



Role of women Entrepreneurs in the Economic Development of India

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship development among women is important for the achievement of broader development objectives such as growth with equity. Studies indicate that many women entrepreneurs are found working in difficult situations when compared to their male counterparts. Factors like political instability, poor infrastructure, high production costs and non-conductive business environment affect women entrepreneurs more than men. Limited access to key resources like land and credit, legal and socio-cultural environment also act as serious impediments. In the era of globalisation changing pattern of trade and evolving technologies necessitate skill enhancement that many entrepreneurs in the continent are yet to possess. This paper presents a brief view of the role of women entrepreneurs in the economic development of our country.

KEYWORDS

women entrepreneurs, growth, infrastructure, production

Introduction:

Economic growth and development of any country are determined by human, physical and financial resources. An economy can move on to higher levels of growth either by acquiring a larger quantum of the factors of production or through technical progress. The objective of any planned development is to develop human resources to their brimming utilisation. Therefore, industrialisation is one of the ways of bringing about socio-economic development in any country. The economic development of a nation is sparked largely by its enterprising spirit. The characteristic of enterprising emerges from the inter play of behaviour and activity of special segment of the population known as entrepreneurs. For example, India's economy is today poised for a flourishing entrepreneurial activity. It is also known that a healthy business environment is an essential requirement for entrepreneurial growth.

Concept of women Entrepreneurs:

Women entrepreneurship has long been associated with concepts such as women empowerment and emancipation. Increasingly, it has also been marketed as crucial for increasing the quality of life of women in the developing world. Further, it has also been encouraged as way of making changes to the status-quo of women in the Muslim world and re-addressing the balance of power within the family unit. The benefits of women entrepreneurship are many and varied and have been researched in great detail in the past. The purpose of this research is to facilitate a discussion on how best to empower women using entrepreneurship. This will in turn help in the marketing of entrepreneurship as a tool for the female empowerment and emancipation.

Women constitute almost 50 per cent of the world population. So the socio-economic participation of women at the international, regional, national and local levels means using significant potential resources more effectively. Moreover, it is noticeable that entrepreneurship development and empowerment are complementary to each other. Women empowerment depends on taking part in various development activities. In other words, the involvement of women in various entrepreneurial activities has empowered them in social, economic, culture and other related fields. It can be understood that women entrepreneurs have been making significant impact in all segments of the economy in the developed countries like Canada, United kingdom, Germany, Australia and the united states, etc.,

Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to different push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stands on their own legs. For example, move towards independent decision making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. In other words, women entrepreneurs are persons who accept challenging roles to meet their personal needs and become economically independent. Besides, 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. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of this digital and dynamic era are growing rapidly that the job seekers are turning in to job creators. On the other hand, many women start a business due to some traumatic events, such as divorce, death of bread winner, sudden fall in family income, permanent adequacy in the income of the family etc.

The rising number of female business owners is currently a global trend especially in the developing countries. In the advanced market economies, women own more than 25 per cent of all business. Many people argue that women are 'pushed' rather than 'pulled' in to business ownership but recent, but recent studies indicate that many women now actively choose self-employment, especially the younger women. Quite interestingly, women entrepreneurs can significantly contribute to poverty reduction, mobilisation of entrepreneurial initiatives and accelerating the achievement of wider socio-economic objectives. However, the contribution of women entrepreneurs depends on their performance, which, in turn, is affected by the underlying facilitators and barriers. Over the past two decades, women entrepreneurs have come to be recognised for their significant contributions to socio-economic development of their respective countries.

Role and contribution of women entrepreneurs in India

In India, women dominate the micro enterprise sector both in rural and urban areas. According to the central statistical authority women account for close to 70 per cent of the micro enterprises in India are run by women. However, their participation in small, medium and large enterprises diminishes. Beyond the participating in productive activities such as agriculture, trade and industry, women have multiple roles in society. They participate in productive activities such as agriculture; they are responsible for caring for the family including the preparation of food, health care and education. Women need to balance this different role and therefore they are mul-

tasked, managing their businesses alongside all other roles they are expected to perform. Women account for a larger share of the informal economy operators, as well as those running micro and small enterprises in India. MSME's make a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of the country by way of supporting the people to earn money and make a contribution to family income, and by supplying basic goods and services for local consumption. However this contribution is not fully recognised or understood, and there is little in the way of research or statistics to provide a broader understanding of women's experience as business owners, their contribution to economic development or the challenges they face in setting up, managing and growing their enterprise.

Women entrepreneurs are often described as 'survivalist' and dominate the low skill, low capital intensive and often informal and micro business. Women tend to focus on business that is a continuation of their domestic roles, such as the service sector. The potential for the growth of women's enterprises is said to be low and is driven less by entrepreneurial drive than the need for survival. Women comprise 74 per cent of those employed in the micro enterprises sector. More than 65 per cent of all women in cottage/handicraft industries (micro enterprise) were engaged in processing food products and beverages.

Economic contribution:

Women's economic activities contribute directly to growth and efficiency in dealing with informal business problems and poverty reduction is one of the main issues for policy makers

i) Capital formation:

Entrepreneurs mobilise the idle savings of the public through the issue of industrial securities. Investment of public savings in industry results in productive utilisation of national resources. The rate of capital formation increases, which is essential for rapid economic growth.

ii) Improvement in Per capita Income:

Women entrepreneurs in India have also been exploiting the opportunities. They convert the latent and idle resources like land, labour and capital into national income and wealth in the form of goods and services. They help increase the country's net national product and per capita income which are important yardsticks for measuring the economic growth.

iii) Generation of employment:

Women entrepreneurs in India are playing an important role in generating employment both directly and indirectly. By setting up small scale industries, they offer jobs to people.

Social Contribution:

Women entrepreneurs are also contributing towards improving the balanced regional development and improvement of living standards in the country.

i) Balanced Regional Development:

Women entrepreneurs in India to remove regional disparities in economic development. They set up industries in backward areas to avail of the resources concessions and subsidies offered by government.

ii) Improvement in living standards:

With the setting up of small scale industries, reduction of scarcity of essential commodities and introducing new products can be achieved. Women entrepreneurs in this country are producing variety of goods on a large scale and offering them at low rates, as a result, achieving improvement in the standard of life.

iii) Innovation:

Innovation is the key to entrepreneurship. It implies the commercial application of an invention. As an innovator, the entrepreneur assumes the role of a pioneer and an industrial leader. Entrepreneurs have contributed many innovations in the developing new products and in the existing products and services. All these have resulted in economic development by way of generating employment, more income etc.,

Other contributions:

Women entrepreneurs are the main actresses in changing the culture of the society. In our country, women are workaholics and participate outside the house and develop the sense of independence and the like.

Thus women entrepreneurs in our country are directly or indirectly playing an important role in environmental protection, backward and forward integration and are acting as change agents, thus contributing to the economic growth of the country.

Conclusion:

In the majority of women operate their medium and small enterprises under very adverse conditions. Not only is it difficult for them to find premises, find markets for their products, access information and credit, but they also have limited access to training especially in the rural areas. Their educational levels are low, they are responsible for all the domestic chores and they have to seek permission from their family members to travel to trade fairs or for training, even if they do want to grow their enterprises. Women entrepreneurs need to be better organised into women entrepreneurs Association which help identify higher potential business opportunities, develop markets for their products, improve product quality and marketing skills, practice good financial management and secure better premises.

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