

Women Entrepreneurship in India

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is the willingness to take risks and develop, organize and manage a business venture in a competitive global marketplace that is constantly evolving. Entrepreneurs are pioneers, innovators, leaders and inventors. The definition of entrepreneurship has been debated among scholars, educators, researchers, and policy makers since the concept was first established in the early 1700's. The term "entrepreneurship" comes from the French verb "entreprendre" and the German word "unternehmen", both mean to "undertake". A woman entrepreneur can be defined as a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving self-economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurs may be defined as a "Woman or a group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise". Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, a woman run an enterprise is defined as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women". Women entrepreneur constitute 10 % of the number of the number of entrepreneur in the country. This has been a significant growth in self-employment of women with women now starting new ventures at three times the rate of men. They constitute 50% of the population of our country with a lower literacy rate than men. This statistical fact indicates that for the economic growth of the nation, women should not be encouraged to make their share of economic contribution towards the country.

One way of achieving is by making women come out and become entrepreneurs. In the traditional society, they were confined to the four walls, playing household roles, but in the modern society, they are coming out to participate in all sorts of activities. Normally, women entrepreneurship is found in the extension of their kitchen activities, mainly in preparing commercially the 3"P's namely, Pickles, Papads and Powder. Few of them venture into services industry relating to hospitality, catering, educational services, consultation or public relations, beauty clinics, etc.

Women enter entrepreneurship due to economic factors which pushed them to be on their own and urge them to do something independently. Women prefer to work from their own work residence, difficulty in getting suitable jobs and desire for social recognition motivate them towards self-employment. We see a lot of women professionals in engineering, medicine, law etc. They are also setting up hospitals, training centres, etc. "An enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated by the enterprise to women."— **Government of India**

2. CONCEPT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as —an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stands on their own legs. A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic responsibilities women want to get independence. Under the influence of these factors the women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and as an urge to do something new. Such a situation is described as pull factors. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is thrust upon them

THE STUDY WAS PLANNED WITH THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES

- To identify the reasons for women for involving themselves in entrepreneurial activities.
- To determine the possible success factors for women in such entrepreneurial activities.
- To make an evaluation of people's opinion about women entrepreneurship.
- To discuss the development of women entrepreneurs through small and medium enterprises.
- To highlight the factors influencing the women entrepreneurs.
- To study the major constraints faced by the women entrepreneurs.
- To draw conclusions and suggestions.

3. METHODOLOGY

The prepared paper is a descriptive study in nature. The secondary data and information have been analysed for preparing the paper extensively. The secondary information have been collected from different scholars" and researchers" published books, articles published in different journals, periodicals, conference paper, working paper and websites.

REASONS FOR WOMEN TO BECOME ENTREPRENEURS

Self-esteem, recognition, Self-determination, and career goal are the key drivers for choosing to entrepreneurship by women. Sometimes, women choose such career path for proving their potential, calibre in order to achieve self-satisfaction. However, dismal economic conditions of the women arising out of unemployment in the family and divorce can compel women into entrepreneurial activities. The days have gone when women always passed her whole life within the boundaries of house now women are found indulged in every line of business. The entry of women into business in India is an extension of their normal home activities. But with the spread of education and passage of time women started shifting from doing work at home or kitchen to the business venture. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge into business ventures.

Women Entrepreneur is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women, who is capable of contributing values in both family and social life. With the advent of media, women are aware of their own traits, rights and also the work situations. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of digital era are growing rapidly that the job seekers are turning into job creators. Many women start a business due to some traumatic event, such as divorce, discrimination due to pregnancy or the corporate glass ceiling, the health of a family member, or economic reasons such as a layoff. But a new talent pool of women entrepreneurs is forming today, as more women opt to leave corporate world to chart their own destinies. They are growing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

A woman is generally perceived as home makers with little to do with economy or commerce. In Modern India, more and more women are taking up entrepreneurial activity especially in medium and small scale enterprises. One of the important inputs in any economic development of a country is entrepreneurship. More the entrepreneurship activities, better the development. Entrepreneurship is the life blood of any economy and it applies more to developing economy like India. The areas of development are:

- Taking to higher rate of economic growth by creation of value.
- Speed up the process of industrial use of the factors of production.
- Creation of employment opportunities.
- Dispersal of economic activities to different sectors of economy and identifying new avenues of growth.
- Development of backward and tribal areas.
- Improvement of the standard of living of different weaker sections in the society.
- Improve culture of business and expand commercial activities.
- Develop a culture of achievement orientation.

TOP TEN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Worldwide, businessmen, economists and politicians today assent that, 'Women owned businesses boost the economy'. Presenting here, dames who pioneer 'women entrepreneurship' and epitomize the female power globally. 1. Madame C.J. Walker (1867–1919), 2. Gabrielle Bonheur 'Coco' Chanel (1883-1971), 3. Estée Lauder (1908-2004), 4. Mary Kay Ash (1918 - 2001), 5. Lillian Vernon (1929), 6. Martha Stewart (1941), 7. Anita Roddick (1943 - 2007), 8. Vera Wang (1949), 9. Oprah Winfrey (1954), 10. Debbi Fields (1956).

4. PROBLEM FACED BY INDIAN WOMEN ENTERPERNEUSHIP

FAMILY TIES

Women in India are very emotionally attached to their families. They are supposed to attend to all the domestic work, to look after the children and other members of the family. They are overburden with family responsibilities like extra attention to husband, children and in laws which take away a lots of their time and energy. In such situation, it will be very difficult to concentrate and run the enterprise successfully.

MALE DOMINATED SOCIETY

Even though our constitution speaks of equality between sexes, male chauvinism is still the order of the day. Women are not treated equal to men. Their entry to business requires the approval of the head of the family. Entrepreneurship has traditionally been seen as a male preserve. All these put a break in the growth of women entrepreneurs.

LACK OF EDUCATION

Women in India are lagging far behind in the field of education. Most of the women (around sixty per cent of total women) are illiterate. Those who are educated are provided either less or inadequate education than their male counterpart partly due to early marriage, partly due to son's higher education and partly due to poverty. Due to lack of proper education, women entrepreneurs remain in dark about the development of new technology, new methods of production, marketing and other governmental support which will encourage them to flourish.

SOCIAL BARRIERS

The traditions and customs prevailed in Indian societies towards women sometimes stand as an obstacle before them to grow and prosper. Castes and religions dominate with one another and hinder women entrepreneurs too. In rural areas, they face more social barriers. They are always seen with suspicious eyes.

PROBLEM OF FINANCE

Women entrepreneurs stiffer a lot in raising and meeting the financial needs of the business, Bankers, creditors and financial institutes are not coming forward to provide financial assistance to women borrowers on the ground of their less credit worthiness and more chances of business failure. They also face financial problem due to blockage of funds in raw materials, work-in-progress finished goods and non-receipt of payment from customers in time.

LIMITED MOBILITY

Women mobility in India is highly limited and has become a problem due to traditional values and inability to drive vehicles. Moving alone and asking for a room to stay out in the night for business purposes are still looked upon with suspicious eyes. Sometimes, younger women feel uncomfortable in dealing with men who show extra interest in them than work related aspects.

5. SIGNIFICANT SCHEMES IN INDIA THOSE SPECIFICALLY INTRODUCED FOR WOMEN FOR PROVIDING SPECIAL BENEFITS TO WOMEN TRADE RELATED ENTREPRENEURSHIP ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR WOMEN (TREAD)

With the objective of encouraging women in starting their own ventures, government launched a Scheme, namely, (TREAD) Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development during the 11th Plan. The scheme envisaged economic empowerment of 297 women through the development of their entrepreneurial skills in non-farm activities. There are three major parts of the scheme; Govt. of India has grant up to 30% of the total project cost to the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) for promoting entrepreneurship among women. The remaining 70% of the total project cost is financed by the lending agency as loan for undertaking activities as envisaged in the project. Up to Rs.1 lakh per program can be granted by govt. of India to training institutions / NGOs for providing training to the women entrepreneurs.

SCHEME FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO ENCOURAGE SMALL & MICRO MANUFACTURING UNITS

DC (MSME) has formulated a scheme for women entrepreneurs to support Small & Micro manufacturing units owned by women in their efforts at developing overseas markets, to enhance participation of representatives of small/micro manufacturing enterprises under SIDO stall at International Trade Fairs/Exhibitions, to enhance export from such units. Under this scheme participation of women entrepreneurs in 25 international exhibitions is envisaged during the 11th Plan. For the year 2007-08 a good number of outstanding women entrepreneur associations have been requested to sponsor their members for participation in 5 international exhibitions scheduled during the months of Jan.-March, 2008, With a view to give confidence to women entrepreneurs for participating in the International Exhibitions.

STEPS TAKEN BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT

The growth and development of women entrepreneurs required to be accelerated because entrepreneurial development is not possible without the participation of women. Therefore, a congenial environment is needed to be created to enable women to participate actively in the entrepreneurial activities. There is a need of Government, non-Government, promotional and regulatory agencies to come forward and play the supportive role in promoting the women entrepreneur in India. The Government of India has also formulated various training and development cum employment generations programs for the women to start their ventures. These programmes are as follows:

STEPS TAKEN IN SEVENTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN

In the seventh five-year plan, a special chapter on the “Integration of women in development” was introduced by Government with following suggestion:

- Specific target group: It was suggested to treat women as a specific target groups in all major development programs of the country.
- Arranging training facilities: It is also suggested in the chapter to devise and diversify vocational training facilities for women to suit their changing needs and skills.
- Developing new equipments: Efforts should be made to increase their efficiency and productivity through appropriate technologies, equipments and practices.
- Marketing assistance: It was suggested to provide the required assistance for marketing the products produced by women entrepreneurs.

- Decision-making process: It was also suggested to involve the women in decision-making process.

STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT DURING EIGHT FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The Government of India devised special programs to increase employment and income-generating activities for women in rural areas. The following plans are launched during the Eight-Five Year Plan:

- Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana and EDPs were introduced to develop entrepreneurial qualities among rural women.
- Women in agriculture scheme was introduced to train women farmers having small and marginal holdings in agriculture and allied activities.
- To generate more employment opportunities for women KVIC took special measures in remote areas. Women co-operatives schemes were formed to help women in agro-based industries like dairy farming, poultry, animal husbandry, horticulture etc. with full financial support from the Government.
- Several other schemes like Integrated Rural Development Programs (IRDP), Training of Rural youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM) etc. were started to alleviate poverty. 30-40% reservation is provided to women under these schemes.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The following training schemes especially for the self-employment of women are introduced by government:

- Support for Training and Employment Programme of Women (STEP).
- Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA).
- Small Industry Service Institutes (SISIs)
- State Financial Corporations
- National Small Industries Corporations
- District Industrial Centres (DICs)

MAHILAVIKAS NIDHI

SIDBI has developed this fund for the entrepreneurial development of women especially in rural areas. Under Mahila Vikas Nidhi grants loan to women are given to start their venture in the field like spinning, weaving, knitting, embroidery products, block printing, handlooms handicrafts, bamboo products etc.

RASHTRIYA MAHILAKOSH

In 1993, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh was set up to grant micro credit to poor women at reasonable rates of interest with very low transaction costs and simple procedures.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE ENTREPRENEURS

- The entrepreneurs should develop a proper industrial plan before starting a unit. Undertaking of feasibility study either by him or through outside agencies can be very helpful in this regard.

- The entrepreneurs should take proper training through the government and non-governmental agencies before starting a unit; this enables the entrepreneurs to protect their units from sickness.
- The entrepreneurs should employ latest techniques of production and skilled labour so as to improve the quality of the products and marketing.
- Low level of education should not deter one to start an industrial venture, though; it is a fact that people with higher education educational levels are finding their entry into industry easier. Moreover, higher the level of education, the greater is the chance to start a venture as a first generation entrepreneur.
- Previous experience in manufacturing and encouragement of family members / relatives /friends facilitates entrepreneurship.
- Ambitions motivate men. It activates men, broaden their vision and make the life more meaningful.

6. CONCLUSION

Empowering women entrepreneurs is crucial for achieving the goals of sustainable development and the bottlenecks hindering their growth must be reduced to enable full participation in the business. Apart from training programs Newsletters, mentoring, trade fairs and exhibitions also can be a source for entrepreneurial development. As a result, the desired outcomes of the business are quickly achieved and more of remunerative business opportunities are found. Therefore promoting entrepreneurship among Indian women is certainly a short-cut to rapid economic growth and development. Let us try to eradicate all kinds of gender bias and thus allow 'women' to be a great entrepreneur at par with men.

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