

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH WATER SECURITY IN JALGAON DISTRICT: CASE STUDY OF PADALSARE PROJECT

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Abstract:

This prospective case study explores the impact of the proposed Padalsare Dam on women entrepreneurs in Rural Areas of Jalgaon District in Maharashtra, India. Despite being incomplete, the dam's planned construction on the Tapi River is expected to improve water security, enhancing agricultural productivity and entrepreneurial opportunities. This study investigates how women entrepreneurs might benefit from the dam's water security, focusing on potential increases in income, improved access to markets, and enhanced decision-making power. Using a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, this research aims to provide insights into the prospective impacts of the Padalsare Dam on women entrepreneurs, highlighting opportunities and challenges. The study's findings will inform policymakers, practitioners, and researchers on strategies to support women entrepreneurs in leveraging water security for economic empowerment.



Keywords

Women entrepreneurs, Water security, Padalsare Dam, Rural development, India, Economic empowerment

Introduction

Women entrepreneurs play a vital role in promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and enhancing social well-being in rural India. However, they face numerous

challenges, including limited access to water, credit, markets, and technology. The proposed Padalsare Dam in Jalgaon district, Maharashtra, aims to improve water security, enhancing agricultural productivity and entrepreneurial opportunities. Although the dam is currently incomplete, its potential impact on women entrepreneurs warrants investigation.

This study explores the prospective impact of the Padalsare Dam on women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district, focusing on the potential benefits of improved water security. By examining the relationships between water security, women's entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of how water infrastructure can support women's economic development in rural India.

Background

- The Padalsare Dam is a proposed irrigation project in Jalgaon district, Maharashtra.
- The dam aims to provide water security for agricultural and entrepreneurial activities.
- Women entrepreneurs in rural Jalgaon district face challenges in accessing water, credit, and markets.

Literature Review

Water Security and Women's Empowerment

Water security is essential for women's empowerment, particularly in rural areas where women play a crucial role in agriculture and entrepreneurship (UNESCO, 2015). Studies have shown that improved water security can increase women's participation in economic activities, enhance their decision-making power, and improve their overall well-being (World Bank, 2018).

Women Entrepreneurs in Rural India:

Women entrepreneurs in rural India face numerous challenges, including limited access to credit, markets, and technology (IFAD, 2019). Despite these challenges, women entrepreneurs play a vital role in promoting economic growth and social well-being in rural India (Agarwal, 2018).

Impact of Water Infrastructure on Women Entrepreneurs

Research has shown that water infrastructure can have a positive impact on women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas (FAO, 2017). For example, a study in Tanzania found that women entrepreneurs who had access to irrigation water were more likely to increase their income and improve their livelihoods (Mdee, 2017).

Gap in the Literature

While there is a growing body of research on the impact of water infrastructure on women entrepreneurs, there is a need for more studies that focus specifically on the Indian context. This study aims to contribute to the literature by examining the prospective impact of the Padalsare Dam on women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district.

Research Methodology:

- Mixed-methods approach
- Surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. A prospective case study design was used to

examine the potential impacts of the proposed Padalsare Dam on women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district.

Study Area

Lower Tapi Dam (or Padalsare Dam) is an earthfill dam on Tapi river near Amalner, but in Jalgaon district in state of Maharashtra in India.

The study focused on Jalgaon district in Maharashtra, India, where the Padalsare Dam is proposed to be constructed.

Data Collection Methods

1. **Surveys:** A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district to gather information on their current entrepreneurial activities, water usage, and perceived benefits and challenges of the proposed dam.
2. **In-depth Interviews:** 20 women entrepreneurs were selected for in-depth interviews to gather more detailed information on their experiences, perceptions, and expectations regarding the proposed dam.
3. **Focus Group Discussions:** 4 focus group discussions were conducted with women entrepreneurs to gather collective insights and opinions on the potential impacts of the proposed dam.
4. **Secondary Data:** Relevant secondary data was collected from government reports, academic studies, and other sources to provide context and background information on the proposed dam and its potential impacts.

Objective:

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the potential impact of the proposed Padalsare Dam on women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district, with a focus on water security and its implications for entrepreneurial growth and empowerment.

Specific Objectives:

1. To examine the current water security situation and its impact on women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district.
2. To assess the potential benefits and challenges of the proposed Padalsare Dam for women entrepreneurs.
3. To identify strategies for empowering women entrepreneurs through water security in the context of the proposed dam.

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis

The proposed Padalsare Dam will have no significant impact on the water security and entrepreneurial growth of women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district.

Alternative Hypothesis

The proposed Padalsare Dam will have a positive and significant impact on the water security and entrepreneurial growth of women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district.

The current water security situation affect women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district.

Current Water Security Situation

The current water security situation in Jalgaon district is characterized by:

1. **Water Scarcity:** Jalgaon district faces severe water scarcity, particularly during the dry season, affecting agricultural productivity and women entrepreneurs' livelihoods.
2. **Limited Access to Irrigation:** Women entrepreneurs have limited access to irrigation facilities, relying on rainfall and traditional water harvesting methods, which are often insufficient.
3. **Water Quality Issues:** The district's water sources are often contaminated, affecting the quality of water used for agricultural and domestic purposes.

Impact on Women Entrepreneurs:

The current water security situation affects women entrepreneurs in Jalgaon district in several ways:

1. **Reduced Agricultural Productivity:** Water scarcity and limited access to irrigation facilities reduce agricultural productivity, affecting women entrepreneurs' income and livelihoods.
2. **Increased Labor Burden:** Women entrepreneurs spend more time and effort collecting and managing water, reducing their time for other economic activities.
3. **Limited Opportunities:** The lack of reliable water supply limits women entrepreneurs' ability to diversify their businesses, explore new markets, and increase their income.
4. **Food and Nutrition Insecurity:** Women entrepreneurs' families may face food and nutrition insecurity due to reduced agricultural productivity and limited access to nutritious food.

Benefits and challenges of the proposed Padalsare Dam for women entrepreneurs

Benefits:

1. **Improved Water Security:** The proposed Padalsare Dam is expected to provide a reliable water supply, reducing water scarcity and improving agricultural productivity for women entrepreneurs.
2. **Increased Agricultural Productivity:** With a stable water supply, women entrepreneurs can cultivate a wider variety of crops, increase crop yields, and reduce crop failures.
3. **Enhanced Entrepreneurial Opportunities:** The dam's water security can enable women entrepreneurs to diversify their businesses, explore new markets, and increase their income.
4. **Reduced Labor Burden:** Women entrepreneurs can reduce their labor burden, freeing up time for other economic activities and improving their overall well-being.
5. **Improved Food and Nutrition Security:** The dam's water security can improve food and nutrition security for women entrepreneurs' families, enhancing their health and well-being.

Challenges:

1. **Displacement and Resettlement:** The construction of the dam may lead to displacement and resettlement of communities, potentially affecting women entrepreneurs' access to land, resources, and markets.
2. **Water Allocation and Management:** Women entrepreneurs may face challenges in accessing the dam's water supply, particularly if water allocation and management practices are not transparent or equitable.

3. **Increased Costs and Debt:** Women entrepreneurs may incur increased costs and debt to invest in irrigation infrastructure, technology, and other inputs required to utilize the dam's water supply.

4. **Environmental Concerns:** The dam's construction and operation may have environmental impacts, such as water pollution, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity, which can affect women entrepreneurs' livelihoods and well-being.

5. **Social and Cultural Impacts:** The dam's construction and operation may also have social and cultural impacts, such as changes in traditional livelihoods, cultural practices, and community dynamics, which can affect women entrepreneurs' lives and businesses.

Mitigating Strategies

1. **Participatory Water Management:** Ensure women entrepreneurs' participation in water allocation and management decisions to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed.

2. **Provide women entrepreneurs with training and capacity-building** programs to enhance their technical, business, and leadership skills.

3. **Access to Credit and Markets:** Ensure women entrepreneurs have access to credit facilities and markets to sell their produce and products.

4. **Environmental and Social Impact Assessments:** Conduct thorough environmental and social impact assessments to identify potential risks and develop strategies to mitigate them.

5. **Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programs:** Develop and implement resettlement and rehabilitation programs to support communities displaced by the dam's construction.

The Padalsare Dam's water security impact women entrepreneurs' agricultural productivity and income?

Positive Impacts:

1. **Increased Agricultural Productivity:** With a reliable water supply, women entrepreneurs can cultivate a wider variety of crops, increase crop yields, and reduce crop failures.

2. **Improved Crop Quality:** Adequate water supply can lead to better crop quality, enabling women entrepreneurs to command higher prices for their produce.

3. **Reduced Labor Burden:** With irrigation facilities, women entrepreneurs can reduce their labor burden, freeing up time for other economic activities.

4. **Increased Income:** Improved agricultural productivity and crop quality can lead to increased income for women entrepreneurs.

Negative Impacts:

1. **Initial Investment Costs:** Women entrepreneurs may need to invest in irrigation infrastructure, which can be costly.

2. **Dependence on Dam Operations:** Women entrepreneurs may become dependent on the dam's water supply, making them vulnerable to changes in dam operations or water allocation policies.

3. **Water-Borne Diseases:** If the dam's water supply is not properly managed, it can lead to an increased risk of water-borne diseases, affecting women entrepreneurs' health and livelihoods.

4. **Displacement and Resettlement:** The construction of the dam may lead to displacement and resettlement of communities, potentially affecting women entrepreneurs' access to land, resources, and markets.

Mitigating Strategies:

1. **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide women entrepreneurs with training and capacity-building programs to enhance their agricultural productivity and irrigation management skills.

2. **Access to Credit and Markets:** Ensure women entrepreneurs have access to credit facilities and markets to sell their produce.

3. **Participatory Water Management:** Encourage participatory water management practices, involving women entrepreneurs in decision-making processes related to water allocation and management.

4. **Health and Sanitation Programs:** Implement health and sanitation programs to prevent water-borne diseases and promote women entrepreneurs' overall well-being.

Strategies employed to empower women entrepreneurs through water security in the context of the proposed dam:

Here are some strategies that can be employed to empower women entrepreneurs through water security in the context of the proposed Padalsare Dam:

Institutional and Policy Support:

1. **Gender-Responsive Policies:** Develop policies that address the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, such as access to credit, markets, and technology.

2. **Water Rights and Allocation:** Ensure women entrepreneurs have secure water rights and access to a fair share of the dam's water allocation.

3. **Participatory Water Management:** Encourage women entrepreneurs' participation in water allocation and management decisions.

Capacity Building and Training:

1. **Training and Capacity Building Programs:** Provide women entrepreneurs with training and capacity-building programs to enhance their technical, business, and leadership skills.

2. **Mentorship and Coaching:** Establish mentorship and coaching programs to connect women entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurs and industry experts.

3. **Access to Technology and Innovation:** Support women entrepreneurs in accessing and adopting new technologies and innovations that can enhance their productivity and competitiveness.

Access to Finance and Markets:

1. **Access to Credit and Financial Services:** Provide women entrepreneurs with access to credit facilities and financial services, such as microfinance programs and loan guarantees.

2. Market Support and Linkages: Establish market support and linkages programs to connect women entrepreneurs with buyers, suppliers, and other market actors.

3. E-commerce and Digital Platforms: Support women entrepreneurs in accessing e-commerce and digital platforms to expand their market reach and customer base.

Social and Cultural Support:

1. Social and Cultural Awareness Programs: Implement social and cultural awareness programs to promote women's empowerment and challenge discriminatory social and cultural norms.

2. Women's Organizations and Networks: Support women's organizations and networks to provide women entrepreneurs with a collective voice and platform for advocacy.

3. Childcare and Family Support Services: Provide childcare and family support services to support women entrepreneurs in balancing their business and family responsibilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the impact of water security interventions on women entrepreneurs.

2. Data Collection and Analysis: Collect and analyze data on women entrepreneurs' access to water, credit, markets, and other resources.

3. Feedback Mechanisms: Establish feedback mechanisms to ensure that women entrepreneurs' voices and concerns are heard and addressed.

Conclusion:

The current water security situation in Jalgaon district significantly affects women entrepreneurs' livelihoods, agricultural productivity, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Addressing these challenges is crucial to empowering women entrepreneurs and promoting their economic development.

The proposed Padalsare Dam, Amalner in Jalgaon district, Maharashtra, India, has the potential to significantly impact women entrepreneurs in the region. This study examined the potential benefits and challenges of the dam's water security for women entrepreneurs and identified strategies to empower them.

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