

# **Crafting Change: Empowering Women Artisans through Madhubani and Jeevika**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Madhubani painting, an indigenous art form from Mithila region of Bihar, India, reflects the creative prowess of Madhubani women artisans. However, these women artisans faced numerous socio-economic challenges. Jeevika, a non-profit organization dedicated to rural livelihood development in Bihar, initiated interventions to empower the artisans. This study assesses impact of Jeevika's interventions in empowering Madhubani women artisans. The interventions included forming Producer Groups, offering training, seed funding, and sales platforms. Results reveal positive outcomes: increased sales, savings, involvement in family decisions and social interactions. The research highlights the effectiveness of multi-pronged interventions, offering insights into empowering rural artisans sustainably.

**Keywords :** Women Artisans, Empowerment, Handicrafts, Madhubani painting, Jeevika, Socio-economic challenges

## **INTRODUCTION**

The handicraft and handloom sector in Bihar has emerged as a vital source of employment, revitalizing the rural economy. Crafts have demonstrated their ability to create value, even for those marginalized from mainstream commercial activities (Dar and Parrey, 2013; Abirami *et al.*, 2017). With a history that predates the industrial era, handicrafts have endured and continue to thrive. Requiring minimal resources and offering flexible working hours, they provide a lifeline for financially disadvantaged artisans, granting them a degree of autonomy (Scrase, 2002). Handicrafts serve as a reliable source of income, particularly for those with limited occupational choices beyond agriculture, which dominates rural employment (Morris and Turok, 1996).

The craft sector has particularly been a lifeline for rural women, offering them a preferred source of income beyond agriculture, which is the predominant employment provider in rural areas (Tyabji, 2016). Craftwork allows women to work from home, managing household responsibilities alongside earning an income with greater

predictability than agricultural activities.

Despite its significance, the craft sector in India, including Bihar, remains largely unorganized, lacking formal benchmarks for assessing fair value, particularly affecting women artisans who often lack market knowledge. In response, government interventions have been initiated to enhance the capacity of artisans through awareness programs, training workshops, and skill development missions targeting various aspects such as product diversification, marketing, e-commerce, technology, and banking (Das, 2013).

Among the organizations working extensively in Bihar's handicraft and handloom sector, Jeevika stands out for its significant contributions to the handicraft sector.

The handicraft and handloom sector in Bihar has become a key driver of rural economy, providing employment opportunities and financial stability for artisans, particularly women. Government interventions, including skill development initiatives, have aimed to enhance the capabilities of Madhubani artisans, supported by organizations like Jeevika. However, there remains an urgent need for systematic data collection

and documentation to adequately monitor and assess the impact of craft interventions.

### Objective of the study:

The objective of this study is to assess the extent to which Jeevika's interventions have contributed to the socio-economic empowerment of rural Madhubani women artisans.

### Literature Review:

#### *Handicrafts Sector:*

The handicrafts sector holds immense potential for growth, with the global market size reaching USD 680 billion in 2021. In the case of India, there is significant room for expansion in the handicrafts industry. In 2019-20, Indian handicraft products generated total revenue of USD 3.72 billion, and in 2021-22, the value of Indian handicraft exports surged to \$4.35 billion (EPCH)<sup>1</sup>. Despite having a large pool of artisans, India currently holds less than 1% share of global handicraft exports (India Brand Equity Foundation report, 2022).

According to the Census of Handicrafts conducted during the eleventh plan, India is estimated to have approximately 7 million regional artisans who rely on crafts as their source of income. The majority of these artisans, accounting for 76.5%, are located in rural areas. Women artisans play a dominant role in the handicraft sector, constituting 56.13% of the total artisan population in India (DCH<sup>2</sup>).

Handicrafts in India are not just an industry but also a vocation, particularly for women in rural areas seeking an alternative to the uncertain and arduous agricultural lifestyle (Tyabji, 2016). Women's participation in crafts has been increasing especially in the rural home-based crafts sector (Madan, 2017).

Bihar, a state in India, boasts a rich cultural heritage with a plethora of arts and crafts that have garnered global attention. Despite significant economic growth over the past decade, Bihar still faces challenges in catching up with other states. It continues to have the highest percentage of population living below the poverty line, as highlighted in NITF<sup>3</sup> Aayog's 2022 report. Unfortunately, poverty disproportionately affects women in Bihar, who struggle to find equitable employment opportunities,

particularly in rural areas.

Handicrafts have acted as a panacea, addressing the persistent economic challenges faced by rural women in Bihar. More and more women are utilizing their spare time to engage in crafts, making it a gender-specific livelihood activity. Crafts have not only provided a source of income but also served as an instrument of women's empowerment and freedom in society (ORF Working Paper Series, 2011). Additionally, an increasing number of women artisans are gaining recognition for their craft skills through government initiatives.

#### *Women Empowerment: Concept and indicators:*

Women's empowerment is a multifaceted concept that can be viewed both as a goal and as a continuing process. It is a continual journey of granting power and control to those who have been marginalized and disempowered in society.

Bano *et al.* (2021) acknowledge that women's empowerment is not just an end result; it is an ongoing process that enables the weak to exercise control over their socio-economic conditions. The process of empowerment involves providing access to and control over financial and knowledge resources in society, particularly for those who have been historically considered weaker, such as women (Batliwala, 2007). This empowerment journey includes gaining resources like education, skill development, and self-efficacy, as well as social resources like association with groups, access to peer networks, and exposure to positive role models outside the family. Additionally, financial resources like money, property, and land contribute to women's empowerment (Kabeer, 1999).

Malapit *et al.* (2019) define empowerment as the ability to utilize available economic resources. Women engaging in crafts and generating income experience increased self-worth, leading to greater confidence and higher self-esteem. Richard (2007) emphasizes the importance of training workshops in empowering craftswomen, improving their societal status, and ultimately enhancing their income prospects.

Given its complex and multi-dimensional nature, achieving women's empowerment requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses various aspects of their

- 
1. Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts
  2. Development Commission of Handicrafts
  3. National Institution for Transforming India

lives (Nandal, 2003). It is not enough to establish social laws and policies without also transforming the mindset and attitudes of those responsible for implementing them. True empowerment involves a holistic strategy that encompasses economic, social, and political emancipation for women.

Women's empowerment can be achieved through various approaches, including providing equal opportunities, ensuring equal access to resources, and offering legal protection. These strategies work on both individual and collective levels. On the collective level, empowering women involves enabling them to work together as a cohesive group, taking control of their lives, and advocating for their rights and interests. Meanwhile, on an individual level, empowerment focuses on enhancing self-image, boosting self-confidence, improving decision-making abilities, and fostering critical thinking skills. From a developing country perspective, empowering women necessitates actions such as providing education, training, increasing income, challenging patriarchal norms, and promoting gender equality (Bernardiner, 2018).

Implementing these multifaceted approaches is crucial for societies to dismantle systemic barriers and empower women at every level, allowing them to not only flourish personally but also become active and valuable members of their communities and the global sphere (Ibid).

#### ***Proxy indicators of empowerment:***

Women's empowerment is often viewed as a complex and continuous process that poses difficulties for direct measurement using conventional empirical tools. Consequently, many studies rely on proxy indicators to gauge empowerment (Malhotra, Schuler and Boender, 2002). Proxy indicators, also known as indirect indicators, serve as approximations or representations of phenomena when direct measurements are challenging or unavailable. Proxy measures are generally simpler and less costly to use as compared to direct measures.

Proxy measures are commonly used for impact assessment, including investments in children's education and health or improvements in various aspects of women's lives, such as health outcomes. However, the challenge of measuring indicators of women's empowerment at the aggregate level is magnified by the lack of reliable and comprehensive data on proxy measures and enabling variables, particularly in developing nations (Buvinic, 2017).

Kishor (2000) reinforces the notion of using proxies like education and employment to evaluate the process of empowerment, acknowledging that the ultimate outcome is best determined by direct indicators. Ackerly (1995) contends that directly quantifying women's empowerment is challenging, hence the reliance on proxy measures like health, education, and knowledge.

Direct measures of agency typically focus on decision-making abilities, while common proxy indicators encompass education, employment, or personal control over assets (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, n.d.).

Soharwardi and Ahmad (2020) identify five key dimensions of empowerment: employment status of women, level of awareness, involvement in decision-making processes, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Women's decision-making indicators are widely used in social science research, but often lack thorough consideration of measurement nuances. Instead of using more comprehensive or experimental methods, a popular quantitative approach to assess women's personal empowerment is based on women's self-reported participation in household decision-making (Peterman *et al.*, 2021).

Researches on women empowerment consistently aim to develop indicators that show a woman's influence in specific decisions. Some studies define having a say in decision-making as being the sole decision-maker (De Brauw *et al.*, 2013), while others give equal weight to individual and joint decisions (Bonilla *et al.*, 2017).

A study conducted in Tanzania investigated changes in empowerment at both individual and national levels over time. It determined 23 pertinent variables and categorized them into six domains based on their factor loadings. These domains included attitudes towards violence, participation in decision-making, social independence, age at significant life events, accessibility to healthcare, and property ownership (Mganga *et al.*, 2021).

Empowerment is defined as a binary variable, derived from combining two separate domains: decision-making and property ownership. Women are not empowered if they had no involvement in household decision-making and did not own a house or land. Conversely, women are considered empowered if they meet the criteria in either or both of these domains (Abbas *et al.*, 2021).

The ability to participate in household decision-making is not just a symbol of women's empowerment;

it has tangible consequences. According to Peterman *et al.* (2021), having a voice in these decisions directly impacts the distribution of resources within a household, ensuring fairer allocation and potentially better outcomes for all members. This resonates with the broader concept of individual empowerment explored by Kim *et al.* (2007). They define it as having control over decisions both within and outside the household, highlighting the importance of agency in all aspects of life.

Similarly, Hashemi and Schuler (1993) identify women's enhanced status and increased decision-making power as key indicators of empowerment. This underscores the link between voice and power, and how the ability to participate in decision-making translates into greater control over one's life and destiny.

In the context of crafts, earnings provide women the freedom to make decisions concerning their lives, families, and how to utilize their income. Economic empowerment in the craft domain, as observed by Rowlands (1997), is closely linked to possessing economic resources, enabling individuals to assume control over their life decisions.

Researchers and practitioners have also sought to identify interpretive dimensions of empowerment related to agency and control, such as self-confidence and gender-equitable decision-making (Anand, Mecagni, and Piracha, 2019), as economic indicators alone do not capture the full scope of women's empowerment (Malhotra, 2002).

Research on women's empowerment indicates that increased participation by women in decision-making leads to enhanced household well-being. Consequently, it is crucial to comprehend the factors that affect women's empowerment, especially in rural settings (Sell and Minot, 2018).

Proxy indicators are crucial in evaluating women's empowerment due to its intricate and multi-faceted character. These indicators offer important perspectives on both the process and results of empowerment, particularly in situations where direct measures are constrained or unfeasible.

In this research, proxy indicators are used to capture the multifaceted nature of women's empowerment. These include an increase in sales and earnings, housing conditions, decision-making abilities, and the level of social interaction. Collectively, these indicators offer a nuanced understanding of empowerment, spanning economic, social, and personal spheres.

### ***Madhubani and Jeevika:***

Madhubani, a district in Bihar, is renowned for its intricate and handcrafted Madhubani paintings. Traditionally created by women using twigs and natural dyes, these paintings adorn the interior walls of houses, serving as a source of cultural expression and pride. For many women, Madhubani art has not only provided a livelihood but also empowered them economically and granted them recognition.

Madhubani paintings, as an Indian art form, have gained popularity as one of the most sought-after handicrafts for export. This presents rural women in Bihar with an opportunity to showcase their creativity and cultural heritage. However, despite the available market potential, these women face challenges in fully leveraging these opportunities.

In response to these issues and with the aim of eradicating poverty and empowering rural women, the Government of Bihar (GoB) has taken proactive measures. Through the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), an autonomous body operating under the Department of Rural Development, the GoB is leading the Jeevika initiative. This initiative focuses on fostering the social and economic empowerment of the rural poor, including women, in Madhubani and other regions of Bihar. By providing support, resources, and training, Jeevika strives to enhance the livelihoods of these women and create a pathway towards sustainable development and empowerment.

### **Significance of the study:**

According to the NITI Aayog report of 2022, Bihar is recognized as the most underdeveloped state in India, with women constituting nearly half of the population and yet facing the perception of being the weaker sex. Empowering women is crucial for the state's progress, as it enables them to better care for their families and actively contribute to society and the economy.

Various craft-related initiatives have been implemented by different departments of the GoB, as well as by NGOs, social workers, and individual craft people. However, there is a lack of structured data on the trainings conducted and their actual impact. The success of these interventions and their effect on the socio-economic status of craftswomen remains largely unmeasured, emphasizing the need to recognize and investigate the outcomes achieved by successful craftswomen who have undergone specific interventions,

including training workshops.

One such case is the Jeevika initiative, which has been actively involved in various craft interventions for the past ten years, focusing particularly on women practicing Madhubani Painting. The key activities included forming Producer Groups (PGs), which are self-help groups of women, and providing them with necessary training to elevate their Madhubani painting skills to a commercial level. Additionally, Jeevika provided the PGs with seed money to procure raw materials and essential requirements. The initiative played two crucial roles: firstly, by providing orders to the craftswomen, it enabled them to create a surplus through practicing Madhubani Painting, and secondly, it facilitated the sale of their products to end consumers through a craft *mela* called *Saras*.

This research centers on evaluating the impact of the interventions undertaken by Jeevika, aiming to analyze the progress of women engaged in Madhubani painting and understand the specific contributions of these initiatives in uplifting their socio-economic status. By examining the outcomes and changes before and after these interventions, the study seeks to isolate the effects of Jeevika's efforts on the craftswomen's lives, and subsequently, gain insights into how similar empowerment initiatives can be effectively designed and implemented in the future.

## METHODOLOGY

The first part involved the secondary research for which various research papers and books were referred. Other sources like working papers, institutional websites, etc. were also referred to make the literature review more robust. Additionally, data from reports and handbooks related to training and development schemes implemented in the past decade were collected.

The second part of the study focused on primary data collection. A structured questionnaire was designed and administered to Madhubani craftswomen residing in two villages, namely Ranti and Simri, in Madhubani district. Enumerators were trained to collect the data. Informed consent was taken from the women artisans before administering the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions. It aimed to gather information about the craftswomen's association with Jeevika, changes in their socio-economic conditions before and after joining Jeevika, and proxies related to women empowerment

such as decision-making, access to and control over finances, skill development, earning opportunities, self-confidence, and self-image improvement through training, education, and income opportunities.

The study utilized a non-probabilistic sampling technique, specifically judgmental sampling, to select craftswomen who had been exposed to the interventions undertaken by Jeevika. The initial survey involved 45 Madhubani women artisans, but 8 were excluded due to incomplete data. Therefore, the final sample size consisted of 37 married women who practice Madhubani painting and have a connection with Jeevika for a period ranging from 2 to 10 years.

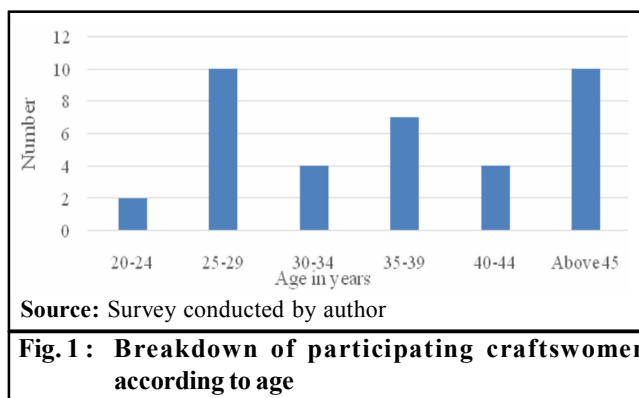
The collected data was organized and analyzed using MS Excel software to assess the impact of Jeevika's interventions on the craftswomen's socio-economic aspects. Basic statistical tools were employed to calculate the impact and draw meaningful conclusions from the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data that was gathered was tabulated for the purpose of analysis and drawing inferences.

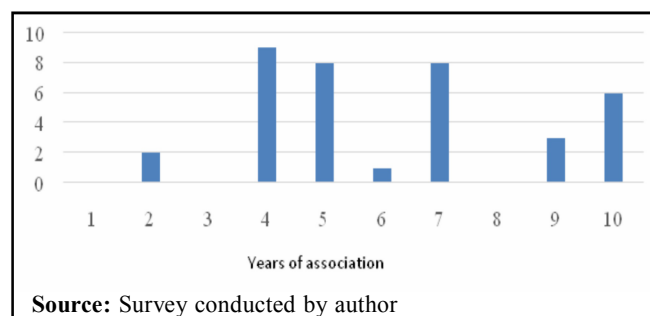
### Age of the craftswomen:

The age composition of craftswomen plays a significant role in maintaining a vibrant and diverse community. Fig. 1 shows the age-wise distribution of craftswomen, which appears to be well-balanced. There are 10 women who are above 45 years of age, reflecting the experience and wisdom of senior members, while another 10 women fall in the age group of 25-29 years, indicating the involvement of younger generations. Additionally, there are other craftswomen spread across intermediate age groups, further enriching the diversity and dynamics within the community.



### Years of association with Jeevika:

On average, the craftswomen had a little over 6 years of association with Jeevika. Fig. 2 demonstrates the distribution of craftswomen based on their years of association with Jeevika. The highest number of craftswomen, have been associated with Jeevika for 4 years, followed by the second highest number of craftswomen who have an association of 5 years and 7 years. Furthermore, there are 6 women who have been associated with Jeevika for a period of 10 years, indicating a long-standing partnership, while 3 women have maintained an association of 9 years with Jeevika. This data showcases the varying lengths of engagement and highlights the sustained commitment and collaboration between Jeevika and the craftswomen over the years.



**Fig. 2 : Frequency distribution based on the number of years of association**

### Type of house:

A large variation can be seen in the type of house that the craftswomen possessed before and after being associated with the PG (Table 1).

Table 1 : Type of house				
Association with PG	No. of women (%)			Total
	Kaccha	Semi-pucca	Pucca	
Before	23 (62%)	8 (22%)	6 (16%)	37
After	12 (33%)	9 (24%)	16 (43%)	37

Source: Author's calculation based on survey

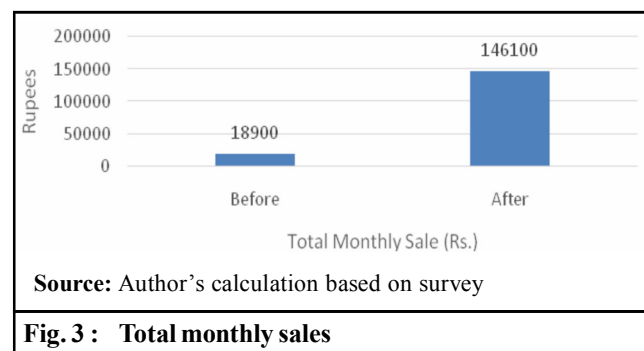
There is a significant variation observed in the type of houses owned by the craftswomen before and after their association with the Producer Group (PG). Prior to their association with the PG, many craftswomen had kaccha or semi-pucca houses which have decreased from 62% to 33% whereas the pucca households have increased from 16% to 43%.

However, to comprehend the true impact, it is

necessary to separate the influence of Jeevika interventions from other government schemes (related to housing) to determine its specific contribution.

### Total Monthly Sales:

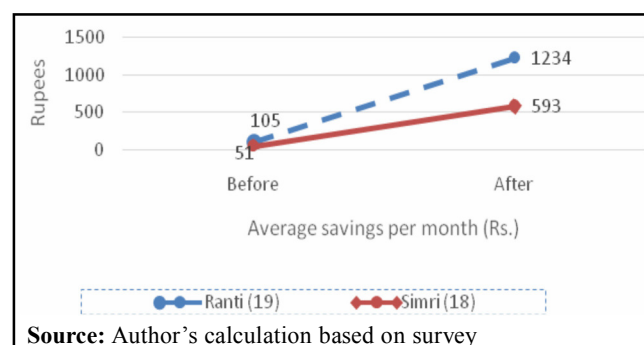
One of the indicators of women's empowerment is the value of sales achieved by craftswomen, which reflects their monthly income from their craft. Fig. 3 demonstrates a substantial increase in the total monthly sales of craftswomen, rising from Rs. 18,900 to Rs. 1,46,100 after becoming part of the Producer Group (PG).



**Fig. 3 : Total monthly sales**

### Average of savings per month:

There were 19 participants from Ranti and 18 participants from Simri (Fig. 4). The average monthly savings in Ranti increased from Rs. 105 to Rs. 1,234 after being exposed to various interventions by Jeevika. In Simri, the average savings rose from Rs. 51 to Rs. 593.



**Fig. 4 : Comparison of average savings per month before and after**

The data indicates that the average savings for craftswomen in Ranti are more than double compared to those in Simri. However, it is important to note that both villages have experienced significant growth, exceeding tenfold, after the interventions by Jeevika.



### Level of Participation in family decision:

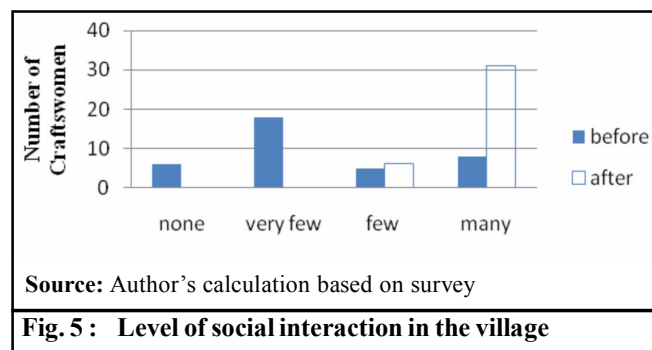
According to the data, there has been a highly encouraging shift in the level of participation of craftswomen in family decisions (Table 2). The percentage of women who ‘always participated in family decisions’ has significantly increased from 32% to 54%, while the percentage of those who ‘never participated in family decisions’ and ‘sometimes participated in family decisions’ decreased from 35% to 30% and 33% to 16%, respectively, after joining the PG. This shift is remarkable, especially considering the historically low level of women’s participation in family decisions in the state of Bihar.

Table 2 : Level of participation in family decision				
Association with PG	No. of women (%)			Total
	Never	Sometimes	Always	
Before	13 (35%)	12 (33%)	12 (32%)	37
After	11 (30%)	6 (16%)	20 (54%)	37

Source: Author’s calculation based on survey

### Social interaction in the village:

Several studies have considered the level of social interaction as a proxy measurement for empowerment (Fig. 5).



Prior to joining the PG, there were six craftswomen who had no social interaction as they were not acquainted with anyone in their village. Additionally, 18 craftswomen had limited social connections, while only eight craftswomen knew a significant number of people in their village. This lack of social interaction can be attributed to the cultural norms that restricted women’s mobility and confined them to their homes, resulting in limited opportunities to meet and interact with others in the community.

However, after joining the PG, there has been a remarkable shift in the networking capabilities of the

craftswomen. Six craftswomen reported interacting with a few people, while 31 craftswomen claimed to have interactions with a large number of individuals in their village. This indicates that joining the PG has played a significant role in empowering the craftswomen to become more socially engaged.

As mentioned above, some of these women did not go out of their houses before joining the PG hence had no acquaintance in the village. As one of the participants of the study, PT1 says, “*Earlier I never used to go out of the house. Since I joined Jeevika PG, I have done the training, made paintings and attended meetings. Through this I have got to know so many ladies with whom I enjoy painting. My time also gets utilized well.*”

Participant PT2 adds, “*I really wanted to learn Madhubani painting but I was not allowed. When my in laws and I got to know about the PG through Jeevika, I was reluctantly allowed to do the training and join the PG. Now I am working and earning some money also and I like that. I also like working with other ladies and we talk about several things.*”

### Summary of Findings:

The survey conducted with craftswomen who have joined the PG established by Jeevika provides insights into the multi-faceted interventions implemented in a synchronized manner. The PG comprises women from different age groups, including those who have been associated with it for over a decade, as well as young members who recently joined. This indicates the successful operation of the PG over the years, as well as its ability to attract new and young participants.

The findings of the survey highlight the positive transformations experienced by the craftswomen and their families. Notably, there has been a significant shift from kaccha (temporary) houses to pucca (permanent) houses, demonstrating an overall development. Although some craftswomen were uncertain about their sales data, the overall monthly sales figures, after joining the PG, are highly encouraging. Over a period of ten years, there has been an impressive eight-fold increase in sales, underscoring the effectiveness of Jeevika’s multifaceted interventions, including training, sales orders, seed funding, and sales platforms.

However, the impact of sales alone would be incomplete without considering savings. In this regard, the survey reveals that savings have increased more than

ten-fold compared to the period before joining the PG, aligning with the sales data. The positive effects of enhanced earning and saving capacity are also reflected in the level of participation in family decision-making. A substantial 20 percent increase has been observed in the proportion of women who reported always participating in family decisions, a crucial aspect of empowerment, particularly in Bihar. The increased involvement of craftswomen in decision-making processes signifies their growing empowerment.

Socialization is regarded as a paramount aspect of empowerment, and the survey findings demonstrate its significance. Before joining the PG, only eight women had extensive social connections within the village. However, after joining the PG, this number increased to 31 craftswomen who reported having significant networks within the village, indicating a substantial enhancement in social integration and empowerment. These women now enjoy collaborating with their peers, fostering discussions on various issues during their work, which in turn raises awareness to a considerable extent. Transitioning from a time when some of them were confined to their homes, they now earn a consistent income, which is profoundly empowering for them.

Overall, the various interventions by Jeevika seem to have yielded positive outcomes for the craftswomen. The interventions have facilitated increased earnings, savings, social connectivity contributing to holistic empowerment.

### Discussion:

The findings of the study reveal that collective mobilization, coupled with support in the form of seed funding, training, income generation opportunities, and sales platforms, can lead to significant improvements in the social and economic status of craftswomen.

The study aligns with existing literature on women's empowerment, emphasizing the need for multi-pronged strategies. Previous research by Kim *et al.* (2007) and Hashemi and Schuler (1993) highlighted the importance of addressing various aspects of empowerment, including economic independence, decision-making power, and collective action. The interventions implemented by Jeevika mirrored this call for multidimensionality covering multiple phases of the empowerment journey, spanning from the establishment of producer groups to the ultimate stage of product sales.

Furthermore, the study echoes the importance of

both collective and individual empowerment, reflecting the broader discourse in previous research. Individual craftswomen experienced notably positive outcomes attributable to these interventions, manifesting as heightened awareness, increased earnings, amplified participation in decision-making processes, and enhanced housing conditions. These individual milestones signify the tangible benefits of the interventions for craftswomen and demonstrate how handicrafts can expand options for women beyond traditional roles. These findings align with research by Peterman *et al.* (2021) who found that having a voice in decision-making directly impacts resource distribution within households.

Additionally, the research elucidates the aspect of collective empowerment facilitated through Jeevika's interventions. By mobilizing craftswomen into cohesive groups and affording them opportunities for training and income generation, Jeevika has nurtured a sense of collective empowerment resonating with the work of Hashemi and Schuler (1993) who view collective action as a key indicator of empowerment. This facet is particularly significant, as it enables craftswomen to offer mutual support, collectively contributing to their overall empowerment.

Moreover, the literature reviewed also underscores the concept of women's empowerment as an ongoing and continuous process, challenging the notion of a mere endpoint. Jeevika's interventions serve as initiators of this empowerment process by providing valuable skill development opportunities and facilitating access to crucial knowledge resources. These initiatives extend their influence to various social dimensions, fostering group associations and peer networks, while also positively impacting financial aspects, including economic resources such as money and property. Ultimately, these multifaceted interventions contribute to the holistic empowerment of women, aligning with the multifaceted nature of women's empowerment as highlighted in the reviewed literature.

### Limitations:

The research study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. It focuses on only two villages, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The experiences and outcomes of craftswomen in different geographical areas may vary due to varying socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and access to resources.



The small sample size and non-probabilistic sampling technique introduce potential selection bias. The reliance on self-reported data by the craftswomen may be subject to biases, such as recall bias or social desirability bias. The short-term focus and absence of a control group make it difficult to isolate the effects of craft interventions. Longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the changes over time. The study does not extensively account for other factors that could influence the outcomes observed, such as market dynamics, changes in government policies, or external economic factors. These confounding variables could potentially impact the results and limit the attribution of changes solely to the craft interventions.

The study does not explore potential challenges or limitations faced by Jeevika in implementing the interventions or scaling them up

### Conclusion:

This study suggests that handicrafts can be powerful tools for empowerment, when coupled with the right support systems. Jeevika's multifaceted interventions demonstrate the potential for skill development, income generation, and collective action, offering women greater agency and control over their lives.

The study emphasizes that empowerment is an ongoing journey, and it requires multifaceted interventions that address the varied needs of craftswomen. The findings suggest that a single, isolated intervention may not be sufficient to achieve true empowerment. Instead, a holistic approach that encompasses all stages of the empowerment process is necessary. By providing support at every step, from mobilization to sales, organizations can effectively empower craftswomen and facilitate their sustainable development. The research provides insights into how similar empowerment initiatives can be effectively designed and implemented in the future, based on the outcomes and changes observed before and after Jeevika's interventions.

Crucially, this research aligns with the notion that empowerment is both an individual and collective process. The interventions discussed in this study have not only led to individual improvements but have also nurtured a sense of collective empowerment through group formation and mutual support, echoing the broader discourse present in the literature.

In conclusion, empowering rural women through craft interventions is a valuable strategy for promoting

sustainable development. By continuing to implement multifaceted interventions that address the specific needs of craftswomen, organizations can make a lasting impact on their social, economic, and collective empowerment. The research contributes to the broader discourse on women's empowerment as both an individual and collective process, highlighting the importance of group formation and mutual support in fostering empowerment.

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