



A Study on Slow Progress of Women Entrepreneurs in India

Mr. Vijayababu
Tekkem

Lecturer, Department of Commerce & Management, KBN College
(Autonomous), Vijayawada, Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA.

ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurship is a phenomenon which has developed in the present scenario. Women entrepreneur is any woman who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business. Women have owned and operated businesses for decades, but they were not always recognized or given credit for their efforts. Often women entrepreneurs were "invisible" as they worked side by side with their husbands, and many only stepped into visible leadership positions when their husbands died.

Women constitute the family, which leads to society and nation. Social and economic development of women is necessary for overall economic development of any society or a country. Entrepreneurship is the state of mind which every woman has in her but has not capitalized in India in way in which it should be due to change in environment, now people are more comfortable to accept leading role of women role in society, though there are some exceptions.

Purpose of this paper is to find out various motivating and de-motivating internal and external factors of women entrepreneurship. It is an attempt to quantify some for non parametric factors to give the sense of ranking these factors. It will also suggest the way of eliminating and reducing hurdles of the women entrepreneurship development in Indian context.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship refers to the act of setting up a new business or reviving an existing business so as to take advantages from new opportunities. Thus, entrepreneurs shape the economy by creating new wealth and new jobs and by inventing new products and services. The educated women do not want to limit their lives in the four walls of the house. They demand equal respect from their partners. However, Indian women have to go a long way to achieve equal rights and position because traditions are deep rooted in Indian society where the sociological set up has been a male dominated one.

The role of women entrepreneurs in the process of economic development has been recognized from nineties in various parts of the world. Today, in the world of business, women entrepreneurship has become an essential movement in many countries and has been accepted in all areas of working. The United Nations report has also concluded that economic development is closely related to the advancement of women.

The first part of this paper deals with the ideas why to boost the women entrepreneurship and what are the reasons that propel women to undertake such profession. This part also depicts the factors of hindrance of women entrepreneurship and also the likely measures to be taken for removing such obstacles that are affecting women entrepreneurship. The last part of this study includes the suggestive measures for eliminating and reducing the hurdles for the women entrepreneurship development in Indian context.

CONCEPT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stand on their own legs. A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic responsibilities women want to get independence. Under the influence of these factors the women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and as an urge to do something new. Such a situation is described as pull factors. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is thrust upon them.

Out of total 940.98 million people in India in 1990s, females comprise 437.10 million representing 46.5 per cent of the total population. There are 126.48 million workforce but as per the 1991 census, only

185900 women accounting for only 4.5 per cent of the total self-employed persons in the country were recorded. Some psycho-social factors impede the growth of women entrepreneurs are as follows:

- Poor self-image of women
- Inadequate motivation
- Discriminating treatment
- Faulty socialization
- Role conflict
- Cultural values
- Lack of courage and self confidence
- Inadequate encouragement
- Lack of social acceptance
- Unjust social, economic and cultural system
- Lack of freedom of expression
- Afraid of failure and criticism
- Susceptible of negative attitude
- Low dignity of labour

REASONS FOR WOMEN BECOMING ENTREPRENEURS

The glass ceilings are shattered and women are found indulged in every line of business. The entry of women into business in India is traced out as an extension of their kitchen activities, mainly 3P's, Pickle, Powder and Paapad. But with the spread of education and passage of time women started shifting from 3P's to modern 3E's i.e., Energy, Electronics and Engineering. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge into business ventures. 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. With the advent of media, women are aware of their own traits, rights and also the work situations. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of digital era are growing rapidly that the job seekers are turning into job creators. Many women start a business due to some traumatic event, such as divorce, discrimination due to pregnancy or the corporate glass ceiling, the health of a family member, or economic reasons such as a layoff. But a new talent pool of women entrepreneurs is forming today, as more women opt to leave corporate world to chart their own destinies. They are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation.

Self-determination, expectation for recognition, self-esteem and career goal are the key drivers for taking up entrepreneurship by women (Moore & Buttner, 1997). Sometimes, women chose such career path for discovering their inner potential, caliber in order to achieve self-satisfaction. It can also provide a mean to make best use of their

leisure hours. However, dismal economic conditions of the women arising out of unemployment in the family and divorce can compel women into entrepreneurial activities.

REASONS FOR SLOW PROGRESS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

The problems and constraints experienced by women entrepreneurs have resulted in restricting the expansion of women entrepreneurship. The major barriers encountered by women entrepreneurs are:

- The greatest deterrent to women entrepreneurs is that they are women. A kind of patriarchal- male dominant social order is the building block to them in their way towards business success. Male members think it a big risk financing the ventures run by women
- Male chauvinism is still prevalent in many parts of the country yet. Women are looked upon as "abala" i.e. weak in all respects. In a male dominated society, women are not treated equal to men that act as a barrier to woman's entry into business.
- Women entrepreneurs have to face a stiff competition with the men entrepreneurs who easily involve in the promotion and development area and carry out easy marketing of their products with both the organized sector and their male counterparts. Such a competition ultimately results in the liquidation of women entrepreneurs.
- Lack of self-confidence, will-power, strong mental outlook and optimistic attitude amongst women creates a fear from committing mistakes while doing their piece of work. The family members and the society are reluctant to stand beside their entrepreneurial growth.
- Women in India lead a protected life. They are not even less educated, economically not stable nor self-dependent which reduce their ability to bear risks and uncertainties involved in a business unit.
- The old and outdated social outlook to stop women from entering in the field of entrepreneurship is one of the reasons for their failure. They are under a social pressure which restrains them to prosper and achieve success in the field of entrepreneurship.
- Unlike men, women mobility in India is highly limited due to many reasons. A single woman asking for room is still looked with suspicion. Cumbersome exercise involved in starting with an enterprise coupled with officials humiliating attitude towards women compels them to give up their spirit of surviving in enterprise altogether.
- Women's family obligations also bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations. The financial institutions discourage women entrepreneurs on the belief that they can at any time leave their business and become housewives again.
- Indian women give more emphasis to family ties and relationships. Married women have to make a fine balance between business and family. The business success also depends on the support the family members extended to women in the business process and management.
- Women's family and personal obligations are sometimes a great barrier for succeeding in business career. Only few women are able to manage both home and business efficiently, devoting enough time to perform all their responsibilities in priority.
- The educational level and family background of husbands also influences women participation in the field of enterprise.
- Absence of proper support, cooperation and back-up for women by their own family members and the outside world people force them to drop the idea of excelling in the enterprise field. They are always making many pessimistic feelings to be aroused in their minds and making them feel that family and not business is a place meant for them.
- Many women take the training by attending the Entrepreneurial Development program without an entrepreneurial bent of mind. Women who are imparted training by various institutes must be verified on account of aptitude through the tests, interviews, etc.
- High production cost of some business operations adversely affects the development of women entrepreneurs. The installations of new machineries during expansion of the productive capacity and like similar factors discourage the women entrepreneurs from venturing into new areas.
- Women controlled business are often small and it is not always

easy for women to access the information they need regarding technology, training, innovative schemes, concessions, alternative markets, etc. Just a small percentage of women entrepreneurs avail the assistance of technology and they too remain confined to word processing software in the computer. They hardly make use of advanced software available like statistical software SAP, Accounting Package like TALLY, Animation software 3DMAX, internet, etc.

- Lack of awareness about the financial assistance in the form of incentives, loans, schemes etc. by the institutions in the financial sector. So the sincere efforts taken towards women entrepreneurs may not reach the entrepreneurs in rural and backward areas.
- Achievement motivation of the women folk found less compared to male members. The low level of education and confidence leads to low level achievement and advancement motivation among women folk to engage in business operations and running a business concern.

Apart from the above discussed problems there may occur other series of serious problems faced by women entrepreneurs as improper infrastructural facilities, high cost of production, attitude of people of society towards the women modern business outlook, low needs of enterprise. Women also tend to start business about ten years later than men, on average. Motherhood, lack of management experience, and traditional socialization has all been cited as reasons for delayed entry into entrepreneurial careers.

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 over-all 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 Minister's 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
- Self help groups of women entrepreneurs to mobilize resources and pool capital funds, in order to help the women in the field of industry, trade and commerce can also play a positive role to solve this problem.
- 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.

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.

STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

Development of women has been a policy objective of the government since independence. Until the 70s the concept of women's development was mainly welfare oriented. In 1970s, there was a shift from welfare approach to development approach that recognized the mutually reinforcing nature of the process of development. The 80s adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on three core areas of health, education and employment. Women were given priorities in all the sectors including SSI sector. Government and non government bodies have paid increasing attention to women's economic contribution through self employment and industrial ventures.

- 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 Grassroots 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 related sectors.

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 ap-

proach.

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)
- Khadi And Village Industries Commission (KVIC)
- Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
- Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)
- Entrepreneurial Development programme (EDPs)
- Management Development programmes
- Women's Development Corporations (WDCs)
- Marketing of Non-Farm Products of Rural Women (MAHIMA)
- Assistance to Rural Women in Non-Farm Development (ARWIND) schemes
- Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)
- Working Women's Forum
- Indira Mahila Yojana
- Indira Mahila Kendra
- Mahila Samiti Yojana
- Mahila Vikas Nidhi
- Micro Credit Scheme
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
- SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi
- Mahila Vikas Nidhi
- SBI's Street Shakti Scheme
- NGO's Credit Schemes
- Micro & Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programmes (MSE-CDP).
- National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes
- Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana (RGMVP)
- Priyadarshini Project- A programme for Rural Women Empowerment and Livelihood in Mid Gangetic Plains'
- Exhibitions for women, under promotional package for Micro & Small enterprises approved by CCEA under marketing support.

The efforts of government and its different agencies are ably supplemented by NGOs that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps. Of course we have come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding.