



Women Entrepreneurs in India - Problems & Prospects

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ABSTRACT

There were the days where women were restricted to only house hold activities. They were not allowed to do any other work apart from their routine work at home. Even if they allowed to work, their services were restricted only to their family. But, now the situation has changed a lot. They are coming out of the house and performing various activities like Accountants, Manages, Teachers, Lawyers, Doctors, Auditors etc., In the same manner women are now entering into the Business World as Entrepreneurs. In this context this paper is intended to observe the various problems faced by women entrepreneurs in India. It is also trying to give some suggestion to overcome these problems.

KEYWORDS :

"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 the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation".

- APJ Abdul Kalam

Introduction:

Entrepreneurs are the key to the development of any country, whether it is developed or developing. Women as entrepreneurs playing prominent role in the development of India. But in our country, women have to face many constraints in carrying out economic activities or undertaking any entrepreneurial work. Even if they are more efficient than men due to the Social and Cultural barriers women are not treated on par with men.

Meaning of Entrepreneur – The term entrepreneur in the modern sense came into usage in the late 18th century with the advent of the industrial revolution in England. The term "entrepreneur" has been derived from the French word "entreprendre" means 'to undertake'.

"An enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated by the enterprise to women."

--- Government of India

The entrepreneur is the person who has the task of determining the kind of business to be operated.

--- Herberton Evans

Entrepreneur is a person who makes decision under alternative courses of action.

---Clarence Danhof

Objectives of the Study:

The main objective of the paper is to discuss the various problems faced by women entrepreneurs and to suggest some remedies to reduce those problems.

Methodology:

The paper is prepared on the basis of both primary and secondary data.

Primary data is collected from the personal interview of the women who are involved in self employment and have small business units.

The secondary information has been collected from different articles published in different journals, periodicals, conference paper, working paper and websites.

Review of Literature:

Bowen & Hisrich, (1986), says that female entrepreneurs are relatively well educated in general but not in management skills, high in internal locus of control, more masculine, or instrumental than other women in their values likely to have had entrepreneurial fathers.

Prof.C.P.Kothawale, says that 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.

Problems of Women Entrepreneurs in India:

Women in India plays an important role as entrepreneur in the development of the nation. These days more and more number of women are coming forward to start their own business unit and becoming entrepreneur. But still they are facing several problems compared to men. Some of the important problems faced by women are as follows:

Gender Discrimination:

The first and foremost important problem faced by women entrepreneur is gender discrimination which starts birth and ends with death. Even today In India, if a mother give birth to a boy the family will be very happy but, if the same mother give birth to a girl the same family will feel the girl child as burden. Still most of the people are going to scanning centres to find out the gender of the baby who is in the mother's womb. If they came to know that the baby is a girl child they are not hesitating to kill the baby in the womb itself. When they don't give the opportunity for a girl child to take birth, how can we expect them to become entrepreneurs.

Educational Barriers:

Most of the Indian people (Men and Women) feel the boy as the person who takes care about them, when they become old. The same parents feel that the girl as burden and feels her as the person who born to take their all money to her in-laws place. Because of this reason, till today most of the parents are not allowing their girl child to get education. Without formal education, women cannot run the business successfully in this competitive world.

Social barriers:

From the childhood women are treated as second gender and they

are treated as the one who born to fulfil the needs of the men. The parents of the girl want their daughter to get married as early as possible. She is treated as the machinery made to produce the children. Even today, most of the women are sticking themselves to the household work even they are well educated.

Financial Problems:

From the ancient days women do not own any property. Even if she gets anything at the time of her marriage as "Sridhan" the same will be given to her husband and children. As they don't have any sort of security to give, the banker, money lenders and financial institutions are hesitating to provide them with financial assistance. Without adequate financial support the women cannot establish a business unit and run it successfully.

Huge Competition:

Women entrepreneurs are facing tough competition from male entrepreneurs who are well educated and have sufficient financial resources. As the men are formally well educated and have various sources of financial resources they are dominating the women in this competitive world.

Lack of Professional and Managerial Skills:

Women entrepreneurs in India are facing the problem of Lack of professional and Managerial skills. Even if they are educated, they are getting only formal education and they are not provided with professional education, which has become a problem for their growth as entrepreneurs.

Low risk taking capacity:

The risk taking capacity of the women entrepreneurs are low compared to men. Lack of education, training and financial support from outside also reduce their ability to take the risk involved in an enterprise.

Lack of Raw Material:

Women when compared with men have the problem of procuring raw material. They are unable to find out the ways from which they can get the raw material at low rates.

Remedies to overcome the problems of women entrepreneurs:

1. Women must be provided with proper formal and professional education. At the same time they must be provided with technical education, which can help them to overcome the problem of lack of education and professional skills. The government must take the policies to educate the women in all these areas.

2. Women entrepreneurial Workshops must be conducted as frequently as possible. With the help of these workshops the women from various places come to a common platform and they can discuss debate and exchange their ideas and opinion. It can help as factor to promote self confidence among the women.
3. As India stays in village, rural women must be encouraged to start small scale business units.
4. Women entrepreneur must be provided with adequate financial resources. Banks and Financial must encourage the women entrepreneurs to establish their own business units. Government must also support the financial institutions which are issuing the loans and advances to women entrepreneurs.
5. The traditional mindset and attitude of the society should be changed towards women. Women must be treated on par with the men and they must be given equal opportunity to get education and encouragement.
6. Awareness camps must be conducted in both rural and urban areas on the subsidies available to the women entrepreneurs and must give the knowledge about the various legal aspects relating to start new enterprises.
7. Women should have self respect and must try to stand on her feet.
8. The financial institutions and banks which provide finances to entrepreneurs must create special cells for providing easy finance to rural entrepreneurs.
9. The rural entrepreneurs should be provided finance at concessional rates of interest and on easy repayment basis. The cumbersome formalities should be avoided in sanctioning the loans to rural entrepreneurs.
10. Women entrepreneur in rural areas should be ensured of proper supply of scarce raw materials on priority basis. Material must be supplied to women entrepreneur at subsidy rates.

Conclusion:

Even the women of India are equally talented when compared to men, she is not provided with equal opportunities to share her knowledge and skills. Even till today the age old customs and traditions are followed by most of the Indian families which is the major constraint for women development. The traditional mindset and attitude of the society should be changed towards women. Women must be treated on par with the men and they must be given equal opportunity to get education and encouragement. If women are given an opportunity to get education, and if she is encouraged on par with men, she can perform her duties very well when compared with men.

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