



Women Entrepreneurs: Role, Development and Contribution in Indian Economy

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ABSTRACT

Women's entrepreneurship needs to be studied separately for two main reasons. The first reason is that women's entrepreneurship has been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. Women entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others and by being different also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems as well as to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, they still represent a minority of all entrepreneurs. This paper is focused on the women entrepreneurship in the India. It also looked at their Role, Growth and Contribution in Indian Economy.

Keywords : Entrepreneurship, Role and development, Women entrepreneurship in India.

Meaning and definitions

"An entrepreneur is an owner or manager of a business enterprise who makes money through risk and initiative". The assumption of risk and responsibility in designing and implementing a business strategy or starting a business.

"The Government of India has defined a women entrepreneur is " an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women".

Introduction

"You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women".

- Jawaharlal Nehru.

Around 1.3 billion people who live in absolute poverty around the globe, 70 percent are women. For these women, poverty doesn't just mean scarcity and want. It means rights denied, opportunities curtailed and voices silenced.

The past few decades have seen an increase in the number of women starting their own companies in many countries. For example, in Canada nearly 65% of the new businesses were started by women (Comper, 1991) Women are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as a way of coping with the "glass ceiling" that seems to prevent them from reaching top managerial levels in organizations (Morrison, et al, 1987). Others find that entrepreneurship provides them with greater satisfaction and flexibility (Belcourt, et al, 1991). The trend also has been seen in several Asian countries such as Indonesia and Singapore (Lieuanan, 1992). However, as Patel (1987) notes, the entry of women into business is a "recent development in the orthodox, traditional socio-cultural environment" (P. 172) of Indian society. While exact statistics are hard to come by, a decade ago, the proportion of businesses set up and operated by women was only around 1 per cent (Patel, 1987) This is much lower than the figures found in western nations. Several studies in Canada and the United States indicate that the problems facing male and female entrepreneurs are different. As Birley (1989) notes, while general models of entrepreneurship (such as the one proposed by Cooper, 1981) may hold true for both men and women, entrepreneurship is an activity that is situationally

and culturally bound. The role of women has traditionally been seen (by both men and women) to be that of wife and mother. This, combined with the lack of prior employment and managerial experience faced by many women (Hisrich & Brush, 1984; Fisher, et al, 1993), may result in differing market entry choices in the case of female entrepreneurs. Women also bear most of the responsibility for childcare and home management and these responsibilities often lead to work family conflicts. Identifying the constraints and limitations which prevent women with entrepreneurial skills from starting their own businesses is an important aspect of economic development especially in countries such as India. While there have been several studies on women managers in India (e.g., Kishore, 1992; Mishra, 1986; Vaz, 1987), there have been very few on women entrepreneurs.

Women Entrepreneurship Role in Today's Society:-

The emergence of entrepreneurs in a society depends to a great extent on economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors prevailing in the society. In many of the advanced countries of the world there is a phenomenal increase in the number of self-employed women after the world war. In U.S women own 25% of all business, even though there sales on an average are less than 2/5th of those of other small business groups. In Canada, 1/3rd of small business are owned by women and in France, it is 1/5th. In U.K., since 1980, the number of self-employed women has increased 3 times as fast as the number of self employed men. They have made their mark in business for the following reasons highlighted below:- 1) They want to assume new and fresh challenges and opportunities for self-fulfillment. 2) They want to prove their personalities in innovative, daring and competitive jobs. 3) They want to undertake changes to control the balance between their families responsibly and business obligations.

Development of Women Entrepreneurship in India

As in other parts of the world, women's entrepreneurship development in Asian developing countries has also a tremendous potential in empowering women and transforming society in the region. Yet, in many countries, especially where the level of economic development, reflected by the level of income per capita and the degree of industrialization, is still low, this potential remains largely untapped. Women owned businesses are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries.

The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. 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. They are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation. In India, although women constitute the majority of the total population, the entrepreneurial world is still a male dominated one. Women in advanced nations are recognized and are more prominent in the business world. But the Indian women entrepreneurs are facing some major constraints like –

1. Lack of confidence – In general, women lack confidence in their strength and competence. The family members and the society are reluctant to stand beside their entrepreneurial growth. To a certain extent, this situation is changing among Indian women and yet to face a tremendous change to increase the rate of growth in entrepreneurship.

2. Socio-cultural barriers – 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.

3. Market-oriented risks – Stiff competition in the market and lack of mobility of women make the dependence of women entrepreneurs on middleman indispensable. Many business women find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular. They are not fully aware of the changing market conditions and hence can effectively utilize the services of media and internet.

4. Motivational factors – Self motivation can be realized through a mind set for a successful business, attitude to take up risk and behavior towards the business society by shouldering the social responsibilities. Other factors are family support, Government policies, financial assistance from public and private institutions and also the environment suitable for women to establish business units.

5. Awareness about the financial assistance – Various institutions in the financial sector extend their maximum support in the form of incentives, loans, schemes etc. Even then every woman entrepreneur may not be aware of all the assistance provided by the institutions. So the sincere efforts taken towards women entrepreneurs may not reach the entrepreneurs in rural and backward areas.

How to Develop Women Entrepreneurs?

Development of women entrepreneurs can be taken into following ways..

- Adequate training programmed on management skills to be provided to women community.

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- Encourage women's participation in decision-making.
- Training on professional competence and leadership skill to be extended to women entrepreneurs.
- Training and counseling on a large scale of existing women entrepreneurs to remove psychological causes like lack of self-confidence and fear of success.
- Continuous monitoring and improvement of training programmers.
- Activities in which women are trained should focus on their marketability and profitability.
- Making provision of marketing and sales assistance from government part.

Women Corporate In Industrial Sectors - 2008-09

Table 1shows Women Corporate In Industrial Sectors - 2008-09

Sr. No	Industry	Percentage of Women Corporate
1	Transportation and Warehousing	15.1%
2	Agriculture Forestry Fishing and Hunting	14.6%
3	Whole Sale Trade	14.0%
4	Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	13.5%
5	Manufacturing	13.3%
6	Management of Companies	12.4%
7	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	11.8%
8	Administrative Support and Waste Management Remediation Service	10.0%

Source : <http://indiabudget.nic.in/es2008-09/esmain.htm>

Conclusion & Policy Recommendations

Entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women today are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the preserve of men, and have proved that they are second to no one with respect to contribution to the growth of the economy. Women entrepreneurship must be molded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges global markets and also be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena.

Policy Recommendations:-

- To create and develop some coaching, mentoring, counseling etc. programmed for the development of initial businesses, owned and run by women;
- To facilitate the access to funds for the women entrepreneurs, by creating and developing some funding products with subsidized interest, and advantageous credits destined to women wishing to develop their business, in compliance with the conditions related to the field of activity, investment, added valued, competitively etc.
- Another vital aspect of the strategy must be to facilitate the entry of women entrepreneurs into areas where high growth is expected. Special incentives, tax rebates, duty cuts and subsidized land and machinery can be provided to encourage women in emerging sectors. Special recognitions and award can be instituted for women participating in such targeted industries.