

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Before the 20th century, women were operating businesses as a way of supplementing income. The ventures that these women undertook were not known as entrepreneurial at the time; many of them usually had to bow to their domestic responsibilities. The term entrepreneur is used to describe individuals who have ideas for products and/or services that they turn into a working business. In earlier times, this term was reserved for men. Women became more involved in the business world only when the idea of women in business became palatable to the general public. Entrepreneurship amongst women has been a recent concern. The development of women entrepreneurship is very low in India, especially in the rural areas. Women have become aware of their existence, their rights and their work situation.

The paper focuses about the status of Indian women entrepreneurs and the problems faced by them when they march forward to make their destiny and to show their ability in the competitive world of business environment.

Introduction

Women entrepreneurs in India face challenges of cultural bias and lack of public safety, in addition to pressures of balancing work, home and family. Enterprising women who raised a family as well as a company, with love, laughter and patience. They never gave in or gave up, and carried on to build valuable companies while also giving back to society. Breaking centuries of tradition; the Indian woman today has not only embraced a life in the corporate world but has also begun to make her moves beyond a corporate career and into Entrepreneurship. While a corporate career gives her the financial independence and growth to substantiate her abilities, being an Entrepreneur takes her beyond that and into a world where not only does she get an opportunity to carve a notch for herself but also make a difference. The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. Skill, zeal, wills, knowledge and adaptability in business are the five important determinants of women to emerge into business ventures. With the advent of media, women are aware of their own traits, rights and also the work situations.

In India, although women have been performing exceedingly well in different spheres of activities like academics, politics, administration, social work and so on, but the entrepreneurial world is still a male dominated one.

Meaning and definitions

The Government of India has defined a women entrepreneur - “ 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 entrepreneurship is the process where **women** organize all the factors of production, undertake risks, and provide employment to others. The **definition of women entrepreneurship** has never been differentiated on the basis of sex and hence could be extended to **women entrepreneurs** without any restrictions.

Kamal Singh who is a woman entrepreneur from Rajasthan, has defined woman entrepreneur as “a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving self-economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life.”

In nutshell, women entrepreneurs are those women who think of a business enterprise, initiate it, organize and combine the factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risks and handle economic uncertainty involved in running a business enterprise.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the present position of Indian Women Entrepreneurs.
2. To study the Problems of Women Entrepreneurship in India
3. To suggest certain supportive measures to solve the problems of Women Entrepreneurship in Indian Economy.

Importance of the Study:

World economy of the country is classified into developed economy, developing economy and Under developed economy. As per statistics it is known that in well developed economy women is having freedom to develop as an entrepreneur, they are having equal priority as equal as man, but in developing economy and under developed economies women's are facing different types of problem, though government introduces different types of schemes for the sake of women, women are growing well day by day in all sectors and in all areas. Their contributions are more as scientists, software engineers, technocrats, economists, professors, lawyers, doctors and as a businessman also. So, it is clear evidence that women contribution for economy is essential and considerable.

Methodology of Study

The study is mainly based on secondary data taken from the reputed Published Sources like various Books, Economic Survey and Websites on Internet.

Present Position of Women Entrepreneurs

Women represent approximately half of the total world population as well as in India also. Women are the better half of the society. In our societies Indian women are treated as show pieces to be kept at home. But now they are also enjoying the impact of globalization not only on domestic but also on international sphere. Women come out of the four walls to contribute in all activities. Indian

women are ready to take burden of work in house and as well as the work place. From many survey it is discovered that the female entrepreneurs from India are producing more capitals than the other part of the world. Since mid 1991, a drastic change takes place in Indian Economy. India has great entrepreneurial potential. At the present era, women participation in financial activities is marked by a low work participation rate. India provides a good example of women entrepreneurship.

Women Entrepreneurship 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
Gujrat	3872	1538	39.72
Karnatka	3822	1026	26.84
Madhya Pradesh	2967	842	28.38
Other States & UTS	14576	4185	28.71
Total	57,452	18,848	32.82

Women Work Participation

Country	Percentage
India (1970-1971)	14.2
India (1980-1981)	19.7
India (1990-1991)	22.3
India (2000-2001)	31.6
USA	45
UK	43
Indonesia	40
Sri Lanka	35
Brazil	35

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)
- Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
- Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)
- Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS)
- Working Women's Forum
- Indira Mahila Yojana

- Indira Mahila Kendra
- Mahila Samiti Yojana
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission
Indira Priyadarshini Yojana
- SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi Mahila Vikas Nidhi

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Problem 1: Traditional Mindsets

When a friend once announced that she would like to quit her job and set up her own Art and Design business, instead of a pat on the back or a hearty congratulations, she got a raised brow and a question that broke her confidence “*You are a girl, what will you be able to do?*”

While a lot many women are breaking the shackles and moving out of their homes to work, setting up businesses is still perceived to be a Man's domain.

Problem 2: Aggression and Assertiveness

Most Indian women are known to be extremely adaptive but the aggression and assertiveness that is required to get their need across has not been a known characteristic in them. However this is once aspect that is changing with more and more women from urban areas who are educated and have an exposure to society taking the initiative to start their own business.

Problem 3: Networking

An important aspect of running your own business is the ability to socialize within the Entrepreneurial network to build contacts and win customers but very few Indian women step out of their comfort zones to do so. If they do socialize, it is limited to the work they need to get done and not to build relationships. The implication of this is directly on the extent of visibility they have in the market and on the perception they build.

Problem 4: Prioritization expectations

Societal expectations that whatever a woman does, she should always prioritize her family over everything else can prove to be a big deterrent for those running their own show. Most women bow down to the pressure instead of working out a win-win situation. A successful woman entrepreneur once pointed out an easy solution to this dilemma; she worked out a solution where she and her husband shouldered their domestic responsibilities equally thus giving her enough time to focus on her work. Understanding that men are also quite capable of handling family responsibilities and making that a reality can go a long way in resolving this obstacle.

Problem 5: Business mindedness

Unfortunately most women lack the shrewdness that is required while dealing with their stakeholders. Part of this also stems from the fact that most women do not hold a long term view of their business and do not have a clear picture of how they want their start up to grow. What also contributes to this absence of behaviour is the lack of the ability to say no. Traditionally Indian

women have learned to adjust and adapt instead of putting their foot down when necessary and saying No. This nature works against them when it comes to the business world.

Problem 6: Sustainability

Probably the most important aspect of turning an Entrepreneur is being able to sustain your business. Most women are unable to carry through their ideas because of the short term goals they set without thinking through the sustainability of their venture and also partly due to the priorities they are forced to change when it comes to family. This alone with the general perception makes VCs hesitate to fund their business. That most VCs are led by men add to the already existing problem.

Problem 7: Safety and Security

In today's times, probably this is the biggest obstacle for women in India. The security blanket is at its thinnest thus making women hesitate to take on roles that demand long hours and interactions with a world of strangers. The rise of social crime and the need for safety pushes everything down the priority list when there is a demand to spend late hours at getting work going.

Problem 8: Family ties

Women in India are very emotionally attached to their families. They are supposed to attend to all the domestic work, to look after the children and other members of the family. They are over burden with family responsibilities like extra attention to husband, children and in laws which take away a lots of their time and energy. In such situation, it will be very difficult to concentrate and run the enterprise successfully.

Problem 9: Social barriers

The traditions and customs prevailed in Indian societies towards women sometimes stand as an obstacle before them to grow and prosper. Castes and religions dominate with one another and hinders women entrepreneurs too. In rural areas, they face more social barriers. They are always seen with suspicious eyes.

Problem 10: Shortage of raw materials

The scarcity of raw materials, sometimes nor, availability of proper and adequate raw materials sounds the death-knell of the enterprises run by women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs really face a tough task in getting the required raw material and other necessary inputs for the enterprises when the prices are very high.

Problem 11: High cost of production

Several factors including inefficient management contribute to the high cost of production which stands as a stumbling block before women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs face technology obsolescence due to non-adoption or slow adoption to changing technology which is a major factor of high cost of production.

Problem 12: Exploitation by middle men

Since women cannot run around for marketing, distribution and money collection, they have to depend on middle men for the above activities. Middle men tend to exploit them in the guise of helping. They add their own profit margin which result in less sales and lesser profit.

Problem 13: Lack of self confidence

Women entrepreneurs because of their inherent nature, lack of self-confidence which is essentially a motivating factor in running an enterprise successfully. They have to strive hard to strike a balance between managing a family and managing an enterprise. Sometimes she has to sacrifice her entrepreneurial urge in order to strike a balance between the two

TOP 15 LEADING BUSINESS WOMEN IN INDIA

S.No	Name	Present Position	Name of Company
1	Indra Nooyi	Chairman and CFO	Pepsico
2	Naina Lal Kidwai	Group General Manager & Country Head –	HSBC,India
3	Kiran Mazumdar Shaw	CMD	BIOCON
4	Chanda Kochar	MD and CEO	ICICI Bank
5	Indu Jain	Chairperson	Times Group
6	Simone Tata	Chairperson (Former), Lakme Chairperson (Present),	Trent Limited
7	Neelam Dhawan	MD	HP India
8	Sulajja Firodia Motwani	JMD	Kinetic Motors
9	Priya Paul	Chairperson,	Apeejay Park Hotels
10	Mallika Srinivasan	Director,)	TAFE (Tractor and Farm Equipment
11	Ekta Kapoor	MD & Creative Director,	Balaji Telefilms
12	Ritu Kumar	Fashion Designer	Ritu Kumarz
13	Shahnaz Hussain	CEO	Shahnaz Herbals Inc
14	Jyoti nayak	President	Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad
15	Ravina Raj Kohli	Founder & Executive Director,	JobCorp

SUPPORTIVE MEASURES AND SCHEMES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

1. Steps taken in Seventh Five-Year Plan:

In the seventh five-year plan, a special chapter on the “Integration of women in development” was introduced by Government with following suggestion:

(i) Specific target group:

It was suggested to treat women as a specific target groups in all major development programs of the country.

(ii) Arranging training facilities:

It is also suggested in the chapter to devise and diversify vocational training facilities for women to suit their changing needs and skills.

(iii) Developing new equipments:

Efforts should be made to increase their efficiency and productivity through appropriate technologies, equipments and practices.

(iv) Marketing assistance:

It was suggested to provide the required assistance for marketing the products produced by women entrepreneurs.

(v) Decision-making process:

It was also suggested to involve the women in decision-making process.

2. Steps taken by Government during Eight Five-Year Plan:

The Government of India devised special programs to increases employment and income-generating activities for women in rural areas. The following plans are lunched during the Eight-Five Year Plan:

(i) Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana and EDPs were introduced to develop entrepreneurial qualities among rural women.

(ii) ‘Women in agriculture’ scheme was introduced to train women farmers having small and marginal holdings in agriculture and allied activities.

(iii) To generate more employment opportunities for women KVIC took special measures in remote areas.

(iv) Women co-operatives schemes were formed to help women in agro-based industries like dairy farming, poultry, animal husbandry, horticulture etc. with full financial support from the Government.

(v) Several other schemes like integrated Rural Development Programs (IRDP), Training of Rural youth for Self employment (TRYSEM) etc. were started to alleviate poverty. 30-40% reservation is provided to women under these schemes.

3. Steps taken by Government during Ninth Five-Year Plan:

Economic development and growth is not achieved fully without the development of women entrepreneurs. The Government of India has introduced the following schemes for promoting women entrepreneurship because the future of small scale industries depends upon the women-entrepreneurs:

(a) Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) scheme was launched by Ministry of Small Industries to develop women entrepreneurs in rural, semi-urban and urban areas by developing entrepreneurial qualities.

(b) Women Component Plan, a special strategy adopted by Government to provide assistance to women entrepreneurs.

(c) Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana and Swarna Jayanti Sekhari Rozgar Yojana were introduced by government to provide reservations for women and encouraging them to start their ventures.

(d) New schemes named Women Development Corporations were introduced by government to help women entrepreneurs in arranging credit and marketing facilities.

(e) State Industrial and Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has introduced following schemes to assist the women entrepreneurs. These schemes are:

(i) Mahila Udyam Nidhi

(ii) Micro Credit Scheme for Women

(iii) Mahila Vikas Nidhi

(iv) Women Entrepreneurial Development Programmes

(v) Marketing Development Fund for Women

4. Consortium of Women entrepreneurs of India provides a platform to assist the women entrepreneurs to develop new, creative and innovative techniques of production, finance and marketing.

There are different bodies such as NGOs, voluntary organizations, Self-help groups, institutions and individual enterprises from rural and urban areas which collectively help the women entrepreneurs in their activities.

5. Training programmes:

The following training schemes specially for the self employment of women are introduced by government:

- (i) Support for Training and Employment Programme of Women (STEP).
- (ii) Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA).
- (iii) Small Industry Service Institutes (SISIs)
- (iv) State Financial Corporations
- (v) National Small Industries Corporations
- (vi) District Industrial Centres (DICs)

6. Mahila Vikas Nidhi:

SIDBI has developed this fund for the entrepreneurial development of women especially in rural areas. Under Mahila Vikas Nidhi grants loan to women are given to start their venture in the field like spinning, weaving, knitting, embroidery products, block printing, handlooms handicrafts, bamboo products etc.

7. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh:

In 1993, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh was set up to grant micro credit to pore women at reasonable rates of interest with very low transaction costs and simple procedures.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The glass ceilings are shattered and women are found to be indulged in every line of business from papad to power cables. Even though we have many successful Women Entrepreneurs in our country, but as we have a male dominated culture there are many challenges which women entrepreneurs face from family & Society.

Women entrepreneurs are not only required motivation in the form of financial assistance, and government permissions and they may require support from family members and life partners. The progress of the nation not only depends on male performance and also female. When a country is economically strong that country people standard of living would gradually increase. In India there is a possibility to grow our economy, by giving motivation to women in all aspects, and women playing dual role like housewife and as an employee/an entrepreneur. When someone playing dual role definitely family members and life partner should support to relieve the stress.

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