterprise.

The administration of the questionnaire to the respondents and collecting data was not an easy task. The researcher collected information from 210 respondents who underwent entrepreneurship development programme during 2000 to 2010 in the Bengaluru rural area belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Secondary data was collected to identify various training institutes conducting entrepreneurship development programmes and primary data was collected from respondents with a structured interview schedule. A census method was used as the available trained women from the disadvantaged group was only limited during the period of study. The study was restricted to Bengaluru rural district covering four
taluks v.i.z Devanahalli, Doddaballapura, Hosakote, Nelamangala. The statistical tools used in the study are one way; two way tables, percentages, simple bar diagrams and the qualitative analysis used were the case study method, focus group discussions etc.

3.4 Secondary Data

The secondary data was collected from the published reports, documents and papers viz. The Human Development Report of Karnataka, vision document, Bengaluru rural district at a glance. The secondary data was collected to identify various training institutes conducting entrepreneurship development programmes in the state and the central and state government institutions, boards and corporations, financial institutions, departments who were sponsoring the entrepreneurship development. These programmes were organised by the government and non-government institutions spread over the state. The number of disadvantaged women who were trained was short listed among all the women trained.

3.5 Limitation

The study is limited only to Bengaluru rural district, the data was collected from disadvantage women who underwent training and were available at the addresses provided by the trainer institutes.
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