



The Challenging Role of Women Empowerment in Rural India

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ABSTRACT

The study deals with various key issues related to women in rural development in India. In case of traditional societies, women are engaged in routine household activities. In modern societies they are participating almost all sorts of activities like academics, administration, politics, and social work and so on. Rural areas are ultimately marked by poverty and backwardness. Our country is agriculture based one. Major portion of national economic growth is contributed by rural economy. To share in this growth, rural women have to take responsibility of the society. Entrepreneurship is treated as a key for women empowerment mainly in the rural areas. So there is a need of continuous attempt to inspire, motivate, co-operate and encourage women entrepreneurs particularly in rural areas. This paper gives a brief idea about the role of women entrepreneurs in enhancing the economic development of our country, challenges faced by them and also it throws light on the requirements to become rural women as successful entrepreneurs.

KEYWORDS : Decision making, Economic development, Empowerment, entrepreneurial abilities, Entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION:

There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing". – Swami Vivekanada.

Entrepreneurship is one of the most important factors for the economic development of a country. The scope and need of entrepreneur is higher in developing countries like that of India. Entrepreneurship development in India has received much concentration during last few years. Encouraging women entrepreneurship is also a part of that. But unfortunately our traditional mindset is not supporting to this. In olden days women had been more important as man. Infact, women employment status and the work performed by them is a key factor of a country's overall development. The complete development in a country is possible only when women participate in all types of national activities. For several of the programs aimed at the masses, multiple platforms were used with overwhelming results. It is generally believed that population stabilization is possible only through the empowerment and education of girls and women.

ROLE OF WOMEN AS AN ENTREPRENEUR:

- Imaginative: Women should have imaginative approach or original ideas with competitive market. Well-planned approach is needed to examine the existing situation and to identify the entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Ability and desire: to be a successful women entrepreneur, they should always be ready to accept risk and ability to the proficiency in planning making forecast estimates and calculations.
- Hardworking nature: Being an entrepreneur, women should have a ability to work hard. To construct an enterprise hard working is a must.
- Persistence: Successful women always will have hardworking nature. With this nature they can transform their dreams into an idea enterprise.
- Profit earning capacity: She always should try to maximum returns on her investment.

Challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs:

Main obstacle in achieving success as an entrepreneur of rural women is having lack of educational and work background. Some other problems are as follows:

- Lack of Confidence: Women will have less confidence on their capabilities. At the same time, organizations also will have less confidence in women's strength, traits and competence.
- Less ability to bear risk: Rural women are economically not self

dependent. So they are not interested in bearing risk.

- Illiteracy: The rural women may have no touch with the new technology and unskilled. The uneducated rural women may have no knowledge of measurement and basic accounting.
- Shortage of Working capital: Obtaining working capital for financing day-to-day operations of the organization, including buying of raw materials, meeting pay-rolls is a major problem for women entrepreneurs.
- Lack of infrastructure problems: Because of lack of infrastructure problems the women entrepreneurs have to depend on administration personnel and intermediaries to the things done, mainly the marketing and sales side of business.
- Manufacturing problems: To complete production process there should be co-ordination among several activities. Out of all these activities, some activities may not be in the control of entrepreneurs. They may create problems in manufacturing process.
- Finance problems: The financial institutions discourage women entrepreneurs about long run continuation of the business. So they will have less interest in granting loans to women entrepreneurs.

How to develop Women entrepreneurs?

There is a great need for the active participation of women in entrepreneurial activities. So, the following points should be taken into consideration for effective development of women entrepreneurs.

- Encourage women's participation in decision making.
- Required training programmes on management skills to be provided to women community.
- Continuous monitoring and improvement of training programmes.
- Activities in which women are trained should focus on their marketability and profitability.
- The financial institutions should provide sufficient working capital assistance both for small and large scale activities.
- A women entrepreneur's guidance Cell set up to handle the various problems faced by women entrepreneurs.
- Vocational training to be extended to women community that enables them to understand the manufacturing process and manufacturing department.
- Infrastructure, in the form of industrial plots and sheds, to set up industries is to be provided by state run agencies.
- Programmes for encouraging entrepreneurship among women are to be extended at local level.
- More government schemes to motivate women entrepreneurs to engage in small scale and large-scale business ventures.

- Training on professional competence and leadership skill to be provided to women entrepreneurs.
- Training and counseling on a large and medium scale of existing women entrepreneurs to remove psychological causes.

Programmes Supporting Women Entrepreneurship:

The government of India has announced several schemes to encourage women entrepreneurship by different departments and ministries. Some of these are as follows:

- RashtriyaMahilaKosh; Khadi and Village Industries commission; Indira PriyadarshiniYojana
- Working women's forum
- Indira MahilaYojana; IndiraMahila Kendra; MahilaSamitiYojana;
- Integrated Rural Development Programmed (IRDP)
- Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
- Prime Minister's RojgarYojana (PMRY)
- SIDBI's MahilaUdyamNidhiMahilaVikasNidhi
- SBI's SreeShaki Scheme; NGO's Credit Schemes
- Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs (FIWE)

Suggestions for improvement in the status of women entrepreneurs:

- Gain occupational experience by rotating to various job profiles of marketing, finance, planning etc.
- Acquire some experience by applying for some loan and repaying it back and filing tax returns, maintaining accounts etc.
- Through family and friends help conducting honest self-appraisal to identify the strength and weak areas.
- Identify and delegate responsibilities in business and at home also by prioritizing the work.
- Establish a support system through a strong network of family, friends, clients, business associates.
- Be determined and professional in the business is also very important. It supports in obtaining respect and confidence from employees, customers financiers and other professional associates.

Conclusion:

Though women comprises nearly half of the world population, but their participation in entrepreneurial activities is lower than that of men. So there is a great need to increase the entrepreneurial abilities of women, as well as to bridge the gender gap and make them to participate in innovative process.

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