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MAJOR CHALLENGES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA


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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is a rapidly rising concern of a modern competitive economy and its contribution in economy is viably recognized worldwide. Women's development has been considered the key role to the overall sustainable development of a nation. Female who play an intriguing role by frequently interacting and actively adjusting herself with socio-economic, financial and support spheres in society. 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.

KEYWORDS :globalization , contribution in economy , socio-economic.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the globalization the government have paid an attention to women entrepreneurs through its various programmes and policies and initiatives. Women entrepreneurs were given top priority for implementation of programmes under agricultural and allied activities viz dairy farming, poultry farming, animal husbandry, hand looms, handicrafts and house hold small scale enterprises. With the opening up of our economy lot of changes have been emerged particularly a faster urbanization, rise in professional and higher education system, use of advanced technology and rapid industrialization the tradition bound Indian society has undergone a change and women entrepreneurs have shifted their entrepreneurial activities to engineering, electronics and energy.

They made personal choices, stood up for their convictions and had courage and strength to enter into new ventures. As a result of these efforts number of women entrepreneurs has increased

over the years. With this background this paper made an attempt to highlight the major challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in the urbanized world.

However, for the convenient, this paper has been divided into the following are as follows:

- + Importance of women entrepreneurs
- + Status of women entrepreneurs in India
- + Promotional institutions and women entrepreneurs
- + Problems faced by the women entrepreneurs
- + Suitable recommendations for the better women entrepreneurship

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Women perform an important role in building the real backbone of a nation's economy. There is considerable entrepreneurial talent among women. Many women's domestic skills such as people and time management and household budgeting are directly transferable in the business context. Women have the ability to balance different tasks and priorities and tend to find satisfaction and success in and from building relationships with customers and employees, in having control of their own destiny, and in doing something that they consider worthwhile. They have the potential and the will to establish and manage enterprises of their own. These qualities and strengths of women are to be tapped for productive channels. But simultaneous creation and development of small business among women is a difficult task.

The process of economic development would be incomplete and lopsided, unless women are fully involved in it. The orientation of a society as a whole, regarding desirability that women should play an equal part in the country's development, is a very important precondition for the advancement not only of women, but the country as a whole. The highest national priority must be for the unleashing of woman power which is the single most important source of societal energy.

Women entrepreneurs should be regarded as individuals who take up roles in which they would like to adjust their family and society, economic performance and personal requirements. "Emancipation of women is an essential prerequisite for economic development and social progress of the nation".

In the dynamic world which is experiencing the effects of globalization, privatization and liberalization, women entrepreneurs are likely to become an even more important part of the global quest for sustained economic growth and social development. The economic status of woman is now accepted as an indication of the society's stage of development. Women (especially rural women) are vital development agents who can play a significant role in the economic development of a nation, but they should have an equal access to productive resources, opportunities and public services. It has also been realized in the last few years that the widespread poverty and stunted economic growth can be overcome only by gainful and sustainable economic participation of women. National development will be sluggish, if the economic engine operates only at half power.

Women in Enterprise Building has emerged as an agenda for many policy makers, researchers and trainers and as well as for associations and organizations involved in women development. If women acquire skills, they can carve a niche for themselves in the outside world too. This is the reason why women entrepreneurship development has become a subject of great concern and series discussion in recent times.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Women entrepreneurs have been designated as the new engines for growth and the rising stars of the economies in to bring prosperity and welfare. A variety of stakeholders has pointed at them as an important 'untapped source' of economic growth and development. The growth of the proportion of women entrepreneurs in developing countries has drawn the attention of both the academic and the development sector. Donors, international public institutions, national and local governments, NGOs, private companies, charities, knowledge institutes and business associations have initiated programs or policies to promote and develop Women's entrepreneurship. They initiate programs for capacity-building of entrepreneurial skills, strengthening women's networks, provide finance and training's, or design policies that enable more and stronger start-ups and business growth. They all claim that women entrepreneurship is essential for growth and development. Some even argue that women entrepreneurs contribution tends to be higher than that resulting from entrepreneurship in developing countries has increased to a great extent and the focus on this 'untapped source' of growth seem to be indispensable nowadays for development practitioners and policy makers. However, despite this growing number of initiatives and resources made available to promote and develop women's entrepreneurship in developing countries, women still own and manage fewer businesses than men, they earn less money with their businesses that grow slower, are more likely to fail and women tend to be more necessity entrepreneurs.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

The economy of India is witnessing a drastic change since mid-1991 with a new policy of liberalization, globalization, privatization initiated by Indian Government. India has great entrepreneurial potential. At present, women involvement in economic activities is marked by low work participation rate. Women Entrepreneurship has gained momentum in last three decades with the increase in number of women enterprises and their contribution to economic growth. In this dynamic world woman entrepreneurs are an important part of economic development and social progress. In India though women play an important role in the society but their entrepreneurial ability has not been tapped due to lower status of women in the society. There is a need for changing the mindset towards women so as to give equal right as explained in the constitution.

In the words of APJ Abdul Kalam "Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to development of good family, good society and ultimately good nation".

Today business is built around human capital and women are one of the valuable factors. Globalization and Liberalization of market encouraged women to come forward to become an entrepreneur and start new industries.

A role of modern women is not confined to the traditional role as a mother and housewife; it has and is undergoing changes. As women gets educated she begins to think of herself as an independent person, she becomes aware of her own identity, potentials and decision making capabilities. Interested women with creative and innovative ideas are coming forward to start the small and medium sized enterprises.

It is a common assumption that majority of women in India are economically non-productive as they are not involved in activities that are financially remunerative. But this trend is gradually changing. Today's women are taking more professional and technical degrees to cope up with market need and are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still

exploring new avenues of economic participation. It is perhaps for these reasons that Government Bodies, NGO's, Social Scientists, Researchers and International Agencies have started showing interest in the issues related to entrepreneurship among women in India.

It has now been recognized that to promote self-employment and to reduce the incidence of poverty, some drastic efforts have to be made to accelerate self-employment of women in various sectors. The Government of India has ushered in the new millennium by declaring the year 2001 as 'Women's Empowerment Year's to focus on a vision' where women are equal partners like men. The most common explanation of 'women's empowerment' is the ability to exercise full control over one's actions. The last decades have witnessed some basic changes in the status and role of women in our society.

The discrepancy in the ideology and practice of the empowerment policy of women in India constitutes its continued social, economic and social backwardness. Women make up 52 per cent of our country's population. Hence there can be no progress unless their needs and interests are fully met. Empowerment would not hold any meaning unless they are made strong, alert and aware of their equal status in the society. Empowerment would become more relevant if women are educated, better informed and actively involved in entrepreneurial activities. Despite all the social hurdles, many women have become successful in their works. These successful women have made name and wealth for themselves with hard work, diligence, competence and will power.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

In India, micro and small enterprises provide opportunities for women to own and lead enterprises. With 495.74 million women accounting for 48.3per cent of India's population there is a significant potential for women-owned enterprises to contribute to the growth of the Indian economy. Globalization and economic Liberalization have opened up tremendous opportunities for development through micro enterprises. Due to modifications of livelihood strategies, women's economic conditions become more vulnerable due to unequal distribution of resource. His in turn favours a policy for employment of women by increasing their access to credit through micro enterprises so as to enable them to acquire the capability and assets that can help to realize strategic gender need and economic independence. Micro enterprise development is viewed as an opportunity for providing gainful employment to the poor women and thereby improving their income and living standard used for training programmes related to their activity to upgrade their skills using local resources as well as skills. These opportunities help women to go well as to get information about the new areas where local demand is high for their products.

Table - 1
Women Entrepreneurs in India

States	No of Units Registered	No of Women Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Tamil Nadu	9618	2930	30.36
Uttar Pradesh	7980	3180	39.84
Kerala	5487	2135	38.91
Punjab	4791	1618	33.77
Maharashtra	4339	1394	32.12
Gujarat	3872	1538	39.72
Karnataka	3822	1026	26.84
Madhya Pradesh	2967	842	28.38
Bihar	7344	1123	15.04
Other states and UTS	14576	4185	28.71
Total	64796	19971	32.82

Source: CMIE Report 2011

The table-1 depicts the fact that on an average 32.82 per cent of the total registered enterprises were occupied by the women entrepreneurs in India. Among the States, Uttar Pradesh tops with 39.84 per cent which is followed by Gujarat 39.72 per cent, Kerala 38.91 per cent, Punjab 33.77 per cent, Maharashtra 32.12 per cent, Tamil Nadu 30.36 per cent, Other States and UTS 28.71 per cent Madhya Pradesh 28.38 percent and Bihar 15.04 per cent.

Table-2
Status of Women Entrepreneurship across the world

Country	Percentage
India	31.6
USA	45
UK	43
Canada	42
Indonesia	40
France	38
Sri Lanka	35
Brazil	35

Source: World Bank Report 2010-11

Around 50 per cent of India’s population is women, yet business spheres such as trade, commerce and industry is still considered a male preserve. Entrepreneurial work has also been predominantly a man’s world in India.

Among the States, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka have more women entrepreneurs. Indian women are in no way inferior to men in all walks of life and they can be good entrepreneurs as men in the country. Therefore, it is essential to exploit the potential of Indian women. Women’s participation in trade, industry and commerce, requiring entrepreneurship is still poor, mainly because of the problems associated with their gender roles. Therefore, promotion of entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of women poses a challenge to the government, funding agencies and non-government organizations. It is important for these people on the limitations faced by the women and

to plan supporting systems to enhance the women entrepreneurship in India. There was a time when women were only limited to household chores and giving birth to a child. But the scenario is totally different as she is now accepted as a leader. But this status did not come that easily as women had to go the extra mile to prove that she is in no way inferior to the males. Still there is a long way to go as women are still considered as the human beings solely responsible in bringing up a child, the house and the man.

According to the recent study, companies with women managers are performing well than the companies with men managers. Fortune 500 companies with most women managers are in the top level management have proved with nearly 35 per cent return on investment to the shareholders and those with 3 or more women executives have recorded 83 per cent higher returns and on the other side there are employees who are striving for the capital, who are lagging behind in marketing their products/services. For these women, poverty leads to more unmanageable living conditions like denied rights, suppressed opportunities and curtailed opinions. The major concerns female entrepreneurs are facing are;

- + Social interaction
- + Market trends
- + Access and control over resources
- + Decision making and exercising full control

Violence against women is a major concern. One out of every three women around the world has been beaten or abused by her intimate partner in her lifetime. Reduction in gender based violence is therefore, a top priority.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1. National Resource Centre for Women (NRCW)

An autonomous body set up under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to orient and sensitise policy planners towards women's issues, facilitating leadership training and creating a national database in the field of women's development.

2. Women's India Trust (WIT)

WIT is a charitable organization established in 1968 to develop skills of women and to earn a regular income by providing training and employment opportunities to the needy and unskilled women of all communities in and around Mumbai.

3. Women Development Corporation (WDC)

WDCs were set up in 1986 to create sustained income generating activities for women to provide better employment avenues for women so as to make them economically independent and self-reliant.

4. Development of Women and Children in Urban Area (DWCUA)

DWCUA was introduced in 1997 to organize the urban poor among women in socio-economic self-employment activity groups with the dual objective of providing self-employment opportunities and social strength to them.

5. Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka (AWAKE)

AWAKE was constituted by a team of women entrepreneurs in Bangalore with a view to helping other women in different ways to prepare project report, to secure finance, to choose and use a product, to deal with bureaucratic hassles, to tackle labour problems etc.,

6. Working Women's Forum (WWF)

WWF was founded in Chennai for the development of poor working women to rescue petty traders from the clutches of middlemen and to make them confident entrepreneurs in their own right. The beneficiaries are fisher women, lace makers, beedi making women, landless women, labourers and agarbarthi workers.

7. Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Small Scale Industries (AWESSI)

It was founded in Ambattur in Chennai in 1984 to promote, to protect and encourage women entrepreneurs and their interests in South India to seek work and co-operate with the Central and State Government services and other Government agencies and to promote measures for the furtherance and protection of small-scale industries.

8. Women's Occupational Training Directorate

It organizes regular skill training courses at basic, advanced and post advanced levels. There are 10 Regional Vocational Training Institutes (RVTIs) in different parts of the country, besides a National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) at Noida.

9. Aid The Weaker Trust (ATWT)

ATWT was constituted in Bangalore by a group of activists to impart training to women in printing. It is the only one in Asia. Its benefits are available to women all over Karnataka. It provides economic assistance and equips girls with expertise in various aspects of printing and building up self-confidence.

10. Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

SEWA is a trade union registered in 1972. It is an organization of poor self-employed women workers. SEWA's main goals are to organize women workers to obtain full employment and self-reliance.

11. Women Entrepreneurship of Maharashtra (WIMA)

It was set up in 1985 with its head office in Pune to provide a forum for members and to help them sell their products. It also provides training to its members. It has established industrial estates in New Mumbai and Hadapsar.

12. Self-Help Group (SHG)

An association of women, constituted mainly for the purpose of uplifting the women belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) categories to the Above Poverty Line (APL) category. The major activities of the group are income generation programmes, informal banking, credit, unions, health, nutritional programmes, etc.

13. The National Resource Centre for Women (NRCW)

An autonomous body set up to orient and sensitise policy planners towards women's issues, facilitating leadership training and creating a national data base in the field of women's development.

14. Women Development Cells (WDC)

In order to streamline gender development in banking and to have focused attention on coverage of women by banks, NABARD has been supporting setting up of Women Development Cells (WDCs) in Regional Rural Banks and Co-operative Banks.

MAJOR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

In order to have a clarity on the problems encountered by women entrepreneurs, the problems have been classified into Economic and Social. The economic problems faced by the women entrepreneurs are lack of finance, lack of adequate knowledge of the business, lack of proper training, lack of availability of raw material, lack of knowledge on transportation and marketing of her product, lack of awareness of the governmental support, lack of managerial skill, lack of confidence and efficiency. Lack of knowledge to employ latest machineries, unable to control the workers, lack of knowledge in budgeting and difficult to face competition in the business etc. With regard to the social are, lack of support from the family members, particularly husband. Attending the domestic work, looking after the family, husband, children and in-laws, dominating character of the husband and elders in the family hinders her growth in the business etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Before entering into the business she has to undergo a rigorous training programme to equip herself to undertake and carry out the business.
- + Acquire higher educational qualification particularly technical qualification which help her to conduct the business.
- + Before taking up a full-fledged entry into business, she need to place her husband in the business, so that she could get support in the initial stage.
- + She need to maintain a good record with the Department of Industries in getting frequent and proper information about the business.
- + She need to attend Entrepreneurial Development Programmes conducted by the Department of Industries or Non-Governmental Organization to train herself in the best possible manner to run the enterprises efficiently
- + She need to assess the market situation for her product otherwise she may not get proper order
- + She need to maintain the best possible prices and best possible quality of the product so as to capture and wide the market for her product.
- + Maintain the budgeting and record in a proper manner and timely payment of income tax etc. which would too easy to submit her proposal for financial assistance from the Banking Sector.
- + Make a proposal to the government to help women entrepreneurs in every aspect of the business activities.
- + Department Inspectors must encourage women managerial enterprises than at a hindrance to these organization in the name of checking and harassing while sanctioning or renewal of production/trade license.

CONCLUSION

If women entrepreneurs get support and encouragement from family, society, Government and financial institutions, such positive effort can open new avenues for them and increase the marketability and profitability of business owned by them. If the problems of women entrepreneurs are addressed properly, they can emerge as very successful entrepreneurs far better than men entrepreneurs.

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