
Women Entrepreneurs - A Shifting Paradigm in India

Dr. Anuj Kumar

Assistant Professor, Amity University Lucknow

ABSTRACT:

Women entrepreneurship is gaining importance in India in the wake of economic liberalisation and globalisation. The policy and institutional framework for developing entrepreneurial skills, providing vocation education and training has widened the horizon for economic empowerment of women. However, women constitute only one third of the economic enterprises. There exist a plethora of successful business women entrepreneurs both in social and economic fields in India. They are performing well. Government of India has also introduced National Skill Development Policy and National Skill Development Mission in 2009 in order to provide skill training, vocational education and entrepreneurship development to the emerging work force. However, entrepreneurship development and skill training is not the only responsibility of Government and therefore other stakeholders need to shoulder the responsibility. In Hindu scriptures, woman has been described as the embodiment of Shakti. But in real life she is treated as Abla. Women are leaving the workforce in droves in favor of being at home. Not to be a homemaker, but as job-making entrepreneurs. The increasing presence of women in the business field as entrepreneurs has changed the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country. Women-owned businesses enterprises are playing a more active role in society and the economy, inspiring academics to focus on this interesting phenomenon. This paper focuses on the problems, issues, challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, how to overcome them and to analyze policies of Indian government for and problems faced by them while pursuing their business.

Key Words – *Entrepreneur; Home maker; Shakti; Empowerment; Workforce*

INTRODUCTION

THE Impact of entrepreneurs as engine for economic growth is well recognized all over the world. Entrepreneurship is necessary to initiate the process of economic development of both developed and developing countries. It is also instrumental in sustaining the process of economic development. Every country tries to achieve economic development for prosperity and better life to people. The better we understand the determinants of successful entrepreneur ventures, the higher will be our standard of living and the brighter our future.

Entrepreneurship has been a male-dominated phenomenon from the very early age, but time has changed the situation and brought women as today's most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs. It is estimated that women entrepreneurs presently comprise about 10% of the total number of entrepreneurs in India, with the percentage growing every year. In almost all the Developed countries in the world, women are putting their steps at par with the men in the field of business. Recent statistics confirm that women's economic activities play a crucial role in the growth of many of the world economies

So, contribution of both men and women is essential in economic activities for healthy nation building but in India, women have to face many constraints in carrying out economic activities or undertaking any entrepreneurial work. Women have to face various socio-economic and other problems as entrepreneurs as they are not treated at par with men due to social and cultural traditions. In recent years, it is observed that there has been increasing trend in number of women enterprises in India as the result of changing scenario of the present world. Both men and women are participating in large number in the present world of business. Today, more and more women are undertaking various economic activities. They are playing very important role in socio-economic development of all countries. Because of their participation, global economy is being changed at present. All over the world, it is estimated that approximately one third of the business organizations are owned by women. In India, the position in this regard is near about the same. The study aims at understanding the development of women entrepreneurship in India, challenges and strategies.

DEFINITION OF ENTREPRENEUR:

The term entrepreneur “ has been derived from the French word „entreprendre“ means to undertake. The term entrepreneur may be defined as “an entrepreneur is a person who combines capital and labor for production”.

DEFINITION OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR ENTERPRISE:

Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the woman or group of women who initiate, organize and co-operate a business enterprise. Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of employment generated in the enterprise to women. The Indian women are no longer treated as show pieces to be kept at home. They are also enjoying the impact of globalization and making an influence not only on domestic but also on international sphere. Women are doing a wonderful job striking a balance between their house and career. Women entrepreneurs are key players in any developing country particularly in terms of their contribution to economic development. In recent years, even among the developed countries like USA and Canada, Women's role in terms of their share in small business has been increasing.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR IN INDIA

The woman entrepreneur in India has various qualities. A woman or a group of women manages the whole business of enterprise. She prepares various plans and executes them under her own supervision and control. There may be some persons to help her but ultimate control lies with the woman. A woman entrepreneur must provide at least 51 percent of the employment generated in her enterprise to women. A woman entrepreneur takes calculated risk. She faces uncertainty

Confidently and assumes risk. She has to tie up capital and wait for good returns. A woman entrepreneur likes to take realistic risks because she wants to be a successful entrepreneur. The most critical skill required for industrial development is the ability of building a sound

organization. A woman entrepreneur assembles, co-ordinates, organizes and manages the other factors namely land, labour and capital. It is essential to be a self confident for a woman entrepreneur. She should have faith in herself and in her abilities. She should have the confidence to implement the change and overcome any resistance to change. A woman entrepreneur should have courage to own the mistakes and correct them. The main function of a woman entrepreneur is to make decision. She takes various decisions regarding the activities of her enterprise. She decides about the type of business to be done and the way of doing it. A woman entrepreneur must be clear and creative in decision making process. A woman entrepreneur is one who incubates new ideas, starts her enterprise with these ideas and provides added value to society based on their independent initiative. A distinguishing feature of a woman entrepreneur is the willingness to work hard. She has to follow the principle, "Hard-work is the key to success A woman entrepreneur is an achievement oriented lady, not money hungry. She works for challenge, accomplishment and service to others. Achievement orientation is a derive to overcome challenges, to advance and to grow. A woman entrepreneur must be optimistic. She should approach her venture with a hope of success and attitude for success rather than with a fear of failure. The positive thinking of woman entrepreneur can turn the situation favorable to her. The success of an enterprise largely depends upon the ability of woman entrepreneur to cope with latest technology. Technical competency refers to the ability to devise and use the better ways of producing and marketing goods and services. Women entrepreneurs face the adversities boldly and bravery. She has faith in herself and attempts to solve the problems even under great pressure. A woman entrepreneur is energetic, single-minded, having a mission and a clear vision. She should be a lady of creative thinking and analytical thinking. She must be intelligent, adaptable and problem solver. Leadership quality is one of the most important characteristic of a woman entrepreneur. It is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically towards achieving objectives.

REASONS FOR WOMEN BECOMING ENTREPRENEURS

The glass ceilings are shattered and women are found indulged in every line of business. The entry of women into business in India is traced out as an extension of their kitchen activities, mainly 3P's, Pickle, Powder and Pappad. But with the spread of education and passage of time women started shifting from 3P's to modern 3E's i.e., Energy, Electronics and Engineering. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge into business ventures. 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: To achieve for independence & flexibility, To better balance work & family, To make optimum use of technical education & qualifications.

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

Women in India are faced many problems to get ahead their life in business. Women entrepreneurs face many problems in their efforts to develop their enterprise. There are umpteen problems faced by women at various stages beginning from their initial commencement of enterprise, in running their enterprise. The main problems faced by the women Entrepreneurs in India are as follows:

Shortage of Finance: Women entrepreneurs always suffer from inadequate financial recourses and working capital. They are not able to afford external finance due to absence of tangible security and credit in the market. Women have a very less property and bank balance to their name. Male members of the family do not want to invest their capital in the business run by women due to lack of confidence in their ability to run venture successfully. The complicated procedure of bank loans also creates lot of problems in getting the required finance. Women entrepreneurs even face problems in getting requisite working capital financing day-to-day business activities. Women entrepreneurs have to depend upon their personal saving and loans from family friends. Most of the women entrepreneurs fail due to lack of proper financing facilities, because finance is life blood of every business activities. Obtaining the support of bankers, managing the working capital, lack of credit resources are the problems which still remain in the males domain. Women are yet to make significant mark in quantitative terms. Marketing and financial problems are such obstacles where even training doesn't significantly help the women. Some problems are structural in nature and beyond the control of entrepreneurs.

Marketing problems: Women entrepreneurs often depend upon the middlemen for marketing their products who pocket large chunk of profit. The middlemen exploit the women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs also find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular. A lot of money is needed for advertisement in these days of stiff competition from male entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs also lack energy and extra efforts needed to be investing and to win the confidence of customers and popularize the products. Women entrepreneurs continuously face the problems in marketing their products. It is one of the core problems as this area is mainly dominated by males and even women with adequate experience fail to make a dent.

Shortage of raw materials: The shortage of required raw materials is also one of the big problems faced by women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs find it difficult to procure the required raw materials and other necessary inputs for production in sufficient quantity and quality. The prices of raw materials are quite high and fluctuate. Women entrepreneurs encounter the problems of shortage of raw materials. The failure of many women co-operations in 1971 Such as these engaged in basket making were mainly because of the inadequate availability of forest-based raw materials.

Stiff competition: Women entrepreneurs have to face severe competition from organized industries and male entrepreneurs having vast experience. Many of the women enterprises have Imperfect organizational set up. But they have to face severe competition from organized industries.

Family dispute: One of the main duties of women in India is to look after the children and other family members. A very little time and energy is left for business activities. A married woman entrepreneur has to make a perfect balance between domestic activities and business activities. The woman entrepreneur cannot succeed without the support and approval of husband. Their success in this regard also depends upon supporting husband and family. Thus, occupational back grounds of families and education level of husbands have a great influence on the growth of women entrepreneurship. Women also face the conflict of performing of home role as they are not available to spend enough time with their families. They spend long hours in business and as a result, they find it difficult to meet the demands of their family members and society as well. Their inability to attend to domestic work, time for education of children, personal hobbies, and entertainment adds to their conflicts.

Limited managerial ability: Women entrepreneurs may not be expert in each and every function of the enterprise. She will not be able to devote sufficient time for all types of activities.

High cost of production: The high cost of production is another problem which undermines the efficiency and restricts development of women entrepreneurs. It is necessary to increase efficiency, expand productive capacity to reduce the cost of production. High cost of production undermines the efficiency and stands in the way of development and expansion of women's enterprises, government assistance in the form of grant and subsidies to some extent enables them to tide over the difficult situations. However, in the long run, it would be necessary to increase efficiency and expand productive capacity and thereby reduce cost to make their ultimate survival possible, other than these, women entrepreneurs so face the problems of labour, human resources, infrastructure, legal formalities, overload of work, lack of family support, mistrust etc.

Absence of Entrepreneurial Aptitude: One of the biggest problems of women is the lack of entrepreneurial aptitude. They have no entrepreneurial bent of mind. The basic characteristics of an entrepreneur such as innovation, risk bearing etc. are absent in a women entrepreneur. Many women take the training by attending the Entrepreneurship Development Programmes without entrepreneurial bent of mind. As per a study, involvement of women in small scale sector as owners stands at mere 7 percent. Women who are imparted training by various institutes must be verified on account of aptitude through the tests, interviews etc.

Low risk taking ability: Women entrepreneurs suffer from the problem of low risk taking ability as compared to their male counterparts, because they have led a protected life. They Even face discrimination in the selection of or entrepreneurial development training. Inferiority complex, unplanned growth, lack of infrastructure, hesitation in taking quick decision also Increases the rate of risk and chances of loss.

Wanting to Please Everyone: Females are often taught to “be nice” and “people pleasers”, which can lead to seeking the approval of others. Subsequently, women can have a harder time saying “No”, which can lead to under-charging for their products/services or being too giving of their time and help in general. This typically comes at the expense of their own Needs, business or otherwise.

Wearing Too Many Hats: In their personal lives, women have a tendency to try to be everything to everyone and wear so many different hats that juggling everything becomes very Difficult. So, when women add “entrepreneur” and “business owner” into the mix, this tendency is further magnified. Women can feel like they have to “do it for themselves” or are the best person for every job and have a tougher time delegating responsibilities to others. This causes more time to be spent working in their business, rather than on their business. This is a major hurdle to overcome in order to have a successful business.

Patriarchal Society: One of the biggest problems women entrepreneurs is the social attitude in which she has to live and work. There is discrimination against women in India despite constitutional equality. Women do not get equal treatment in male-dominated Indian society and male ego puts barriers in their progress. Entrepreneurship has been traditionally seen a male preserve and idea of women taking up entrepreneurial activities considered as a distant dream. Any deviation from the norm is frowned and if possible, immediately curbed. Women also have to face role conflict as soon as they initiate any entrepreneurial activity. It is an uphill task for women to face such conflicts and cope with the twin role.

Lack of entrepreneurial training: Large number of women is no proper and sufficient technical and professional training to set-up a new venture. All women entrepreneurs are given the same training through EDPs. Second-generation women entrepreneurs don't need such training as they already have the previous exposure to business.

Legal Formalities: Women entrepreneurs find it extremely difficult in complying with various legal formalities in obtaining licenses etc.

Travelling: Women entrepreneurs cannot travel from one place to another as freely as men do. Women have some peculiar problems like staying out in the nights at distant places etc.

Credit Facilities: Though women constitute about 50 per cent of population, the percentage of small scale enterprise where women own 51 percent of share capital is less than 5 percent. Women are often denied credit by bankers on the ground of lack of collateral security. Therefore, women's access to risk capital is limited. The complicated procedure of bank loans, the inordinate delay in obtaining the loans and running about involved do deter many women from venturing out. At the same time, a good deal of self-employment programme has been promoted by the govt. and commercial banks.

Challenges Facing Women Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship isn't a walk in the park for anyone and it can be even more challenging if you are of the “female persuasion”. Even with all of the advancements that women have made in the business world, there is still a long way to go before the success rate is level between male and female entrepreneurs. Below are some of the top challenges that female entrepreneurs need to overcome in general in order for woman-owned businesses to be more successful as a whole

(a) Not Being Taken Seriously: Within the business world, women's opinions and advice are not always viewed as “expert” compared to a man's opinion. And when a female starts a

business, sometimes family, friends, and others in the business community can view it as a hobby or a side project to family duties, rather than a bona fide business. Seeking out extra support can help to help overcome this bias, but women need to realize that this is a true gender bias obstacle.

(b) Letting Fear Stand in the Way: In general, women can be less prone to taking risks and can let their own fears (such as the fear of failure, fear of success, fear of being on their own etc.) stand in the way of “going for it” and pursuing the path of entrepreneurship. Confidence is a great way to combat these fears and the best way to feel confident in what you are doing is to make sure that you are as prepared as possible before you start your business endeavor. Also, believe in what you bring to the table and value your time, efforts and capabilities.

(c) Wanting to Please Everyone: Females are often taught to “be nice” and “people pleasers”, which can lead to seeking the approval of others. Subsequently, women can have a harder time saying “No”, which can lead to under-charging for their products/services or being too giving of their time and help in general. This typically comes at the expense of their own needs, business or otherwise.

(d) Wearing Too Many Hats: In their personal lives, women have a tendency to try to be everything to everyone and wear so many different hats that juggling everything becomes very difficult. So, when women add “entrepreneur” and “business owner” into the mix, this tendency is further magnified. Women can feel like they have to “do it for themselves” or are the best person for every job and have a tougher time delegating responsibilities to others. This causes more time to be spent working in their business, rather than on their business. This is a major hurdle to overcome in order to have a successful business.

SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN

Female entrepreneurship has been steadily climbing in recent years, but these new opportunities and growth are not without a unique set of challenges. Women entrepreneurs face many different “stumbling blocks,” throughout their careers and offered the following suggestions:

Finance cells: A large number of various finance cells may be open to provide easy finance to women entrepreneurs. These special cells should provide finance to women entrepreneurs at low and concessional rates of interest and on easy repayment facilities. Even these finance cells should be manned by women officers and clerks. Efforts should be made to provide finance at the local level.

Marketing Co-operatives: Marketing co-operatives should be established to encourage and assist to women entrepreneurs. Government should give preference to women entrepreneurs while purchasing their requirements. These marketing cooperating will help the women entrepreneurs to sell their products on remunerative prices. This will help in eliminating the middlemen.

Supply of raw-materials: The required, scarce and imported raw-materials should be made available to women entrepreneurs at priority basis at concessional rate.

Educational and awareness: The educational and awareness programmes should be arranged to change the negative social attitudes towards women. The attitude of elders needs to be changed about the potential of girls and their due role in society.

Training facilities: Training and development programmes play a very essential role for the development of entrepreneurship. Special training schemes should be so designed that women can get full advantages. Mobile training centers, part time training facilities etc. should be offered to attract more and more women to the training centers.

Develop a Blue Print: Wesman said one of the top issues she experiences with women entrepreneurs is that they lack having a set plan in place because so many women fall into their business accidentally. "They seem to fall into the business because it's something they like doing, so they don't create a specific plan or strategy," she said. Wesman advised all women entrepreneurs to write up a business blue print when starting out that includes a clear description of the product or service, their target audience and how the business will be run on a daily basis. This blueprint should also touch on the specific responsibilities of the business owner and employees, as well as an estimate of what it will cost to run the business in the first year.

Team Building: Many female entrepreneurs try to handle every aspect of the business alone, according to Wesman, and that's a recipe for failure. It's important that female entrepreneurs surround themselves with team members that have different strengths and expertise that can help run a successful business. Women think they can do it all themselves, and aren't thinking about team building and tapping resources the way that men are. Men in the business world tend to realize that, whereas women are used to multitasking.

Build Relationships: Women often try to build relationships with prospective clients or customers, which can set themselves up for disappointment, Wesman said. "When they can't make the sale they take it too personally because it was a relationship they tried to build," she said. "Instead of stepping back and thinking, 'what did I learn from that sales experience?' or 'how can I use this to improve my next sales experience?'" Wesman blames this on how women have been conditioned in society, and being uncomfortable with competition and wanting to be liked. "Then you take it really personally, because you are trying to sell based on people liking you," Wesman said. She said women need to build relationships, but shouldn't be scared to be competitive when pitching sales.

Under-pricing services: Money can be a touchy subject for many women, Wesman said, and many have trouble discussing pricing terms. This uneasiness often leads female business owners to under value their products or services. "It does not understand what it actually costs you to produce a product, or what it costs you to deliver a service," Wesman said. "Women also under price themselves in the workplace, and the same thing happens when you are an entrepreneur."

Hiding from cash flow issues: Managing cash flow and following up on owed money and payments is critical to every successful business, but women tend to be less assertive when

it comes to collecting money, according to Wes man. "This goes along with the issue of it being unladylike, or not feminine to discuss money, or think about money, or to collect it," she said. Owners need to face those debtors head on, and get what they are due.

Getting too close with employees: While many small businesses adopt that "family" mentality, female entrepreneurs are often very guilty of getting too close with their workers, Wes man said. "They treat employees like family and friends," she said. "It's about having a good business relationship, but not getting involved in too personal relationship." When a relationship reaches that point, it becomes harder to make decisions in the best interest of the business, she said.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The government programme for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, the Government of India has over 27 schemes for women operated by different departments and ministries. Some of these are: Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) - Working Women's Forum

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) - Indira Mahila Yojana

Indira Mahila Kendra

Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) -

Mahila Samiti Yojana

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh

Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS) - Khadi and Village Industries
Commission

Indira Priyadarshini Yojana -

SBI's Sree Shaki Scheme

SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi Mahila Vikas Nidhi -

NGO's Credit Schemes

National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes, The efforts of government and its different agencies are ably supplemented by nongovernmental organizations that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps. Of course we have come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding.

CONCLUSION:

Women entrepreneurs faced so many problems in aspects of financial, marketing, health, family, and problems. These factors may vary from place to place business to business but women entrepreneurship is necessary for the growth of any economy weather it large or small. Some guidelines should be given by the govt. and the financial institution to the women entrepreneur at time to time. What women need for enterprises little training, some financial support and motivation at all levels-home, the society and the government. Its hope that If the problems of women entrepreneurs are addressed properly, they can emerge as very successful entrepreneurs far better than men entrepreneurs.

REFERENCES

- i. Women Entrepreneurs in India: A Socio economic study of delhi-1975-76, Mittal Publication, New Delhi
- ii. Women Entrepreneurship Development in India,
www.indianmba.com/Faculty_Column/FC1073/fc1073.html
- iii. Lall, Madhurima, & Sahai Shikha, 2008, Women in Family Business, presented at first Asian invitational Conference on family business at Indian School of Business, Hyderabad
- iv. Moore, D. P. & Buttner, E. H. (1997). Women entrepreneurs: Moving beyond New Generation of Women Entrepreneurs Achieving Business Success.
- v. India: A Socio-Economic Study of Delhi - 1975-76, Mittal Publications, New Delhi.
- vi. Gupta, C.B. and N.P. Srinivasan, "Entrepreneurial Development", Sultan Chand and Sons
- vii. Renuka V. (2001) Opportunities and challenges for women in business, India Together, Online Report, Civil Society Information Exchange Pvt. Ltd.
- viii. Jose P., Ajith Kumar. And Paul T.M., (1994) Entrepreneurship Development, Himalaya Publishing.
- ix. Why women entrepreneurs are rare in India and what challenges they face TV Mahalingam and K P Narayana Kumar, ET Bureau Jan 6, 2013, 10.26AM IST
- x. Women Entrepreneurship: Emerging Issues, Challenges and Strategies (2 Vols.) by A.K. Singh, K. Suguna and R.V.M. Reddy
- xi. Women Entrepreneurship The Emerging Workforce in 21st Century: Turning Challenges into Opportunities Ayesha Kalim Innovative Educational Solutions (IES), Lahore
- xii. www.economist.com
- xiii. www.unido.com
- xiv. www.sciedu.ca
- xv. www.usatoday.com