



## Unleashing the Entrepreneurial Potential of Women: initiative of Coca Cola Company

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### ABSTRACT

*"The greatest revolution in a country is the one that affects the status and living conditions of its women"*

—Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru.

### KEYWORDS :

Women constitute almost half of the total population of the world and out of which two third of world's adult illiterates are women. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the most disadvantaged section of the society is the women; they are the 'silent majority' of the world's poor. Seventy per cent of the world's poor are women. They face peculiar social, cultural, educational, political and allied problems. Traditionally the position of women in India has been low compared to men. Pundit Jawaharlal was of the opinion that the ***greatest revolution in a country is the one that affects the status and living conditions of its women.*** A nation that wants to progress cannot afford to ignore capacity building and empowerment of women. Gender sensitivity is the prerequisite that must prevail and be strengthened at all levels. Empowerment of women and gender equality recognized globally as a key element to achieve progress in all areas. It is one of the eight millennium goals to which world leaders agreed at the Millennium Summit held at New York in 2000. Thus, governments across the world as well as various business and developmental organizations are actively undertaking promotion of women entrepreneurs through various schemes, incentives and promotional measures.

This paper seeks to study the Coca-Cola Company's ambitious global initiative to enable the economic empowerment of **five million women entrepreneurs** across their value chain by **2020 (5by20)**. Through **5by20**, they are developing and implementing programs that enable women entrepreneurs to break down the barriers they face. This initiative offers women access to business skills training courses, financial services and connections with peers or mentors -- along with the confidence that comes with building a successful business. Through 5by20, Coca-Cola addresses the most common barriers women face when trying to succeed in the marketplace.

Over the last 2000+ years, history has been unkind to women and it is observed that women have been suppressed in almost every culture. Not only men, but even women thought that assertions like they were passive, emotional and less intelligent etc. were kind of undeniable truth. It appeared that men working outside and women at home created a stable society conceptually. Unfortunately ignorance made them suffer so much and today when we look back, even men feel sorry for the suffering women had to go through. But it is unfortunate that because of centuries of inertia, ignorance and conservatism, the actual and potential role of women in the society has been ignored, preventing them from making their rightful contribution to social progress. They are denied their rightful status and access to developmental resources and services contributing to their marginalization. With regard to their multidimensional responsibilities, it is required to empower women *socially, economically and technologically* to enable them to stand in society on their own with confidence.

Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. It means moving from the position of enforced powerlessness to one of power. Economic Empowerment is the key to open up avenues of such power by enabling women to gain personal identity and social status. It involves reaching women all basic amenities and services through broad based efforts, addressing their problems arising out of gender bias and social constraints that confront women and help achieve linkage between women and available economic/social services and provide them with economic opportunities.



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) constituted eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for ensuring equity and peace across the world. The MDGs are agreed-upon goals to reduce certain indicators of disparity across the world by the year 2015. The third MDG is directly related to the *empowerment of women* and is centered towards promoting gender equality and empowering women. In the simplest of words it is basically the creation of an environment where women can make independent decisions on their personal development as well as shine as equals in society.

A country can truly develop only when its women are given enough opportunities to improve their socio-economic status. Today the need of the hour is to make women feel that she is economically strong and equal to men in all respects, hence making entrepreneurship, the best means of empowerment of women. Entrepreneurship not only alleviates poverty but also generates more jobs in the economy.

"Enhancing economic opportunities for women in the Coca-Cola value chain will result in increased incomes, enhanced skills in business, increased stature within the community, and improved potential for communities," said Mr Muhtar Kent, chairman and chief executive officer of The Coca-Cola Company at a plenary session (September 2010) on empowering women at the Clinton Global Initiative.

A study conducted in March 2012 stated that women account for only 7.7% of entrepreneurs in India. The study also revealed that more women in the age group of 25-45 yrs are contemplating entrepreneurship, with the support of their spouse or parents but over 84% of them reported that finance was a major problem to start-up. The Government does take initiatives by giving subsidies or easy loans to women, but the same would not be sufficient and the private sector also needs to look into the same and play its role.

The ambitious global initiative, known as 5by20, of CCC is one among such initiatives to enable the economic empowerment of **five million women entrepreneurs** across their value chain by **2020**. The CCC operates in more than 200 countries worldwide. Their focus in the first phase of 5by20 was on four lead countries – Brazil, India, the Philippines and South Africa, then to expand their reach in the program's second phase to include China, Mexico, Nigeria, Kenya, Ugan-

da, Haiti and Egypt. In the years ahead, CCC expects to reach every region of the globe as its program grows exponentially.

### 5by20: the ambitious initiative of Coca-Cola Company (CCC)

In September 2010, The Coca-Cola Company launched a 10-year global initiative- 5by20, an ambitious initiative to enable economic empowerment of 5 million women entrepreneurs across its value chain by 2020. Through 5by20, the Company is developing and implementing programs that enable women entrepreneurs to break down the barriers that can prevent them from growing their businesses. It anticipates that its efforts will enable these women to reinvest in themselves, their families and their communities. Its success rests on the shoulders of millions of women who run small businesses selling and distributing Coca-Cola products every day.

The CCC announced a strong progress in 2012 toward its goal to enable the economic empowerment of 5 million women entrepreneurs across the Coca-Cola value chain by 2020. The initiative is expanding beyond its pilot programs launched in four countries and scale programs across a total of 12 countries: Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Haiti, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa and Thailand.

By collaborating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments and businesses, the Company had broken down the economic and social barriers that can prevent women's success in business. It has provided business skills training, access to financial assets and services, and linkages to networks of peers and mentors. By helping women grow their businesses across its value chain, these women will in turn help to grow its own business as well as their communities. From producers to artisans, 5by20 will reach women across its value chain, as described below:

#### The Value Chain of the Coca Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company is the world's largest beverage company, refreshing consumers with more than 500 sparkling and still brands. Led by Coca-Cola, the world's most valuable brand, the Company's portfolio features 15 billion-dollar brands including Diet Coke, Fanta, Sprite, and Coca-Cola Zero.

Through the world's largest beverage distribution system, consumers in more than 200 countries enjoy its beverages at a rate of 1.8 billion servings a day. With an enduring commitment to building sustainable communities, the Company is focused on initiatives that reduce our environmental footprint, support active, healthy living, create a safe, inclusive work environment for its associates, and enhance the economic development of the communities where it operates.

#### Partners of the Value Chain

**Producers** Growing fruit, sugar, coffee, tea and other agricultural ingredients, producers represent the first step in its global business.

**Suppliers** are partners, who provide its business system with ingredients, packaging, machinery, as well as goods and services.

**Distributors** deliver its beverages from its bottling partners to their retailers every day, bringing Coca-Cola's global brand to local communities.

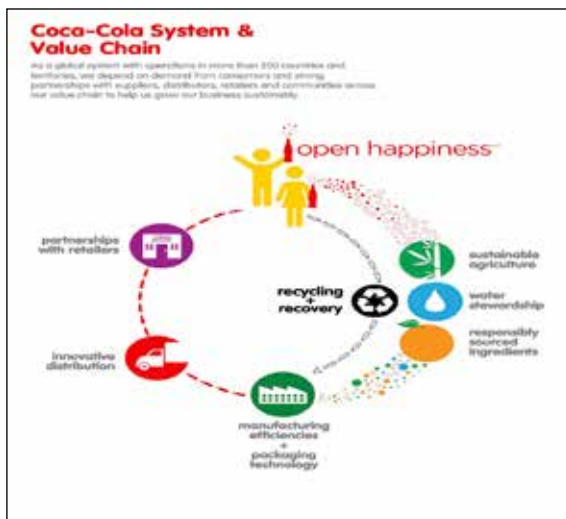
**Retailers** place their products directly into the hands of the consumer from hand carts to large convenience stores,

**Recyclers** earn a living and help to bring their product life-cycle full circle by collecting, sorting and trading used packaging.

**Artisans** transform packaging into artistic items of value that help drive family income and local economies.

#### Empowerment of Women: Case Studies

In **Kenya** and **Uganda** the Company is helping more than 50,000 farmers to grow mangoes for locally sold fruit juices, building its business while creating sustainable livelihoods at the farm level. Approximately 30 per cent of these farmers are women.



The 5by20 programmes in South Africa are offering training, finances and equipment to help grow small businesses. Before Coca-Cola became actively involved in Laly's business, she could sell about ten cases a week. Coca-Cola helped Laly to refurbish the tavern with branded signage, a large flat-screen TV, tables, chairs and more, and since the refresh, she has sold more than 50 cases each week. Thus Laly has turned her late husband's small butchery into a booming business.

With the help and support of the Coca-Cola system in Indonesia, Maya has established multiple warehouses for her collection and recycling business, received favorable financial agreements for bottle loans and credit and has become a priority client of Coca-Cola. She employs eight people, and she is involved in almost every aspect of the bottling business. Maya's husband now works alongside her, as well.

In India, the Company is providing solar coolers to shop keepers in rural areas with unreliable electricity, allowing them to sell chilled drinks, as well as to charge mobile phones and solar lanterns. In Preeti's case, a shopkeeper (women) belonging to Agra, something as simple as a beverage cooler is making dreams a reality. Living and working with only intermittent electricity proved challenging, but the recent addition of a solar-powered cooler provided by The Coca-Cola Company has quietly begun to change Preeti and her family's lives. How exactly can a cooler have such an impact— and she can keep her shop open after the sun sets and the other shops have closed. Perhaps the most important benefit is that her children can study at night as they pursue an education and better life. Income and quality of life for Preeti and her family have increased since getting the cooler, with Coca-Cola beverage sales providing approximately 15-20 percent of their earnings depending on season. This income means Preeti can invest in needs many others consider basic: healthcare for her family and an education for her children. They now have an opportunity to get ahead.

Rosemary of Kenya originally started her distribution business as a way of helping her husband and supporting her family. She started very small, but little by little her business began to grow and her turnover increased. With the support of Coca-Cola, Rosemary's distribution center is now a thriving business and is the second largest of the 37 centers that Coca-Cola supports in the urban region of Nairobi. She has received training on stock keeping, book keeping, and IT, and the local Coca-Cola bottling partner has provided assets such as equipment and signage as well as management training. Rosemary's business has grown through her enthusiasm, hands-on approach and determination, and she has increased the number of her employees from two people to 16, including members of her family. She has also started a group of women distributors who meet regularly to discuss the issues that they face as businesswomen and to encourage and support one another.

#### Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs around the world are faced with numerous barriers to success and providing access to training, finance and sup-

port networks are the best ways to help women overcome the barriers, unlock their untapped potential and build their business in a sustainable way. By providing access to business skills, financial services, assets and support networks of peers and mentors, 5by20 is helping women succeed as entrepreneurs, while also creating thriving, sustainable communities. Initially focused on four pilot countries – Brazil, India, South Africa and the Philippines – the expansion of 5by20 into additional countries demonstrates The Coca-Cola Company's continued commitment to testing, learning and scaling programs in order to reach its ambitious women's economic empowerment goal.

Since launching 5by20 in 2010, The Coca-Cola Company has enabled more than 131,000 women like Preeti, Mama Njeri and Laly and focused on having a positive impact while also building momentum, learning and identifying programs to take to scale. Around the globe, the women the Company is reaching through 5by20 inspire it every day. Bolstered by their success, it is inspired to continue on this journey toward their goal of enabling the economic empowerment of five million women worldwide and continue to test, learn and scale the programmes that work – an approach that the Company hopes will ensure a lasting, sustainable and impactful legacy which will continue to positively affect lives of women beyond 2020.