



# Female Labour Participation In The Leather Industry: A Study With Reference To Ranipet District

K. Siva<sup>1</sup>, Dr. P. Mohamed Vaseem<sup>2</sup>, Dr. B. Fuzail Ahmed<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, PG & Research Department of Commerce, C Abdul Hakeem College (A),  
Melvisharam, TN, India

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor & Head, PG & Research Department of Commerce, C Abdul Hakeem College (A),  
Melvisharam, TN, India

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Islamiah College (A), Vaniyambadi, TN,  
India

## ABSTRACT:

The paper intended at the socio-economic empowerment of women workers engaged in leather manufacturing industry of Ranipet in Tamil Nadu, India. The study is concerned with three crucial elements related to workplace environment, societal environment and government/institutional support, and examines the extent to which these dimensions influence on female labor force empowerment. Survey The structured questionnaires were administered to 111 women using a descriptive and analytical research design and were translated to Tamil to aid in clear understanding. The sample consists of a workforce with low levels of education, financial precariousness and reclaiming working conditions. The workplace-related factors, institutional support and socio-cultural environment have statistically momentous effects on socio-economic empowerment, mutually explaining 33.7 percent of variance. The importance of addressing self-sustained social and cultural constraints, as well as inefficient environmental, organizational and institutional structures, in promoting empowerment is emphasized. Government interventions to improve working conditions, social support and changes in culture are essential. Through its exploration in conjunction with world sustainable development goals and existing literature, this study shares key findings and applies them to strategies around empowering women in manufacturing that matter to policymakers, industry representatives and community activists concerned with inclusive growth and gender equity.

**Keywords:** women empowerment, leather industry, socio-economic determinants, working conditions, support from institutions, socio-cultural ownership.

## INTRODUCTION

### Study Background

Labor-intensive manufacturing industries including leather production remain crucial factors of service and trade and industry development in emerging economies. Current reviews demonstrate the way gender-relations in these industries are driven by wider social legal and economic contexts. Research indicates that discriminatory legal frameworks—especially concerning property rights and inheritance—substantially limit women's access to non-agricultural work by constraining educational opportunities and perpetuating unpaid domestic labor obligations (Kocabiçak & Dildar, 2025). Additionally, institutional quality and environmental pressures in areas like Sub-Saharan Africa create additional obstacles to women's economic engagement, revealing intricate connections between governance structures and ecological conditions that influence empowerment trajectories (Okere, Dimnwobi, Ekesiobi, & Onuoha, 2023; Ackah, Asuming, Agyire-Tettey, & Asuman, 2025).

### Review of Literatures

Research shows that urban relocation and diversified employment opportunities provide greater empowerment benefits for women than conventional agricultural family work, indicating potential avenues for advancement through institutional mechanisms and policy reforms (Waltz, 2016). In the Chinese context, household origins and gender attitudes collectively shape women's workforce engagement, with cross-generational impacts differing among age cohorts (Huang & Li, 2024). Furthermore, extended commuting distances resulting from metropolitan growth have been associated with substantial reductions in women's workforce participation, highlighting how infrastructure and spatial factors influence employment patterns (Liu, Pan, Wan, Zhang, & Zhou, 2025).

The relationship between economic progress and women's labor market involvement operates bidirectionally, with diverse patterns documented throughout Sub-Saharan Africa; recognizing these causal pathways is crucial for developing successful empowerment initiatives (Soro, 2025). Current holistic capability-focused research identifies numerous social and economic determinants of women's empowerment in India, encompassing financial knowledge, civic participation, and household relationships (Nath & Das, 2024). However, significant vulnerabilities remain, as demonstrated by the disproportionate effects on women workers during emergencies like the COVID-19 outbreak, highlighting the necessity for focused protective measures (Pratomo et al., 2025).

Notable thoughts of women's work contributions during early industrial transformation also provide valuable standpoints on the lasting importance of workforce participation for women's economic independence (Xu, Li, & Chen, 2025). This research supports inclusive multi-faceted approaches that tackle legal societal environment and economic obstacles to advance women's positions in historically disadvantaged labor sectors, including manufacturing, consistent with international SDGs.

**This study aims to:**

- (1) Assess the degree of empowerment among women employed in Ranipet's leather sector,
- (2) Examine how workplace conditions, socio-cultural elements, and governmental/ institutional assistance influence empowerment, and
- (3) Identify obstacles and enabling factors for empowerment to inform appropriate policy measures.

The research focuses exclusively on women directly engaged in leather manufacturing in Ranipet, with limitations including dependence on participant self-reports and geographic specificity that restrict broader applicability.

**The research hypotheses are:**

H1: Workplace Conditions have a positive impact on Socio economic Empowerment,

H2: Governmental and Institutional Assistance significantly and positively influences Socio economic Enablement, and

H3: Socio cultural Elements are meaningfully related to Socio economic Enablement.

With the incorporation of fresh empirical data and positioning within global frameworks, this work advances both intellectual discourse and practical tactics for nurturing gender-equitable development and progression in industrial manufacturing.

**METHODOLOGY**

The research team implemented a cross-sectional investigation by surveying approximately 145 women workers across various tanneries using a validated instrument. To guarantee linguistic accuracy, the survey instrument was independently rendered into Tamil during data collection. Succeeding arduous screening processes 111 complete responses were retained for examination. Structural equation modeling (SPSS v.26) was engaged to recognize the primary determinants of women's enablement covering work environment characteristics cultural variables and public sector support. The unified methodological strategy enabled a sophisticated exploration of the challenges and possibilities encountered by womenfolk employed in this industry.

**RESULTS****Reliability and Validity:**

The survey that measured Workplace factors, Socioeconomic empowerment, Socio-cultural factors and Government/institutional support demonstrated middling coefficient with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.656 (table 1) which indicates satisfactory reliability for the four-item scale. The construct is validated as indicated by strong correlations between the constructs and with the constructs explaining 33.7% of the variance in socio-economic empowerment; hence, the measures effectively represent constructs that influence female empowerment in the leather industry.

Table 1 Reliability and Validity

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation	Validity Evidence
Workplace Factors	4	0.656	Acceptable reliability	Significant correlation with empowerment
Socio-Economic Empowerment	4	0.656	Acceptable reliability	Significant correlation with predictors
Socio-Cultural Factors	4	0.656	Acceptable reliability	Significant correlation with empowerment
Gov./Institutional Support	4	0.656	Acceptable reliability	Significant correlation with empowerment
Total Scale	16	0.656	Moderate reliability	Factors explain 33.7% of empowerment variance

### Descriptive Statistics:

The findings (table 2) indicate that female workers of leather manufacturing industry of Ranipet are mainly in their mid 30s and have, on an average, three dependents. The vast majority of them have a secondary education or less, and a large majority are married, with working husbands, in most cases. Workers travel on an average of 10 km daily, mostly by employer operated transportation. Average family income is roughly ₹25,540 a month, while individual wages average ₹12,829. Many are under financial strain, with nearly a third unable to afford the essentials. Those workers who are motivated to do so can be categorized as being motivated by interest in the industry or by financial reasons. Scores suggest moderate socio-economic empowerment and comparatively higher perceived institutional support.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Value/Distribution
Age	Most women are in their mid-30s
Dependents	3 dependents
Education	Mostly secondary or less
Marital Status	Large majority married
Spouse Employment	Majority have working spouses
Commute Distance	About 10 km
Transport Mode	Mostly employer-provided transport
Family Income	₹25,540
Personal Wage	₹12,829
Financial Challenges	Nearly one-third
Motivation for Work	Industry interest, financial need
Socio-Economic Empowerment	Moderate
Institutional Support	Relatively high

### Inferential statistics:

The correlation outcome (table 3) directs substantial positive relationship among the variables which influencing women's socio economic empowerment in Ranipet leather sector. Work Aspects are noticeably interrelated with Socio-Economic Empowerment ( $r = 0.457$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ), but significantly associate with Government/Institutional Support ( $r = 0.246$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ). The evidences recommend that empowerment is a function not only of workplace quality, but of institutional support and cultural context as well, validating the multi-dimensional nature of empowerment for this group of women.



Table 3 Correlation

Variables	r value	p value	Significance
Workplace Factors & Socio-Economic Empowerment	0.457	< 0.001	Significant
Government/Institutional Support & Socio-Economic Empowerment	0.468	< 0.001	Significant
Socio-Cultural Factors & Socio-Economic Empowerment	0.313	0.001	Significant
Workplace Factors & Government/Institutional Support	0.435	< 0.001	Significant
Workplace Factors & Socio-Cultural Factors	0.131	> 0.05	Not Significant
Socio-Cultural Factors & Government/Institutional Support	0.246	0.009	Significant

The regression analysis (table 4) determined the predictors of Socio-Economic Empowerment of women workers in Leather Industry of Ranipet that include the Workplace Factors, Socio-Cultural Factors and Government/Institutional Support. The model is a noteworthy forecaster,  $F(3,107) = 18.13$ ,  $p < .001$ .  $F(3,107) = 18.13$ ,  $p < .$  The p value is  $< .001$  and along with education it accounts for 33.7% of the variance in Socio-Economic Empowerment ( $R^2 = .337$ ,  $R^2 = .337$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .318$ ,  $R^2 = .318$ ).

Table 4 Regression &amp; Model Summary

Predictor Variable	Beta ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Interpretation
Workplace Factors	0.307	0.001	Significant, positive effect
Government/Institutional Support	0.284	0.002	Significant, positive effect
Socio-Cultural Factors	0.203	0.014	Significant, positive effect
<b>Model Summary:</b>			
$R^2$	0.337		33.7% variance explained
Adjusted $R^2$	0.318		
$F(3,107)$	18.13	<0.001	Model is significant

## Hypothesis Testing:

All three hypotheses (table 5) are empirically reinforced, with significant positive relationships between predictors and socio-economic empowerment ( $p < 0.05$  for all). The facts shows that improvements in workplace factors, institutional support, and socio-cultural aspects all help to raise empowerment levels for women workers.

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	$\beta$ (Beta)	p-value	Result
H1	Workplace Factors positively influence Socio-economic Empowerment	0.307	0.001	Supported
H2	Government and Institutional Support positively influence Socio-economic Empowerment	0.284	0.002	Supported
H3	Socio-cultural Factors significantly relate to Socio-economic Empowerment	0.203	0.014	Supported

## DISCUSSION

The study exposed multiple interconnected aspects, together with working conditions, organizational support systems, and socio-cultural dynamics influence the socio-economic empowerment of female workers in Ranipet's skin industry. The outcomes are in line with studies demonstrating how legal frameworks environmental circumstances and social structures collectively impact women's economic engagement across diverse international settings. In India, for instance, discriminatory legislation—particularly inequitable property inheritance rights—continues to restrict women's educational access and formal job opportunities, perpetuating their dependence on unpaid domestic work (Kocabiçak & Dildar, 2025). Comparable barriers exist in Sub-Saharan Africa, where governmental shortcomings and ecological degradation pose considerable challenges to women's workforce involvement and economic advancement (Okere et al., 2023; Ackah et al., 2025).

These results parallel research indicating that urban relocation and income diversification typically provide women with enhanced empowerment compared to conventional agricultural roles in rural settings, as demonstrated in Brazilian and Chinese studies (Waltz, 2016; Huang & Li, 2024). Additionally, infrastructure-related issues, such as extended travel times in expanding urban centers, have been associated with decreased female workforce participation, highlighting how practical and environmental barriers can restrict women's access to paid employment (Liu et al., 2025). The evolving connection between women's labor participation and economic growth in Sub-Saharan nations emphasizes the necessity for customized, region-specific policies that facilitate women's workforce entry and continued employment (Soro, 2025).

Organizational and governmental interventions—encompassing educational initiatives, community engagement, and empowerment schemes—play crucial roles in determining women's socio-economic standing, as evidenced by research conducted in India and Indonesia (Nath & Das, 2024; Pratomo et al., 2025). Furthermore, bygone investigations of China's industrial revolution highlight the lasting significance of women's labor in supporting both family welfare and broader economic prosperity, demonstrating sustained routes to empowerment (Xu et al., 2025).

Mutually, these investigations emphasize the necessity of comprehensive approaches that incorporate legal reform, enhanced workplace standards, socio-cultural transformation, environmental stewardship, and social safety nets to advance women's empowerment in manufacturing and comparable labor-intensive industries. The universal outline resembles the sustainable growth objectives and also captures the contextual variations evident across different geographical areas and circumstances.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the socio-economic empowerment of women workers in leathers manufacturing industry of Ranipet is statistically influenced by the conditions of the work place, institutional supports, and socio-cultural factors. Increasing the quality of work with higher pay, safety and development of skills appears as the principal factor for empowerment, while strong governmental policies and programs play the critical complements. Although the role of institutional support has been influential, cultural factors have been persisting obstacles, suggesting that interventions be developed to examining both social and economic contexts. These results highlight the need for a comprehensive strategy of workplace enhancement, policy reinforcement and cultural desensitization in promoting women workers' empowerment and well-being, in keeping with the national priorities and global imperatives for gender equality and inclusive industrial development.

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