

# ROLE OF SHRI MAHILA GRAH UDYOG IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

( a case study of Lijjat Papad)

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## INTRODUCTION

**SHRI MAHILA GRIHA UDYOG LIJJAT PAPAD (SMGULP)**, popularly known as *lijjat* is an organisation which stands for women's strength and fully owned and run by women. It is the women's organisation of the women, by the women and for the women. It was started on 15th March 1959 with 7 lady members with a borrowed sum of Rs. 80 at Girgaon in Mumbai and it has completed 50 years and it celebrated Golden jubilee year in 2009. It is a cooperative organization involved in manufacturing of various fast-moving consumer goods. India, since independence tried to gain the self sufficiency in all the sectors. Women, being the weaker section were never encouraged for entrepreneurial and business activities. This paper aims to highlight the role of women empowerment by indicating and signifying the philanthropic activities of Shri Mahila Griha Udyog business with special reference to the Lijjat papad which is the most successful Fast Moving consumer good. Since its inception, this organization aimed at imparting employability skills to women by making them able to sell certain products by preparing it at their residential places and thereby selling the same in the market. Through this technique of production and distribution, the one new era of Household earners is created, which resulted in self reliance of women. Shri Mahila Griha Udyog inculcates 3 E's in women i.e, Employment, Entrepreneurship, thereby Empowerment and the paper is all about focusing on the business, its culture and its contribution to the social service.



**Keywords :** Shri mahila griha udhyog, lijjat papad, women empowerment, social service

## Objectives of the study

- ✓ To give a brief idea of the culture of Shri mahila grih udhyog.
- ✓ To highlight the role of Shri Mahila Griha Udyog in women empowerment and making them self dependent.
- ✓ To give an overview of social responsibility/service.

## Review of literature

**Shaikh Shafeequr Rahmaan** (2012) through their article "Empowerment of Women for Social development" had made an attempt to raise the standard of women and had found that the organization is responsible for empowering women by way of promoting self reliance, self confident, self dependant and educating them to realize their fundamental rights. Lijjat as a trust is a service organization engages in serving poor and destitute and to empower women for social development. The author had enlighten on Empowerment by his golden words i.e, "The women empowerment is not a onetime affair but a continuous process."

**Malathi Ramanathan** (2004) had made an attempt to focus on the strength and achievements made by the women in cooperative as well as economic empowerment of women. The author had made an approach to answer the reliable questions for the growth and success of Lijjat Papad Organization which has brought the change in not only in women's life but also in the development of Indian society and culture.

**Prof. Dr. Rahul Goyal** (2011) highlights on the concept of women entrepreneurship in India, their traits in business, motivating factors and the problems faced by them when they setup the business in corporate field. The study concludes that the attitude, social responsibility, support to family, lack of resources, etc which have created a major hurdle for women in their path.

### Research methodology

This paper is based on secondary data. The important reference books relating to women entrepreneurship and some articles based on shri mahila gruh udhyog business were referred. The Wikipedia of shri mahila gruh udhyog was undertaken to simplify the activities of organization. The web links relating to the same were also referred.

### About Shri mahilaGruhUdyog:



**Shri MahilaGrihaUdyog Lijjat Papad**, popularly known as **Lijjat**, is an Indian women's cooperative involved in manufacturing of various fast-moving consumer goods. The organization's main objective is empowerment of women by providing them employment opportunities. Started in the year 1959 with a seed capital of Rs. 80, Lijjat has an annual turnover of around Rs. 6.50 billion (over 100 million USD) in 2010, with Rs. 290 million in exports. It provides employment to around 43,000 (in 2015) people. Lijjat is headquartered in Mumbai and has 81 branches and 27 divisions all over India.

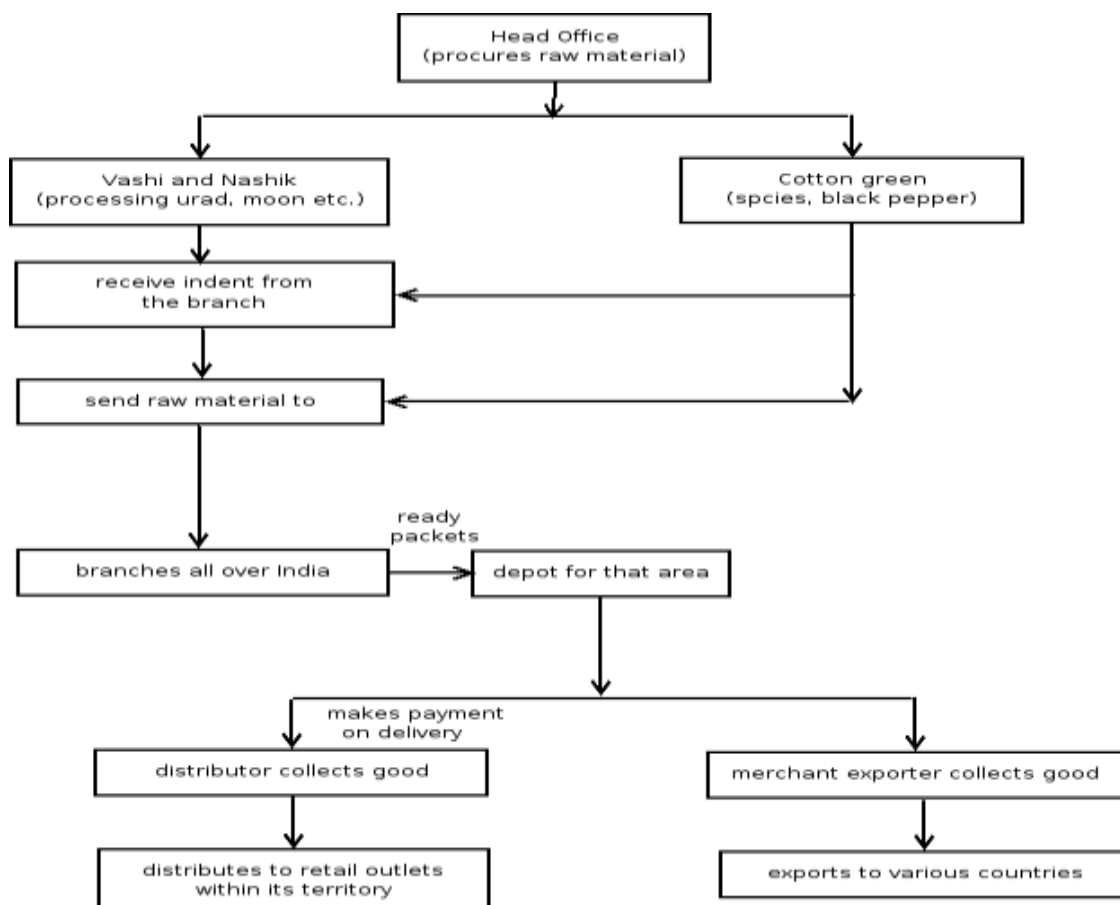
Lijjat is primarily a cottage industry, urban by its origin, which has spread to the rural areas. It is considered as one of the most remarkable entrepreneurial initiatives by women that are identified with female empowerment in India.

### Business Prospects- Current Scenario

1. In 2002, Lijjat had a turnover of Rs 3 billion and exports worth Rs. 100 million. It employed 42,000 people in 62 divisions all over the country. The 62nd branch became operational at Jammu and Kashmir in 2002, enrolling over 150 members.
2. Lijjat has an annual turnover of around Rs. 6.50 billion (over 100 million USD) in 2010, with Rs. 290 million in exports.<sup>[3]</sup> It provides employment to around 43,000 (in 2015) people.<sup>[4]</sup> Lijjat is headquartered in [Mumbai](#) and has 81 branches and 27 divisions all over India.<sup>[5]</sup>
3. In 2003, Lijjat received the "Best Village Industry Institution". It also received the PHDCCI Brand Equity Award 2005.<sup>1</sup> Lijjat marked its 50th year of existence on 15 March 2009.

### Working of Lijjat Papad industry

Lijjat believes in the philosophy of sarvodaya and collective ownership. The following chart reveals the execution and the harmonization carried out between the head office and its departments.



### Culture

*Lijjat Patrika*, the in-house magazine, is published and circulated for a nominal rate to those interested in the activities of Lijjat. It is published in many languages Hindi, English, Marathi, and Gujarati. It has emerged as a strong mode of communication for information related to significant events and initiatives at Lijjat, in addition to presenting articles on women.

Member sisters across all branches of Lijjat recite an all-religion prayer before beginning their daily activities. The sisters are free to choose their activities and each activity is given equal importance. Leaving the organisation is voluntary. No member sister can be asked to leave unless or until she goes against the organizational principles. There is no fixed retirement age at Lijjat. Once, when the president Jyoti Naik was questioned about this anomaly, she said that there was no need to make provision for a retirement age, as the emphasis obviously was on earning one's bread through daily work, all through one's life.



Because of Lijjat's main motive of generating self-employment for women, no machinery is used at the production level, and everything is done manually. However, computers are now being used in some of the Mumbai branches for accounts and administration.

### **Role in Women Empowerment**

The growth of the Lijjat is often seen in the larger canvas of women and their empowerment. The organisation has undertaken various efforts to promote literacy and computer education for member-sisters and their families. A literacy campaign for sisters began through literacy classes at Girgaum on 18 June 1999. Later, the managing committee decided to start such classes in all its branches. From 1980 onwards, Lijjat started giving Chhaganbapa Smruti Scholarships to the daughters of the member-sisters.

The member-sisters used their organization as a medium to promote their and their families' welfare. In the Valod centre, they set up an educational and hobby centre for the rural women. Orientation courses in typing, cooking, sewing, knitting and toy making as well as other courses like child welfare, first aid and hygiene were taught. The first ever pucca (tarred) road in Valod to be built and inaugurated in 1979 was with the help of the Lijjat, Valod branch.

In 1979, Lijjat teamed up with UNICEF to organise a seminar in Mumbai on "Child Care and Mother Welfare", as part of the International Year of the Child celebrations. In October 1984, Bhadraben Bhatt represented Lijjat at the UNESCO sponsored international workshop on "The role of women in the assimilation and spread of technological innovation" held at NITIE, Powai. Alkaben Kalia represented Lijjat at the national level meeting on women convened by the National Commission on Self Employed Women.

At the behest of Mother Teresa, the member-sisters also took part in some activities of Asha Dhan, an institution to care for destitute women.

Lijjat member-sisters also tried to start a co-operative bank, but the effort was not very successful.

### **Contribution to Social Service**

On several occasions, the Lijjat member-sisters have undertaken social service activities such as distributing nutritious food for poor children, donating money for conducting community marriage, instituting prize-money for spread of primary education, undertaking blood donation drive, organizing health camps, plantation drives and even making donations to Government bodies. In 1999, the Mumbai City felicitated Rukminiben B. Pawar, Lijjat President, as an outstanding woman in the field of social work.

Lijjat undertook the rehabilitation of Chincholi (Jogan), the earthquake affected village in the Latur district of Maharashtra. The institution provided the finance and supervised the work of construction of fifty-eight houses for the people of the village. Member-sisters donated money from their daily *vanai* (wage). After the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, all the branches of Lijjat gave a total donation of more than 4.8 million, including Rs 1 million from the central office. Lijjat built forty houses for the rehabilitation of the people of Bhujpur (Bhachau) in Kutch District.

### **Awards and Achievements**

The Institution has received an award from Khadi & Village Industries Commission as a "Best Village Industry" for the period 1998-1999 to 2000-2001.

On 6th September 2002 our Institution has received the Economic Times Award of "Businesswomen of the Year 2001-02 for Corporate Excellence".

In January 2003 we received the award for 'Best Village Industries' at the hands of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee at New Delhi.

On 21st December 2005 our institution has received the 'Brand Equity Award' at the hands of Hon'ble President of India, Dr.A.P.J. Abdul Kalam being presented by PHDCCI at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.



Lijjat Papad has been chosen as a Power Brand 2010-2011 by the Indian Consumer and received the Award on 4th February 2011 in New Delhi.

Khambatta Lifetime Achievement Award for 2010 was conferred on Smt. Swati R. Paradkar, President of Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad by All India Food Processor's Association, New Delhi. The Award was presented by Shri Harish Rawat, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries, Government of India on 16th December 2011 at New Delhi.

'Outstanding Service Organisation Award-2012' was conferred on Smt. Swati R. Paradkar, President of Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat papad, by National Institution for Quality and Reliability (NIQR), Chennai. The Award was presented by His Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr. K. Rosaiah on 21st April 2012.

Lijjat was featured in various T.V. Channels, which include BBC World in the programme "Business Bizarre".

The Institution, over the years, has paved the way for women to become self-reliant and self-confident. Lijjat has provided them the right platform to improve their status in society.



## **Findings & Recommendations**

### **Finding**

1. Empowerment of Women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women and to make them realize that they have the potential to be strong human being.
2. Support to family and economical independence is high as maximum numbers of respondents are financially and economically weak and their requirement is to satisfy basic necessities. Change in psychological factors i.e., security, self satisfaction, self confidence are high followed by self determination and the reason for this is the ideology of organization in collective ownership. With earning capability women were able to develop positive attitude, new ideas and ability to face challenges
3. It was found during the research that there was systematic execution between the harmonial balance amongst all the departments and as a result of which the lijjat papad industry had been awarded.
4. It was found that lijjat papad industry started with its main product i.e. papad, and after reaching the milestone, the industry expanded in various range of products i.e., detergent, masala, gehu atta, appallam, jeera papad, traditional masala, etc
5. In order to create a sustainable world, we must begin to Empower Women.

### **Recommendations**

1. Expand the Chappati Division into a full fledged meal service
2. Tie up with the Mumbai Dabbawalas for the distribution
3. More women will be employed in new divisions.

**Conclusion**

“When women move forward, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves”. It is essential as their thought and their value systems lead the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation. The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society.

The contribution of Shri mahila gruh udyog in field of women empowerment is commendable, the organization is running successfully.

Moreover, there is no particular retirement age for women who are associated with this organization. Hence it can be concluded that this is boon for Women household. What is significant is that Lijjat provide beat light to the lower class women in India, irrespective of their caste religion or region a path towards a better future. The capability to earn one's live hood and the resultant self-confidence necessarily the first step in ladder to empowerment.

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