

Women Entrepreneur : The Emerging Economic Force

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ABSTRACT

As technology speeds up lives and the new millennium is now upon, it is useful to take time to reflect what will surely be one of the driving forces of the global economy of the 21st century. This is an entrepreneurs' era, as government sectors are turning into private sectors, it is the right time to enter into market as entrepreneurs. Currently, India has the best global talent, which is now required for technical and knowledge skills to take on the entrepreneurial challenges. Today, India is witnessing the emergence of a large number of entrepreneurs, but there is definitely potential for many more. The role of women entrepreneur in economic development is inevitable. Now –a –days women enter not only in selected professions but also in professions like trade, industry and engineering. Women are also willing to take up business and contribute to the Nation's growth. Their role is also being recognized and steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded 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. This paper focuses on Women entrepreneur, understanding of Indian women, their identity and especially their role taking and breaking new paths with new responsibilities. This paper also talks about how women entrepreneurs are playing important role in sustaining economic development and social progress and what are the problems faced by them when they ventured out to carve their own niche in the competitive world of business environment.

KEY WORDS : Women entrepreneur, Economic force

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Times are certainly changing and India too is in the midst of series of changes. Many people have started regarding entrepreneurship as a better use of their time, talent and energy. It is surely going to be one of the potent forces of 21st Century. We can certainly call it an entrepreneur's era, as government sectors are turning into private sectors. It is the right time to enter into market as entrepreneur. Currently, India has the best global talent, which is required to take up the entrepreneurial challenges. This transitional phase is also witnessing the emergence of large number of women entrepreneurs. Many urban based elite women have established their own economy i.e. entrepreneurial empire and are now ruling their world as they wished to. The hidden entrepreneurial potential of large mass of rural women has also gradually been changing due to growing sensitivity and documentation of their roles. They are no longer confined to the four walls of their homes. They have started seeking employment outside and even making their mark as women entrepreneurs. Government and NGOs are devoting greater attention towards promoting self employment among these women. The development of

entrepreneurial talent however is essential for sustaining a competitive atmosphere all around.

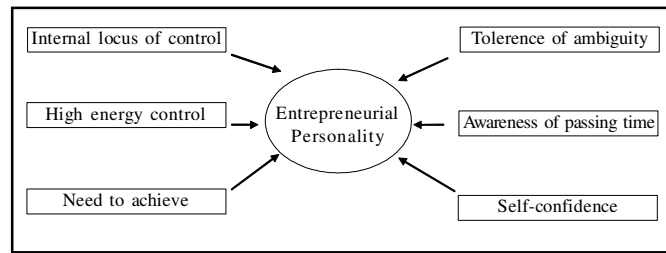
Who is a Entrepreneur:

In a broad sense women Entrepreneur may be defined as a woman or group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. Government of India uses the concept as "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 in the enterprise to women".

In sum, those women who think of a business enterprise, start it, organize the factors of production, run the enterprise and bear risks can be categorized as women entrepreneurs.

Traits of Women Entrepreneur:

The Entrepreneurs are known for their special characteristics. Some of the important traits of women entrepreneurs are illustrated below:



Internal locus of control:

The entrepreneurs not only have a vision but also must be able to plan to achieve that vision and believe it will happen. An internal locus of control is the belief by individuals that their future is within their control and that external forces will have little influence. An external locus of control is the belief by individuals that their future is not within their control but rather is influenced by external forces. Entrepreneurs are individuals who are convinced they can make the difference between success and failure.

High energy level:

A business start-up requires great effort. Most entrepreneurs report struggle and hardship. They persist and work incredibly hard despite traumas and obstacles.

Need to achieve:

Another human quality closely linked to entrepreneurship is the need to achieve, which means that people are motivated to excel and pick situations in which success is likely. People who have high achievement needs like to set their own goals, which are moderately difficult. Easy goals present no challenge; unrealistically difficult goals cannot be achieved. Intermediate goals are challenging and provide great satisfaction when achieved. High achievers also like to pursue goals for which they can obtain feedback about their success.

Tolerance for ambiguity:

Many people need work situations characterized by clear structure, specific instructions, and complete information. Tolerance for ambiguity is the psychological characteristic that allows a person to be untroubled by disorder and uncertainty. This is an important trait, because few situations present more uncertainty than starting a new business. Decisions are made without clear understanding of options or certainty about which option will succeed.

Self-confidence:

People who start and run a business must act decisively. They need confidence about their ability

to master the day-to-day tasks of the business. They must feel sure about their ability to win customers, handle the technical details, and keep the business moving. Entrepreneurs also have a general feeling of confidence that they can deal with anything in the future, complex, unanticipated problems can be handled as they arise.

Awareness of passing time:

Entrepreneurs tend to be impatient; they feel a sense of urgency. They want things to progress as if there is no tomorrow. They want things moving immediately and seldom procrastinate. Entrepreneurs “seize the moment.”

The changing face of women entrepreneurship in India:

Out of the total 1.21 billion people in India, female comprise of 586.5 million representing 48.46 per cent of the total population. There are 129.4 million women work force (representing 28.9 per cent of the female population) but as per the 1991 census only 1, 85,900 women accounting for only 4.5 per cent of total self-employed persons in the country were recorded. Majority of them are engaged in the un-organized sector like agriculture, agro-based industries, handicrafts, handloom and cottage based industries. Participation of women as industrial entrepreneurs however is comparatively a recent phenomenon. There were more than 2,95,680 women entrepreneurs claiming 11.2 per cent of total 2.64 million entrepreneurs in India, during 1995-96. This is almost double the percentage of women (5.2%) among the total population self employed during 1981. On this, a majority were concentrated in low-paid, low-skilled, low technology and low-productivity jobs in the rural and un-organized sector. Now, almost 79.4 million women workers were in the rural areas as against only 10 percent (86 million) in the urban areas. Only 2.5 million women workers were in the organized sector and a small percentage of 12.4% were total employed.

As per the 2001 census report, there are 22.73 percent of women workers of the total working population

including formal as well as informal sector. In the era of L.P.G. (Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization) the Indian women entrepreneurs are very fast entering the non-traditional sector, which indeed is in response to their greater awareness. Work participation of Indian women is 22 percent as per 1991 census and triple in rural areas around 27 per cent and in urban areas 9 percent, thus the role and involvement of women entrepreneurs in rural sector is tremendously enhancing.

So we can say that the status of women in India has been changing as a result to amounting industrialization and urbanization and social legislation. Over the years, more and more women are going in for higher education, technical and professional education and their proportion in the work force has also increased. With the spread of education and awareness, women have shifted from the kitchen, handcrafts and traditional cottage industries to non-traditional higher levels of activities. The Government has also laid special weight age on the requirement for conducting special entrepreneurial training programs for women to enable them to start their own ventures. Financial institutions and banks have also set up particular cells to help women entrepreneurs. This has rebounded the women entrepreneurs on the economic scene in the recent years although many women's entrepreneurship enterprises are still remained a much neglected field. Though, for women there are quite a lot of handicaps to enter into and manage business ownership due to the intensely entrenched conventional state of mind and strict principles of the Indian society.

Some initiatives by Government for Women Entrepreneurship Development:

Govt. of India has formulated various measures for women's economic activities and entrepreneurship.

Direct and indirect financial support:

- Nationalized banks
- State finance corporation
- State industrial development corporation
- Mahila udyog Needhi scheme
- District industries centres
- Differential rate schemes
- Small industries development bank of India (SIDBI)
- State small industrial development corporations (SSIDC)

Yojna schemes and programme:

- Nehru rojgar yojna
- TRYSEM
- Jawahar rojgar yojna

- DWACRA

Technological training and awards:

- Stree shakti package by SBI
- Entrepreneurship development Institute of INDIA
- Trade related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)
- National INSTITUTE of Small Business Extension Training (NSIBEI)
- Women's university of Mumbai

Federations and associations

- National Alliance of young Entrepreneurs (NAYE)
- Indian council of Women Entrepreneurs, New Delhi
- Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
- Association of Women Entrepreneurship of Karnataka (AWEK)
- World Association of Women Entrepreneurs (WAVE)
- Associated country women of the world (CWW)

Constraints faced by women entrepreneurs:

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

Twin responsibility and male dominated society:

Women entrepreneurs need to move away to a certain extent from the traditional roles of home makers and child rearing to more progressive roles where their economic contribution to society is regarded in a positive light .women perform dual role in society relating to production and reproduction that is why they are over burdened. The contribution to the family economy and national remains largely invisible and undervalued.

Lack of education and information:

In India, female literacy rate is 65.46 per cent thus nearly 35 per cent women are still illiterate. Due to illiteracy, women lack access to technology and marketing knowledge.

Scarcity of raw material and transport facility:

High price of raw material and getting raw material at minimum discount is main difficulty faced by women in rural area, lack of proper transport medium blocks the way of women.

Problem of marketing:

To market the finished goods women has to be at the mercy of middlemen who take up a big chunk of profit. Also, a lot of money is required for advertisement of product.

Limited mobility:

Their mobility is highly limited. The attitude of society towards them and constraints in which she has to survive and work are hostile

Problem of liquidity and finance:

Women have less access to finance due to various reasons like (a) lower inheritance shares than males to sue them as collateral for getting credits.(b) ignorance and lack of experience in formulating bankable projects (c) inadequate utilization of credit by women due to lack of marketing accounting and management skills further worsen the condition.

Lack of risk bearing capacity:

In spite of working hard women in India hesitate in coming forward to take challenges for better alternatives. Illiteracy, economic and social dependence reduces their ability to bear risks. Inadequate infrastructural facilities high cost of production and socio-economic constraints further discourage them.

Strategies for promoting women entrepreneurship:

On the basis of the aforesaid problems faced by women entrepreneurs and various other problems too, there is a provision of a number of strategies for promoting women entrepreneurship to overcome these problems. Such solutions or remedies can be well understood as under:

- Promoting entrepreneurship among women is especially important to tackle the problems of under employment and unemployment in the society.

- Education has been instrumental in increasing the participation of women in entrepreneurial activities. The formal education not only helps in acquisition of requires knowledge for a job, which demands non-traditional skills but also imparts knowledge about the different occupational opportunities. Good academic background makes women confident in dealing the problems in business in an effective manner. Although it is a fact that entrepreneurship is not a special preserve for the educated but in the case of women already burdened with many social pressures, education is a powerful tool in breaking down the barriers to successful entrepreneurship.

- There should be an incessant attempt to motivate, give confidence inspire an assist women entrepreneurs.

- Establishment of proper training institutes for enhancing their level of work knowledge, skills, risk taking abilities, enhancing their capabilities. Training centre should provide training to prospective entrepreneurs free of cost and entrepreneurship development programme should be much more practical oriented. Inculcation of self confidence amongst women that they can also run a business should be one of the prime motives of these programmes. Potential women entrepreneurs should be exposed to different type of emerging opportunities.

- A women entrepreneur should herself setup an example by being successful, as a role model. Since children have a tendency to emulate their parents, the resultant effect would be automatic.

- Creating provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level.

- A women entrepreneur's guidance cell should be set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs all over the state.

- Positive attitudinal change in the society recognizing the role of women as entrepreneur may lead to the development of appropriate environment in which women will be able to exploit their entrepreneurial talents.

Conclusion:

The women force of India will get another dimension if the entrepreneurial skill among them especially rural women is developed and channelled appropriately. Constant efforts in this direction would lead to a better human resource development and strengthen the nation's economic development. In the present competitive business and industrial situation, the women entrepreneurs whether in rural or urban parts of India, can play a greater role in the emerging new economy of the nation.

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