



## Factors contributing to the empowerment of women lace makers-A Case Study

Dr. D.M.Neeraja, Reader,  
Dept. of Commerce, SKSD Mahila Kalasala, Tanuku, W.G.Dt, AP

**Abstract:** Lace craft was introduced in the twin Godavari districts in 1780 by the Dutch missionaries and lace park in Narsapur. It is important to note that due to lack of demand and for lace product from advanced countries, now the industry and women lace makers are in dire straits. the opinion of the sample women lace makers on the motivating factors for the present work. Regarding the total sample, women lace makers in SHG members and Non-SHG members, majority i.e.,100 percent have awareness on DWCRA/SHG, from the remaining, regarding group unity, mutual respect in the group, 99.2 percent responded positively for mutual respect. Towards the freedom of expression, the highest majority (98.5%) responded positively.

**Key words:** lace industry, Lace Park, women empowerment

### Introduction

India's largest lace industry concentrated in Andhra Pradesh in general and occupied main place in both West and East Godavari districts. Lace craft was introduced in the twin Godavari districts in 1780 by the Dutch missionaries and Lace Park in Narsapur. It is important to note that due to lack of demand and for lace product from advanced countries, now the industry and women lace makers are in dire straits. There is a great demand for the lace products, particularly interior-home-linens, from United States and European countries. However, due to the poor patronage from the government only a handful of exporters are able to compete with their international counterparts of China, Japan, Thailand and other European countries. Of the 25 lace exporting companies in the twin Godavari districts, only two are equipped with the required machinery including tailoring and ironing unit.

There is a remote area of India called Narasapur (or Narasapuram) in the West Godavari district of the state of Andhra Pradesh. In this remote Indian town, some of the world's finest crochet lace makers reside – and work feverishly to produce what can only be produced by human hands. To date, there is no way to crochet by machine unlike knitting which can be accomplished by machines. More than 80% of this lace is exported – mostly to the US – but also to Europe and Japan and larger cities within India itself. Chances are if you've seen a crocheted table cloth being sold commercially, it came from Narasapur. One can learn more about these lace makers here. One interesting feature of this industry is that much of the work is done from the homes of the women – thus the term 'cottage industry'. This sort of business venture is extremely important so that the women may care for their own children and household while producing income with the work of her own talented hands. Imagine how quickly these women must be this is one area where crochet is taken very seriously. Lace production accounts for a



hefty percentage of the area's economy. Skills are passed down from mother to daughter and the lace making tradition continues in a time when the vast majority of fiber arts are mechanized for mass production.

The lace park was established in the year 2003 as cooperative, corporate setup, which forming lace self-help groups with the lace artisan women in the village. Lace self-help groups were formed at village level in to 'village level mutually aided cooperative societies'. All village level cooperative societies are formed in to a federal society in the name and fame of Lace Park at district level with head quarters at Narsapuram. The day to day running of the lace park is taken care by board of directors elected from the lace artisans.

### Objectives and methodology

The main objective of study is to study the factors contributing to the empowerment of women lace makers and the impact of Lace parks on the empowerment process of lace makers in West Godavari District. The primary data is collected through canvassing a simple questionnaire among women incumbents of the Lace Park in selected area of study. The study is designed to cover a sample of of 125 women lace makers who are working under Lace Park and also independent lace workers. Averages and percentages are used at appropriate place of the study.

### Analysis of the study

**Table- 1: Age Distribution of the sample Respondent**

S. No.	Age	Women lace makers at lace park		Total
		SHG members	Non-SHG members	
1	Below 30	22 (24.0)	7 (21.0)	29 (23.3)
2	31-40	38 (42.7)	15 (43.0)	53 (42.6)
3	41-50	23 (26.0)	11 (31.0)	34 (27.3)
4	Above 50	7 (7.3)	2 (5.0)	9 (6.8)
Total		90 (100.0)	35 (100.0)	125 (100.0)

Source: - Survey

Age may be considered as an important factor in seeking employment, since capacity to work and the acquisition of skills are governed by age. Table- 1 analyses the distribution of sample women SHG members and Non-SHG

members by their age groups. From the total SHG members, who are doing lace work independently, majority group (42.7%) are in the age group of 31-40 years followed by 41-50 years (26.0%), below 30 years (24.0%) and the remaining



(7.3%) are in the age group of above 50 years. Out of the total women Non-SHG members, who are working in Lace Park, majority group (43.0%) are in the age group of 31-40 years followed by 41-50 years (31.0%), below 30 years (21.0%) and the remaining (5.0%) are in the age group

of above 50 years. This shows that there is no difference in the age groups of SHG members and Non-SHG members of women in lace makers in their age group, most of the women belong to age group of 31-40 years.

**Table- 2: Education level of the Respondents**

S. No.	Educational qualification	Women lace makers at lace park		Total
		SHG members	Non-SHG members	
1	Illiterate	23 (25.1)	10 (26.0)	33 (25.2)
2	Primary education	37 (41.3)	17 (55.0)	54 (44.8)
3	Secondary education	27 (30.3)	5 (13.0)	32 (26.0)
4	Above secondary	3 (3.3)	3 (6.0)	6 (4.0)
Total		90 (100.0)	35 (100.0)	125 (100.0)

Source: - Survey

The table indicates the distribution of sample women lace makers in SHG members and Non-SHG members by their literacy levels. Out of the total SHG members working under Lace Park, majority group (41.3%) is having primary level of education followed by secondary level 30.3 percent, while 25.0 percent are illiterates and 3.3 percent have above secondary level of education. Among the total Non-SHG members, more than fifty percent (55.0%) are with primary level of education followed by 13.0 percent with secondary level of education, 6.0 percent with above secondary level of education, while 26.0 percent of the respondents are illiterates.

makers on the motivating factors for the present work. Regarding the total sample, women lace makers in SHG members and Non-SHG members, majority i.e.,100 percent have awareness on DWCRA/SHG, from the remaining, regarding group unity, mutual respect in the group, 99.2 percent responded positively for mutual respect. Towards the freedom of expression, the highest majority (98.5%) responded positively. About the democratic decision 96.5 percent respondents are enjoying. Freedom of democratic decision making relating to the network with other NGO's, very few (3.5%) have membership in Mahila Mandals also less number (17.0%) are being represented.

**Motivational factors:** The table analyses the opinion of the sample women lace



Table-3: Motivational factors Of the Women Lace Workers

S. No.	Factors of motivational	Women lace makers at lace park				Total	
		SHG members		Non-SHG members			
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Group has unity	89 (99.0)	1 (1.0)	35 (100.0)	-	124 (99.2)	1 (0.8)
2	Mutual respect	89 (99.0)	1 (1.0)	35 (100.0)	-	124 (99.2)	1 (0.8)
3	Freedom of expression	88 (98.3)	2 (1.7)	34 (99.0)	1 (1.0)	123 (98.5)	2 (1.5)
4	Democratic decisions	86 (95.7)	4 (4.3)	34 (99.0)	1 (1.0)	21 (96.5)	104 (3.5)
5	Networking with other NGO's	4 (4.0)	86 (96.0)	1 (2.0)	34 (98.0)	4 (3.5)	121 (96.5)
6	Member in any Mahila Mandal	15 (16.7)	75 (83.3)	6 (18.0)	29 (82.0)	21 (17.0)	104 (83.0)

Source: - Survey

#### References

These variations are found in all the literacy levels. It is evident that most of the respondents in SHG and Non-SHG members are motivated in the current job due to unity in groups, mutual respect, freedom of expression and demographic interest.

#### Conclusion

The members of the Lace park learning from the past experiences are walking through the present are marching ahead for a bright future. Government of Andhra Pradesh has rightly realized that the involvement of the rural poor women in development will speed up attainment of Swarnandhrapradesh and realizing the vision indeed.

1. Greenwood, Daphne. 1984 "The Economic Significance of Women's Place in Society". New-Institutionalism view. Journal of Economic Issues No.3. Sept.
2. ROEMER. J. "New Directions in the Marxian Theory of Exploitation and Class". Politics and Society, Vol. 11. No.3.
3. NAQVI. Khalid. 1985 "Exploitation and Labour Theory of Value - A Critique of Roemer's General Theory of Exploitation and Class" (Special Article) Economic and Political Weekly Vol.20 No.35. August, 31.