

Need of Woman Participation in Entrepreneurship: Specifics and Challenges- an Outlook

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Abstract

In every country and in all ages much has been written and debated on the basic nature of women and there is no virtue or vice known to man which has not been ascribed to them. Right from the temptress Eve to Mary in the West and from goddess to demoness in India, the highest and lowest stations have been assigned to women and the interminable controversy goes on. By and large, in the ancient history of India, women have been defied, glorified and also regarded as myths. Even their caliber to carry out certain duties is doubted and they had become subject matters of disdain, mockery and fun; but in reality several times contradictory state of affairs has existed.

Men have almost always held women to be somehow inferior to themselves, treating them as if they belonged to a different species altogether. All important species of life were controlled and managed by men, women being relegated to the position of mere housewives. They were required to be good wives and mothers, whatever the fallings of their husband might be.

The industrial revolution ushered in a changed outlook on life and raised the level of human consciousness. Women could not remain unaffected by these developments. Often the new circumstances forced them to raise their voice and demand better treatment. With growing awareness more and more women came forward to champion their cause. Entrepreneurship of Women development is an essential part of human resource. Development Compared to other countries the development of women entrepreneurship is very low in India, especially in the rural areas. However, women of middle class are not too eager to alter their role in fear of social backlash. The progress is more visible among upper class families in urban cities.

This paper focuses on women entrepreneur. Any understanding of Indian women, of their identity, and especially of their role taking and breaking new paths, will be incomplete without a walk down the place of Indian history where women have lived. The paper also talks about how much credit can be given to entrepreneurship for the unprecedented innovation and growth of free-enterprise economies. Despite all the social hurdles, Indian women stand tall from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their achievements in their respective field. The transformation of social fabric of the Indian society, in terms of increased educational status of women and varied aspirations for better living, necessitated a change in the life style of Indian women. She has competed with man and successfully stood up with him in every walk of life and business is no exception for this. These women leaders are assertive, persuasive and willing to take risks. They managed to survive and succeed in this cut throat competition with their hard work, diligence and perseverance. The paper endeavors to study the concept of women entrepreneur-Reasons women become entrepreneurs -Reasons for slow progress of women

entrepreneurs in India - suggestions for the growth of women entrepreneurs-Schemes for promotion & development of women entrepreneurship in India.

Women's entrepreneurship needs to be studied separately for two main reasons. The first reason is that women's entrepreneurship has been recognised during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. The second reason is that the topic of women in entrepreneurship has been largely neglected both in society in general and in the social sciences.

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.

"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

Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs tend to be highly motivated & self directed, they also exhibit a high internal locus of control & achievement. Researchers contend that women business owners possess certain specific characteristics that promote their creativity and generate new ideas and ways of doing things. One key characteristic of all successful entrepreneurs is that they have vision. They find a niche in a particular market and find a way to fill it. They give life to their vision/business and either personally or finding a way to make it happen. This "vision" keeps them focused and able to bring product or service to the market. Entrepreneurs are also very self-motivated. They don't wait for someone to tell them to get to work. They are self-propelled and do the work because they want to. They know that it takes discipline and self-sacrifice to make their dreams come true.

Problems of Women Entrepreneurship in India

Definitely, there are a number of problems regarding women entrepreneurship in India, researchers having identified issues relating to social aspects, economic life, skill problems, problems of family support, courage etc.

1. Absence of Definite Agenda of Life

The educated women do not want to limit their lives in the four walls of the house (Cf. Babaria and Chheda, 2010). In rural India, most of the women are either illiterate or semi-literate and they have not a proper idea of self-esteem and self-

respect. Therefore, the question that immediately arises is how they can try to get self-respect and have a definite agenda in order to acquire good positions in society.

2. Absence of Balance between Family and Career Obligations

As Indians, most of the women are very serious about family obligations but they do not equally focus on career obligations (Cf. Mathur 2011; Singh N.P. 1986). Indian women devote their lives to take care of their family members but they are not concerned with their self-development.

3. No Direct Ownership of the Property

No doubt, the right of property is given as a legal provision in India, but it raises one of the most important questions regarding the right to property for women. There are very few women having on paper the right of property because, firstly, they are not aware of this right. They only become aware when problems are created in their families due to family disputes. Otherwise, women are not enjoying their right of property, being treated as second-class citizens, which keeps them in a "pervasive cycle of poverty" (Mehta and Mehta, 2011).

4. No Awareness about Capacities

An increasing level of education should create awareness regarding an individual's capacities. But, unfortunately, our educational system has not succeeded in creating awareness about woman's capacities and their hidden powers to handle economic activities. According to Shruti Lathwal (2011), India faces an increase in the education level of women and an increased social awareness as to the role women play in society, but this is not a widely acceptable truth because it applies only in urban India and not in rural India too.

5. Low Ability to Bear Risk

According to Mehta and Mehta, 2011, women in India live protected lives. A woman is taught to depend on the male members of her family from birth. She is not allowed to take any type of risk even if she is willing to take it and has ability to bear it as well. However, this is not entirely true because many great women proved that they have risk bearing capacities and attitude to take risks in entrepreneurial activities. They have become aware of their rights and potential situations and therefore entered different fields of businesses (Cf. Singh and Raghuvanshi 2012).

6. Problems of Work with Male Workers

Many women have good business skills but they do not want to work with male workers and sometimes male workers are not ready to work with women entrepreneurs. According to Shruti Lathwal, 2011, most of women entrepreneurs argued that semi-educated or uneducated class of workers cannot visualize a "female boss" in their field of work.

7. Lack of Self-Confidence

A strong mental outlook and an optimistic attitude amongst women create a fear of committing mistakes while doing their work (Cf. Goyal and Parkash 2011). The family members and the society are not willing to stand by women with entrepreneurial development potential. In such a situation women should develop their self-confidence to handle this type of barriers, in spite of the fact that Indian women prefer a protected life to the development of their self-confidence.

8. Lack of Professional Education

Rao (2007) observed in his study that poverty and illiteracy are the basic reasons of the low rate of women entrepreneurship in our country. The educational level and professional skills also influence women participation in the field of enterprise.

9. Mobility Constraints

According to Ghani et al. (2011) mobility is one of the important problems in women entrepreneurial development. They are not ready to leave their place for business activities and prefer staying only in their residential areas. These traits are important as entrepreneurs tend to start their businesses in their current local area and are thus disproportionately found in their region of birth (Dahl and Sorenson 2007).

10. Lack of Interaction with Successful Entrepreneurs

Singh (2008) mentioned that the lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs is also one of the problems in women entrepreneurship in India. Successful entrepreneurs always play the role of model in the society for women who have the ability of entrepreneurial activities and lead to undertaking economic activities to prove their ability. But unfortunately there is no sufficient provision of such type of interaction to inculcate knowledge and provide experiences of successful women entrepreneurs. Many economists argue that this is a main obstacle in the growth of women entrepreneurship.

Women Empowerment And Planning Process In India

The all round development of women has been one of the focal point of planning process in India. The **First Five-Year Plan** (1951-56) envisaged a number of welfare measures for women. Establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board, organization of Mahila Mandals and the Community Development Programmes were a few steps in this direction. In the **Second Five-Year Plan** (1956-61), the empowerment of women was closely linked with the overall approach of intensive agricultural development programmes. The **Third and Fourth Five-Year Plans** (1961-66 and 1969-74) supported female education as a major welfare measure. The **Fifth Five-Year Plan** (1974-79) emphasized training of women, who were in need of income and protection. This plan coincided with International Women's Decade and the submission of Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. In 1976, Women's welfare and Development Bureau was set up under the Ministry of Social Welfare. The **Sixth Five-Year Plan** (1980-85) saw a definite shift from welfare to development. It recognized women's lack of access to resources as a critical factor impeding their growth. The **Seventh Five-Year Plan** (1985-90) emphasized the need for gender equality and empowerment. For the first time, emphasis was placed upon qualitative aspects such as inculcation of confidence, generation of awareness with regards, to rights and training in skills for better employment. The **Eight Five-Year Plan** (1992-97) focused on empowering women, especially at the grass roots level, through Panchayati Raj Institutions. The **Ninth Five-Year Plan** (1997-2002) adopted a strategy of women's component plan, under which not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits were earmarked for women-specific programmes. The **Tenth Five-Year Plan** (2002-07) aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action and ensuring Survival, Protection and Development of women and children through rights based approach. The **Eleventh Five-Year Plan** lays down six monitorable targets (1) Raise the sex ratio for age group 0-6 from 927 in 2001 to 935 by 2011-12 and to 950 by 2016-17; (2) Ensure that at least 33% of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children; (3) Reduce IMR from 57 to 28 and MMR from 3.01 to one per 1000 live births; (4) Reduce malnutrition among children of age group 0-3 to half its present level; (5) Reduce anaemia among women and girls by 50% by the end of the Eleventh Plan; and (6) Reduce dropout rate for primary and secondary schooling by 10% for both girls as well as boys."

Some Suggestions For The Growth Of Women Entrepreneurs

Right efforts from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurship basically implies being in control of one's life and activities and women entrepreneurs need to be given confidence, independence, and mobility to come out of their paradoxes. The following measures are suggested to empower the women to seize various opportunities and face challenges in business.

There should be a continuous attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate women entrepreneurs.

- An Awareness programme should be conducted on a mass scale with the intention of creating awareness among women about the various areas to conduct business.
- Attempts should be there to enhance the standards of education of women in general as well making effective provisions for their training, practical experience and personality development programmes, to improve their overall personality standards.
- Organize training programmes to develop professional competencies in managerial, leadership, marketing, financial, production process, profit planning, maintaining books of accounts and other skills. This will encourage women to undertake business.
- Vocational training to be extended to women community that enables them to understand the production process and production management.
- Skill development to be done in women's polytechnics and industrial training institutes. Skills are put to work in training-cum-production workshops.
- Educational institutes should tie up with various government and non-government agencies to assist in entrepreneurship development mainly to plan business projects.
- International, National, Local trade fairs, Industrial exhibitions, seminars and conferences should be organized to help women to facilitate interaction with other women entrepreneurs.
- Women in business should be offered soft loans & subsidies for encouraging them into industrial activities. The financial institutions should provide more working capital assistance both for small scale venture and large scale ventures.
- Making provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level.
- The weaker section could raise funds through various schemes and incentives provided by the government to develop entrepreneurs in the state. E.g. the Prime ministers Rozgar Yojana, The Khadi and Rural village industries scheme, etc.
- In the initial stages women entrepreneurs may face problems but they must persevere, believe in themselves and not give up mid way.
- Attempts by various NGO's and government organizations to spread information about policies, plans and strategies on the development of women in the field of industry, trade and commerce. Women entrepreneurs should utilize the various schemes provided by the Government.
- Women should try to upgrade themselves in the changing times by adapting the latest technology benefits. Women must be educated and trained constantly to acquire the skills and knowledge in all the functional areas of

business management. This can facilitate women to excel in decision making process and develop a good business network

- Women's entrepreneurship must be examined both at the individual level (i.e. the choice of becoming self-employed) and at the firm level (the performance of women owned and managed firms) in order to fully understand the differences between men's and women's entrepreneurship.
- To establish all India forums to discuss the problems, grievances, issues, and filing complaints against constraints or shortcomings towards the economic progress path of women entrepreneurs and giving suitable decisions in the favor of women entrepreneurs and taking strict stand against the policies or strategies that obstruct the path of economic development of such group of women entrepreneurs.

Thus by adopting the following aforesaid measures in letter and spirit the problems associated with women can be solved. Entrepreneurship is not a bed of roses to women. Women participation in many kinds of economic activities to complement to their family income, their participation in no way reduces their family duties. The task of women has become more tedious and full of challenges. Let us all make efforts to help women rediscover her.

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