

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Women Entrepreneur is defined by Government of India as any woman owning and controlling an enterprise having a minimum financial interest of 51 % of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated by the enterprise to women. Now women have taken up entrepreneurial role in order to create a meaning for themselves. The traditional roles of housewives are gradually changing into women entrepreneurs. Some of the factors responsible for these changes are better education, changing socio cultural values and need accepted as an indicator of a stage of development and therefore to support women entrepreneurs government frame policies and enhancing the rights, roles, opportunities and promotion of women entrepreneurs through various schemes, incentives and promotional measures.

FEW COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

Women entrepreneurs normally possess the following common attributes in the Indian context as listed below:

1. Women with small families are more likely to become entrepreneurs.
2. A majority of women entrepreneurs are married.
3. Unmarried women entrepreneurs are often finding it difficult to get financial aid for running their ventures.
4. Many women entrepreneurs belong to the low income groups.
5. A large number of women entrepreneurs are venturing into entrepreneurial career with weak education background and they have not undergone any vocational training.
6. Women from low and high income groups are enjoying greater freedom to commence their business activities comparing to the women from middle class families who are still in the circles of cultural barriers.
7. Many women become entrepreneurs out of economic necessity.
8. Gender discrimination is encountered by the women entrepreneurs at every stage of business development.

Though the trend is changing it is not uncommon to find that women entrepreneurs are acting as mere facades to their male counterparts in many places of the country.

Classification of woman entrepreneurs: Though there is n formal ramification of woman entrepreneurs, researchers and entrepreneurial educators have reckoned psychological factors

family background motivational factors and nature of work to bring out the classification of woman entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, allow the woman entrepreneurs are candid and capable enough to navigate their enterprises, the following classification helps understanding the divergence existing among the women entrepreneurs, their unique competencies and attributes.

1. **Affluent women entrepreneurs:** Affluent entrepreneurs are hailed from well established business families. They are bestowed with an opportunity to see the way enterprises are being run from their childhood and develop a passion to succeed the family led business with new ideas and strategies. They are generally educated in premier business schools and trained on entrepreneurial line of operations that help them understanding the nuances of critical success factors.
2. **Women entrepreneurs emerged from pull factors:** Women in towns and cities take up entrepreneurship as a challenge to do something new and evince themselves in order to be financially independent. These are coming under the category of pull factors. They are educated women who generally venture with small and medium industries where risk is low. Under this category women usually start service centres, schools, food catering centres, restaurants, grocery shops etc.
3. **Women entrepreneurs emerged from push factors (Induced entrepreneurs):** There are some women entrepreneurs who accept entrepreneurial career to mitigate financial difficulties. The family situation forces them either to develop the existing family business or to start new ventures to improve the economic conditions of the family. Such entrepreneurs are called as induced women entrepreneurs or women entrepreneurs emerged from pushing factors.
4. **Self Help Women Entrepreneurs:** Women hailing with very feeble economic background and depending on cottage works like that of an artisan, handlooms, and such other works is referred to a self help woman entrepreneur. These entrepreneurs are generally affiliated to self help groups to meet their micro financial requirements. However, it is not accurate to confine self help women entrepreneurs to cottage works in the present scenario. There are innumerable examples to prove the export capabilities of these entrepreneur's. Edibles exported from Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh; handmade toys exported from Telangana are the classic examples showing the competencies of self-help women entrepreneurs.
5. **Trained women entrepreneurs:** These are the women selected by NGO's or government agencies to provide special training on entrepreneurial development through various EDP's and sponsored schemes to encourage them in entrepreneurial career. Few authors call them shopped entrepreneurs which is of course, not a meaningful word.
6. **Nominal women entrepreneurs:** Women entrepreneurs acting as mere facades to their male counterparts in running the enterprise are called nominal women entrepreneurs. This practice is in existence to siphon the financial benefits and other incentives granted by the state to women entrepreneurs. The culture of nominal women participation in entrepreneurial sphere must be done away to see the real empowerment of women entrepreneurship.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The mentioned below help us to understand how statutory policies can contribute towards achieving development for women entrepreneur, it is essential to have understand how other researchers have attributed and measure the importance of statutory polices for the development of women entrepreneurship form various perspective, the summary of literature published in the field of women entrepreneurship, specifically to understand the statutory policies that help them. The following sections take reference of the relevant works that can help quantify and measure the importance of government policies, while seeking gap and opportunities for further research. the review of literature includes review of research paper, professional journal articles and case studies as follows P.Babu (1978) The study was an attempt to find out the sociological factors that contribute to the development of small entrepreneurs The study showed that community and family background contributed to the success of prospective entrepreneurs formal education has not been a positive factor in entrepreneurship development, providing infrastructure facilities alone will not promote entrepreneurship development and the Association of Small Scale Industries has Lo play an important role in identification and development of entrepreneurs, a strong policy to support the entrepreneurs is called upon as the economy demands the growth of women entrepreneurs, the education and other factors like the background for entrepreneurship is not a criteria for entrepreneurial growth, risking bearing attitude and innovation prove to be more encouraging towards growth. Mayers (1981) conducted a research study to analyze the effect of economic pressure on employment of married women. The study reveals those married women with comparatively low economic background and having more financial burdens arc coming for wage employment and undertaking other economic activities. Women who cannot be employed, due to other responsibilities can be encouraged to use their skills by availing the policies of the government. The policies are run through a net work of schemes that help them to financially support themselves as well as add up to the economy Lehrer Sara (1981) studied the effects of a women's conference on participant's attitude towards women's role in society. It was observed that the conference did not make much effect on changing the attitude of participants towards women's role in the development of society. The perception about women in the past has cajoled them to think in the direction of other people. Women have realized their own potentials as entrepreneurs but they need the encouragement from the state. The environment for women entrepreneurs to bloom can be created by the government through policies designed for women entrepreneurs.

Aruna Shree P Rao (1981) made a study on the level of organizational involvement of women in development projects. The study recommends that project personnel should train participants in the skills necessary for planning and implementing project activities and Project should concentrate on activities designed to raise the income of the participants.

Objectives: The following are the objectives of the paper

- i) To identify the problems faced by women entrepreneurs,
- ii) To explore the schemes supporting women entrepreneurs in India,

- iii) To present the constitutional provisions focusing on the women entrepreneurship and
- iv) To focus on the problems and to develop the means to empower the women entrepreneurs.

PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

Nevertheless, uniform entrepreneurial process is followed for both men and women in principle, there are many problems and challenges being faced by women entrepreneurs in India. These are:

1. **Male dominated society:** The utmost constraint to women entrepreneurs is that they are women. A male dominant social order is the biggest hurdle to them in their way towards business success. Male members consider it to be a big risk funding the ventures run by women.
2. **Distrust in the entrepreneurial abilities of women:** Few financial institutions do not trust the entrepreneurial abilities of women. The bankers put impracticable and absurd securities to get loan to women entrepreneurs. According to the report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) despite evidence those women's difficulties in obtaining credit often due to biased attitudes of banks and informal lending groups.
3. **Inadequate financial resources and working capital:** Entrepreneurs generally need financial assistance of some kind to take off their ventures be it a formal bank loan or money from a savings account. The women entrepreneurs are suffering from inadequate financial resources and working capital. They do not have access to external funds due to their incapability to provide tangible security. Very few women have tangible property in hand.
4. **Family obligations:** Women's family obligations also restrict them from becoming effective entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations. Having primary responsibility for children, home and older dependent family members, few women can devote all their time and energies to their business. The financial institutions dishearten women entrepreneurs on the belief that they can at any time leave their business and become housewives again. The consequences are that they are compelled to depend on their won savings, and loan from relatives and family friends. Indian women give more importance to family ties and relationships. Married women have to make a reasonable equilibrium between business and home. Moreover, the success of a business depends on the support of the family members to married women who are engaged in the business process and management.
5. **Lack of managerial skills:** Another dispute is that women entrepreneurs have low level management skills. They have to rest on office staffs and intermediaries to get things done, especially the marketing and sales side of business.
6. **Hard competition between male and female:** The male and female competition is another reason which develops hurdles in the path of women entrepreneurs in the

business management process. In spite of the fact that women entrepreneurs are good in keeping their services prompt and delivery on time, due to lack of organizational skills compared to male entrepreneurs women have to face constraints from competition.

7. **Low mobility:** The confidence to travel across day and night and even different regions and states are less found in women as compared to male entrepreneurs. This shows the low level of freedom of expression and freedom of mobility of women entrepreneurs.
8. **Lack of knowledge of availability of raw material:** Information of different sources of raw materials availability and high negotiation skills are the basic prerequisites to run a business. Receiving the raw materials from different sources with discount prices is the factor that defines the profit margin. Lack of knowledge of availability of the raw materials and low level negotiation and bargaining skills are the factors, which affect the business adventures of women entrepreneurs.
9. **Lack of Education:** Knowledge of modern technological changes, knowhow and education level of the persons are the major factors that affect business. The literacy rate of women in India is found at low level compared to male population. Many women in developing nations lack the education required to build up successful entrepreneurship. They are unaware of new technologies or inexpert in their use, and often incapable to do research and gain necessary training.
10. **Inability to take risks :** Low level risk taking attitude is another factor affecting women entrepreneurs, investing money, maintaining the operations and ploughing back money from surplus generation requires high risk taking attitude, courage and confidence.
11. **Managing employees:** Managing employees is another challenge that women entrepreneurs in India face. Finding and retaining good employees is vital for the success of a business, but can be problematic for women entrepreneurs in India. Since women owned businesses tend to be smaller, they are often less likely to provide job security and retain good talent.
12. **Inefficient arrangements for Marketing and sales:** For marketing their products, women entrepreneurs are frequently at the mercy of the middlemen who pocket the chunk of profit. Further, women entrepreneurs find it tough to capture the market and make their products popular. This problem is all the more serious in the case of food production and processing ventures.

SCHEMES SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

Government of India has recognized the need for empowering women in entrepreneurial domain and initiated fair measures to support the entrepreneurial endeavors' of women living in both urban and rural arcades. Such schemes are spanned to cover subsidized credit marketing assistance, training and infrastructure facilities. The seventh five year plan has expressly stated that women shall be considered as special target group in making budgetary allocations. Since then, it has become precedent to announce special schemes and incentives for women

entrepreneurs in every five year plan. Though, it is a big list to chronicle the schemes supporting the efforts of women entrepreneurs, the following few important schemes deserves precise explanation.

1. Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)

TREAD Schemes for women was launched in the 12th Five year plan Government had come to an understanding that., apart from counseling and training delivery of credit poses the most serious problem for the poor women, since such women will not be able to have an easy access to credit thus TREAD scheme is launched with an intention that the credit will be made available to applicant woman through NGO's who would be capable of handling funds in an appropriate manner. These NGO's will not only handle the disbursement of such loans needed by women but would also provide them adequate counseling and training for taking up productive activities. There is a provision for Government of India Grant up to 30% of the loan credit maximum up to Rs. 30.00 lakh as appraised by lending institutions/banks. The lending institutions/ banks would finance assistance for women through NGO for undertaking nonfarm activities, who usually have no easy access to credit from banks due to cumbersome procedures and because of their inability to provide adequate security demanded by banks in the form of collaterals. Government of India Grant and the loan portion from the lending agencies to assist such women shall be routed through NGO s engaged in assisting poor women through income generating activities. While the loan amount will be passed on to women beneficiaries, the Grant shall be utilized by the NGO 's for activities accepted as grant activities in the appraisal report of the lending agency and capacity building of the NGO's. NGO which has been selected for Government Grant will not be considered for GOI grant again in the subsequent two years from the date of GOI grant.

2. Micro and small enterprises (MSE) Cluster Development Programme for Women:

Though, the cluster development programme is not exclusively designed for women entrepreneurs the Ministry of MSME's subsidizes the cost of projects undertaken by the women entrepreneurs in such clusters, which is 30 % and may vary up to 90 % depending on the nature of the project.

3. Credit Guarantee Fund for Women:

Government has announced a credit guarantee fund scheme to address the collateral issues at the time of funding the venture, it stipulates that the credit guarantee is extended up to 80% if the loans are borrowed by women entrepreneurs to finance their entrepreneurial needs.

4. Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) & Women:

(PMEGP) has laid down the following provisions for women entrepreneurs.

1. 25 % of Margin money subsidy is provided to urban women which is only 15 % to general category.
2. 35 % of project cost is subsidized for rural women entrepreneurs which is only 25% to others.
3. 95% of bank finance is provided to women an entrepreneur which is only 80 % in the case of general category.

5. Mahila Coir Yojna:

It is the first scheme launched by the Coir Board to promote women entrepreneurs in the coir sector under which women are trained for two months to use coir rats and also obtain stipend of Rs. 750 per month during the training. The scheme provides subsidy in obtaining motorized coir rats which shall be maximum of Rs. Thousand.

6. Support to Training and Employment Programme:

Support to Training and Employment Programme for women is announced by the Ministry of Women and Children welfare. The STEP scheme aims to provide skills that give employability to women self employed /entrepreneurs. The scheme is intended to benefit women who are in the age group of 16 years and above across the country. The grant under the scheme is given to an institution / organization including NGO's directly and not the States/UT's The assistance under STEP scheme will be available in any sector for imparting skills related to employability and entrepreneurship, including but not limited to the agriculture, horticulture food processing handlooms tailoring stitching, embroidery, Zari etc., Handicrafts computer and IT enable services along with soft skills and skills for the work place such as spoken English, Gems, & Jewels, Travel & Tourism and Hospitality.

7. Mahila Udyam Nidhi:

Mahila Udyam Nidhi is launched in the year 2016 to meet the equity gap of micro and small enterprises which are exclusively promoted by the women entrepreneurs. SIDBI is the principal institution administering this scheme which not only provides funds in the form of equity to start new ventures but also extends to the viable sick MSME's This scheme s applicable to both manufacturing and service sectors (except road transport operations) and confined to maximum of Rs. 5 lakh Mahila Udyam Nidhi also provides soft loan to the projects, the cost of which does not exceed Rs. 10 lakh subjected to a maximum loan of Rs.2.5 LAKH OR 25% of the cost of project whichever is higher .Such loan is repayable within a period of ten years.

ASSOCIATION SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

The efforts of government and its different agencies are supplemented by NGO's and associations that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. List of various women associations in India are Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs (FIWE), Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs(CWEI), Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of Andhra Pradesh, Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Women Entrepreneurs Promotion Association(WEPA), The Marketing Organization of Women Enterprises, Bihar Mahila Udyog Sangh, Mahakaushal Association of Women Entrepreneurs(MAWE), SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurial Council, Women Entrepreneurs Association of Tamil Nadu (WEAT), Tie Stree Shakti (TSS), Women Empowerment Corporation.

Hindrances to women empowerment

HINDRANCES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT The main Problems that were faced by women in past days and still today up to some extent

- ❖ Gender discrimination
- ❖ Lack of Education
- ❖ Female Infanticide
- ❖ Financial Constraints
- ❖ Family Responsibility
- ❖ Low Mobility
- ❖ Low ability to bear Risk
- ❖ Low need for achievement
- ❖ Absence of ambition for the achievement
- ❖ Social status Dowry Marriage in same caste and child marriage (still existing)
- ❖ Atrocities on Women (Raped. Kicked, Killed, Subdued, humiliated almost daily.)

WAYS TO EMPOWER WOMEN

- ❖ Changes in women's mobility and social interaction
- ❖ Changes in women's labor patterns
- ❖ Changes in women's access to and control over resources
- ❖ Changes in women's control over Decision making
- ❖ Providing education, Self-employment and Self-help group
- ❖ Providing minimum needs like Nutrition, Health, Sanitation, Housing
- ❖ Other than this society should change the mentality towards the word women
- ❖ Encouraging women to develop in their fields they are good at and make a career

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme
2. One Stop Centre Scheme coupled with working women Hostel
3. Women Helpline Scheme and Mahila Police Volunteers
4. UJJAWALA: A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Resue. Reliability and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
5. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme For the Children of Working Mothers
6. Ministry approves new projects under Ujjawala Scheme and continues existing projects
7. SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances)
8. Revision under IGMSY in Accordance with National Food Security Act, 2013 in Xilti Plan
9. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)
10. Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar
11. Awardees of Rajya Mahila Samman & Zila Mahila Samman
12. Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog

Constitutional Provisions for Empowering Women in India

- ❖ Equality before law for all persons (Article-14).

- ❖ Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15 (1)).
- ❖ However, special provisions may be made by the state in favors of women and children Article 15(3).
- ❖ Equality of opportunity for all citizens relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state (Article 16).
- ❖ State policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39(a): (v) equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d)).
- ❖ Provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 42).
- ❖ Promotion of harmony by every citizen of India and renouncement of such practices which are derogatory to the dignity of women Article 51A (e).
- ❖ Reservation of not less than one-third of total seats for women in direct election to local bodies. Panchayats and Municipalities (Articles 343(d) and 343 (T)).

Observations at the Women Entrepreneurship Initiatives:

1. Globalization, Liberalization and other Socio-Economic forces have given some respite to a large proportion of the population. However, there are still quite a few areas where women empowerment in India is largely lacking.
2. There needs to be a sea- change in the mindset of the people in the country. Not just the women themselves, but the men have to wake up to wake up to a world that is moving towards equality and equity. It is better that this is embraced earlier than later for our own good.
3. There are several Government programmes and NGOs in the Country, there is still a wide gap that exists between those under protection and those not.
4. Poverty and illiteracy add to these complications. The Empowerment of Women begins with a guarantee of their health and safety.
5. 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 beings.
6. We must begin to Empower Women to create a sustainable world.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are drawn from the present paper:

1. Entrepreneurship is presently the most discussed and encouraged concept all over the world to overcome economic challenges. Women being the vital gender of the overall population have great capacity and potential to be the contributor in the overall economic development of any nation. Therefore, programs and policies need to be customized to not just encourage entrepreneurship as well as implement strategies

which can help support entrepreneurial culture among youth. Media has the potential to play the most vital role in entrepreneurial development.

2. As today's most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs, nowadays women are in professions like trade, industry and engineering. Women in only in selected professions are prone to the nation's growth. Their rise is able, so willing to take up business and contribute to women entrepreneurship. To promote women entrepreneurship steps are being moulded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skill entrepreneurship. Changes in trends, challenges in Global markets making to entrepreneurs to strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena.
3. Thus the attainment in the field of income employment and in educational from, the scenario of women empowerment seems to be comparatively poor. The need of the hour is to identify those loopholes or limitations which are observing the realization of empowerment of women and this initiative must be started from the women folk itself as well as more importantly policy initiative taken by the state and society. Let us take the oath that we want an egalitarian society where everybody whether men or women get the equal opportunity to express and uplift one's well being and well being of the society as whole.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are offered to strengthen the concept of women empowerment in Indian context:

1. The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grass roots problem. Hence, education for women has to be paid special attention
2. Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.
3. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. They should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society.
4. Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts should be there to curb the mal-practices prevalent in the society.

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