

Women as Entrepreneurs in India

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Abstract

In today's world, women entrepreneurs are playing very vital role and they have become important part of the global business environment and it is really important for the sustained economic development and social progress. In India, though women are playing key role in the society, but still their entrepreneurial ability has not been properly tabbed due to the lower status of women in the society. The main purpose of this paper is to find out the status of women entrepreneurs in India and also to analyze that the policies provided by the government is adequate for the growth of women entrepreneurship. This study is mainly based on secondary data which has been collected from Internet and various books. On the basis of this study I conclude that, apart from training programs, mentoring, trade fairs and exhibitions also can be source for entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: women entrepreneur, economic development, social status, business environment

Introduction

Women Entrepreneurs may be define as the women or a group of women who commence and operate a business venture. Like a male entrepreneurs a women entrepreneur has many functions. They should explore the prospects of starting new enterprise; undertake risks, introduction of new innovations, coordination, administration and control of business and providing effective leadership in all aspects of business. Government of India has described women entrepreneurs as an enterprise/venture owned and controlled by women having atleast financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of employment generated in the organization to women.

Women Entrepreneurs are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries. The hidden business potentials of women have been increasing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. The knowledge, Skill and compliance in business are the core reasons for women to come forward into business ventures. Women entrepreneurs engage in business due to push and pull factors which give confidence to women to have an self-sufficient occupation and stands on their foots. Logic towards independent decision making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this insists on 'Women Entrepreneur' is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal desires and turn out to be economically independent. A strong desire to do enormous positive is an integral quality of entrepreneurial women, who is competent of contributing values in both family and social life. With the introduction of media, women are conscious of their own qualities, rights and also the work situations. The glass ceilings are shattered and women are found indulged in every line of business from aachaar to telecommunication. Right efforts in all areas are vital in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater involvement in the entrepreneurial activities

Review of Literature

Tambunan, (2009), made a study on recent developments of women entrepreneurs in Asian developing countries. The study focused mainly on women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises based on data analysis and review of recent key literature. This study found that in Asian developing countries SMEs are gaining overwhelming importance; more than 95% of all firms in all sectors on average per country. The study also depicted the fact that representation of women entrepreneurs in this region is relatively low due to factors like low level of education, lack of capital and cultural or religious constraints. However, the study revealed that most of the women entrepreneurs in SMEs are from the category of forced entrepreneurs seeking for better family incomes.

Das, 2000 performed a study on women entrepreneurs of SMEs in two states of India, viz, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The initial problems faced by women entrepreneurs are quite similar to those faced by women in western countries. However, Indian women entrepreneurs faced lower level of work-family conflict and are also found to differ from their counterparts in western countries on the basis of reasons for starting and succeeding in business. Similar trends are also found in other Asian countries such as Indonesia and Singapore. Again the statistics showed that the proportion of business setup and operated by women is much lower than the figures found in western countries.

Singh, 2008, identifies the reasons & influencing factors behind entry of women in entrepreneurship. He explained the characteristics of their businesses in Indian context and also obstacles & challenges. He mentioned the obstacles in the growth of women entrepreneurship are mainly lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs, social unacceptance as women entrepreneurs, family responsibility, gender discrimination, missing network, low priority given by bankers to provide loan to women entrepreneurs. He suggested

the remedial measures like promoting micro enterprises, unlocking institutional frame work, projecting & pulling to grow & support the winners etc. The study advocates for ensuring synergy among women related ministry, economic ministry & social & welfare development ministry of the Government of India.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the reasons for women to become entrepreneurs.
2. To study the support given by the government to women entrepreneurs.
3. To examine the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs.
4. To draw conclusions and offer suggestions

Women Entrepreneurship

For any developing country, Women entrepreneurs play the vital role particularly in terms of their contribution to the economic development. Women entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important source of economic growth. By establishing their new venture women entrepreneurs generate new jobs for themselves and others and also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems. However, they still represent minority as women entrepreneurs, especially in India. Women entrepreneurs often face gender-based barriers to starting and growing their businesses, like discriminatory property, matrimonial and inheritance laws and/or cultural practices; lack of access to formal finance mechanisms limited mobility and access to information and networks, etc. Women’s entrepreneurship can make a particularly strong contribution to the economic well-being of the family and communities, poverty reduction and women’s empowerment. Thus, governments across the world as well as various developmental organizations are actively assisting and promoting women entrepreneurs through various schemes, incentives and promotional measures.

Over the past few decades women are coming out of the boundaries of houses and proving their ability and competencies in the business world. Today the roles of women are not confined to the traditional role of a mother or a housewife. The role of modern women is much wider than, what it was previously. A woman has to play multiple roles, besides playing the role of housewife/mother/daughter, she has to play different roles in community in the social settings simultaneously. Because of Indian culture traditional customs women, even after 63 years of independence, are facing bias. This has adversely affected the status of Indian business women.

Categories of Women Entrepreneurs in Practice in India

1st Category

1. Established in big cities
2. Having higher level technical and professional qualifications
3. Non traditional items
4. Sound financial position

2nd Category

1. Established in cities and towns
2. Having sufficient education
3. Both traditional and non traditional items

4. Undertaking women services-kindergarten, crèches, beauty parlours, health clinic

3rd Category

1. Illiterate women
2. Financially weak
3. Involved in family business such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries, agro forestry, handloom, powerloom etc.

Trends in Women entrepreneurship in the last few decades

In the area of women entrepreneurship, government policies and promotion strategies have been giving new opportunities to women, few have come forward. According to the same MSME annual report 2011-2012, only 13.72 percent of enterprises in the registered MSME sector were enterprises managed by women representing about 2.15 lakh across the country.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Enterprises by Gender of Owner in Rural and Urban Areas

Area	Female	Male
Rural	15.27	84.73
Urban	12.45	87.55
All	13.72	86.28

Source : MSME annual report 2011-12, Ministry of MSME, Government of India

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, caliber 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.

Assistance Provided By Government

1. Assistance to Rural Women in Non-Farm Development (ARWIND) schemes
2. Entrepreneurial Development programme (EDPs)
3. Indira Mahila Yojana
4. Mahila Vikas Nidhi
5. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
6. Khadi And Village Industries Commission (KVIC)
7. Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)
8. Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana (RGMVP)
9. SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi
10. SBI's Stree Shakti Scheme
11. Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)
12. Training of Rural Youth for Self-Development

Obstacles in the Path of Women Entrepreneurs in India

Highly educated, talented and professionally qualified women should be encouraged for running their own business, rather than reliant on wage service jobs. The uncharted talents of young women can be acknowledged, skillful and used for various types of industries to increase the yield in the business sector. A desirable atmosphere is necessary for every woman to inculcate entrepreneurial values and involve greatly in business dealings. But Women in India are faced many problems to get ahead their life in business. A few problems can be detailed as;

- **Short of Self-Confidence** - In India women have lack of self-confidence in their strength and ability. The family members and the society are unwilling to stand beside their organizational growth. To a certain degree, this situation is changing with Indian women and yet to face an incredible amend to boost the rate of growth in entrepreneurship.
- **Socio-Cultural Barriers** - family and personal obligations sometimes works as a great barrier for succeeding in business career of women entrepreneurship. Only few women are capable of managing both home and business efficiently, giving sufficient time to perform all their responsibilities in priority.
- **Risks Related To Market** - tuff competition in the market and lack of mobility of women make them dependent on middleman essential. Many business women find it very difficult to capture the market share and make their products well popular and accepted by customer. They are not fully conscious of the changing market environment conditions and hence can effectively exploit the services of media and internet.
- **Mobility Constraints** - Women in India have to face lot of restriction on their mobility, our society still have some conservativeness, and due to that career of women is limited to four walls of kitchen. Though women faced lots of problems being mobile in entrepreneurial activity, the mobility problem has been eliminated to very certain extent by the expansion of education awareness to all.
- **Business Administration Knowledge** - Women must be educated and trained continuously to acquire the skills and understanding in all the required functional areas of

business venture. This will make women to excel in decision making and develop good business skills.

- **Financial Assistance** - most of the women especially in rural areas are not aware about the financial assistance provided by various institutions. The efforts taken for women entrepreneurs may not able to reach the entrepreneurs in rural and backward areas.
- **Training Programs** - Depending upon the needs, duration, skill and the purpose of entrepreneur there are various workshops and training programs available the social & welfare association. Such kinds of programs are really helpful to new and young entrepreneurs who desire to start a small and medium sized business on their own.
- **Cost** - some business have highly production and operation cost that adversely affects the expansion of women entrepreneurs. The installations of new machineries during expansion of the productive capacity and like similar factors discourage the women entrepreneurs from entering into new areas.

Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs make a significant contribution to the Indian economy. Today's women entrepreneur represents a group of women who have started exploring new possibilities of economic participation. Self Confidence, self esteem, educational level and knowledge make women handle different tasks in life. Women entrepreneurs not only require motivation in the form of financial assistance, government permissions, they may require support from family members and life partners.

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