



A Study on Women Entrepreneurship in India

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Abstract:

Women empowerment should be one of the primary goals of a society. Women should be given equality, right of decision-making and entitlements in terms of dignity. They should attain economic independence. The most important step to achieve women empowerment is to create awareness among women themselves. Development of women can be achieved through health, education and economic independence. Realizing the importance of women entrepreneurs, Govt. of India has taken a number of measures to assist them. Women are the pillars of society and when women are empowered, the whole world is empowered. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) is empowering women entrepreneurs through its different schemes helping women spark their talent and build their own identity. Not only MSME, the Government of India has taken various steps towards women empowerment and safety. Initiatives like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Stand Up India, Mission Indradhanush, Mudra Yojana Scheme, TREAD (Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development) Scheme, Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme, Annapurna Scheme, Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs, Bhartiya Mahila Business Bank Loan, Dena Shakti Scheme, Udyogini Scheme, Cent Kalyani Scheme and many more have added to the welfare of the women population in India.

Introduction:

Entrepreneurs play a key role in any economy. These are the people who have the skills and necessary initiatives to take some new ideas to market or provide a service and make the right decisions to make their ideas profitable. The educated Indian women have to go a long way to achieve equal rights and position because traditions are deeply rooted in Indian society where the sociological and psychological factors set up have been a male dominated one. Despite all the social hurdles, Indian women have been standing tall from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their achievements in their respective fields. The transformation of the social fabric of the Indian society, in terms of the increased educational status of women and varied aspirations for better living, has necessitated a change in the lifestyle of

every Indian woman. She has competed with man and successfully stood up with him in every walk of life and business is no exception for this. These women leaders are assertive, persuasive and willing to take risks. They have managed to survive and have succeeded in this cut throat competition with their hard work, diligence and perseverance. The present study has been an attempt to generate awareness and to understand the meaning of what women entrepreneurship is and how important it is or the development of the world rationally, economically and in all spheres. An extensive literature review is done on women entrepreneurs. At the end some major problems faced by Indian women entrepreneurs, success stories of Indian women entrepreneurs, factors influencing women entrepreneurship and the perspective

of different sections of the society about women entrepreneurship have been noted. Index terms-women entrepreneurship, success stories, problems faced by women

Objectives:

1. To analyze the factors influencing women entrepreneurship in India.
2. To explore the challenges and barriers faced by women entrepreneurs.
3. To provide recommendations for improving the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women in India.

Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in India:**Government Support and Initiatives:**

- Stand-Up India Scheme, Mudra Yojana, and various microfinance programs.
- Policies focusing on rural women entrepreneurship and self-help groups (SHGs).

Growing Sectors:

- E-commerce and digital platforms: Women-led businesses making strides in online retail, services, etc.
- Women-led businesses in sustainable sectors like eco-tourism, organic farming, and social enterprises.

Women's Empowerment and Networking Platforms:

- Rise of women-focused organizations, networks, and communities that provide mentorship, funding, and advice (e.g., WEConnect International, Women's Entrepreneurship Day).

Innovation and Niche Markets:

- Women entrepreneurs entering niche markets with innovative products and services.
- Focus on health, wellness, education, and eco-friendly products.

Government Schemes for Female Entrepreneurs:**1. Mudra Yojana:**

- A government initiative aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and providing financial support to micro and small enterprises, with a special focus on women entrepreneurs.
- Mudra loans for women come with easy terms, no collateral for loans up to ₹10 lakhs and lower interest rates.

2. Stand-Up India Scheme:

- This scheme promotes entrepreneurship among women and marginalized communities by providing bank loans for the establishment of greenfield businesses. At least one scheduled caste (SC) or scheduled tribe borrower and one woman per bank branch are targeted. Loans range from ₹10 lakhs to ₹1 crore.

3. Mahila Coir Yojana:

- Empower women through skill development training and provide spinning equipment at reduced prices.
- Women entrepreneurs can receive a subsidy of up to 75% of the cost of COIR processing equipment, along with a margin money subsidy of up to 25% of the project cost.

4. Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE):

- Offers collateral-free financing to micro and small enterprises. The scheme, managed by Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), provides credit facilities up to ₹200 lakh per eligible borrower. Women-operated and/or owned enterprises receive a guarantee cover of 85%.

5. Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP):

- Aimed at generating employment opportunities by promoting micro-enterprises. The scheme provides financial assistance for setting up

new ventures and expanding existing ones. Women entrepreneurs can benefit from this initiative.

6. Udyam Shakti Portal:

- Launched by the Ministry of MSME, it supports social entrepreneurship by offering assistance with business planning, incubation facilities, training programs, mentorship, and market research. Projects with a maximum cost of ₹25 lakhs, including ₹10 lakhs for service-based projects, are eligible.

7. Economic Empowerment of Women Enterprises and Start-up by Women:

- A Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurs scheme providing an incubation and acceleration program for female micro-entrepreneurs. It aims to launch new businesses and scale up existing ones, currently operational in states like Assam, Rajasthan, and Telangana.

8. Trade-Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD):

- Designed to economically empower women by providing finance, training, development, and counseling. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) receive assistance in the form of a grant from the Government of India, up to 30% of the total project cost, to promote entrepreneurship among women.

Problems of Women Entrepreneurs

Basic problem of a woman entrepreneur is that she is a woman. Women entrepreneurs face two sets of problems specific to women entrepreneurs. These are summarized as follows.

Shortage of Finance:

Women and small entrepreneurs always suffer from inadequate fixed and working capital. Owing to lack of confidence in women's ability, male members in the family do not like to risk

their capital in ventures run by women. Banks have also taken negative attitude while lending to women entrepreneurs. Thus women entrepreneurs rely often on personal saving and loans from family and friends.

Shortage of Raw Material:

Women entrepreneurs find it difficult to procure material and other necessary inputs. The prices of many raw materials are quite high.

Inadequate Marketing Facilities:

Most of the women entrepreneurs depend on intermediaries for marketing their products. It is very difficult for the women entrepreneurs to explore the market and to make their product popular. For women, market is a 'chakravayuh'.

Keen Competition:

Women entrepreneurs face tough competition from male entrepreneurs and also from organized industries. They cannot afford to spend large sums of advertisement.

High Cost of Production:

High prices of material, low productivity. Under utilisation of capacity etc. account for high cost of production. The government assistance and subsidies would not be sufficient for the survival.

Family Responsibilities:

Management of family may be more complicated than the management of the business. Hence she cannot put her full involvement in the business. Occupational backgrounds of the family and education level of husband has a direct impact on the development of women entrepreneurship.

Low Mobility:

One of the biggest handicaps for women entrepreneur is her inability to travel from one place to another for business purposes. A single women asking for room is looked upon with suspicion. Sometimes licensing authorities, labour officials and sales tax officials may harass them.

Lack of Education:

About 60% of women are still illiterate in India. There exists a belief that

investing in woman's education is a liability, not an asset. Lack of knowledge and experience creates further problems in the setting up and operation of business.

Low Capacity to Bear Risks:

Women lead a protected life dominated by the family members. She is not economically independent. She may not have confidence to bear the risk alone. If she cannot bear risks, she can never be an entrepreneur.

Social Attitudes:

Women do not get equal treatment in a male-dominated society. Wherever she goes, she faces discrimination. The male ego stands in the way of success of women entrepreneurs. Thus, the rigid social attitudes prevent a woman from becoming a successful entrepreneur.

Low Need for Achievement:

Generally, a woman will not have strong need for achievement. Every woman suffers from the painful feeling that she is forced to depend on others in her life. Her preconceived notions about her role in life inhibit achievement and independence.

Lack of Training:

A women entrepreneur from middle class starts her first entrepreneurial venture in her late thirties or early forties due to her commitments towards children. Her biggest problem is the lack of sufficient business training.

Lack of Information Women entrepreneurs sometimes are not aware of technological developments and other information on subsidies and concessions available to them. They may not know how to get loans, industrial estates, raw materials, etc.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in India:

Access to Financial Resources:

- Gender bias in lending practices.
- Limited collateral and financial history hindering credit access.

Social and Cultural Barriers:

- Stereotypes and prejudices regarding women's leadership and business capabilities.
- Lack of social acceptance for women in leadership roles.

Work-Life Balance:

- The dual role of women as caregivers and entrepreneurs.
- Lack of infrastructure support like affordable childcare services.

Networking and Mentorship:

- Limited access to networks, mentors, and role models.
- Difficulty in navigating male-dominated business environments.

Reasons for the Slow Growth of Women Entrepreneurship:

- In spite of the initiatives taken by the government, the growth of women entrepreneurship is very slow. The reasons are outlined as below:
- Unfavourable family background
- Lack of business education
- Dual role of women
- Lack of aptitudes and training
- Absence of individualistic spirit
- Lack of freedom to choose a job according to ability, influence of sex, custom etc
- Inadequate infrastructure facilities
- Shortage of capital and technical knowhow
- Lack of adequate transport and communication facilities
- Shortage of power
- Lack of security
- Absence of ideal market conditions
- Corruption in administration.

Remedies to Solve the Problems of Women Entrepreneurs:

The following measures may be taken to solve the problems faced by women entrepreneurs in India: In banks and public financial institutions, special cells may be

opened for providing easy finance to women entrepreneurs. Finance may be provided at concessional rates of interest.

Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged and assisted to set up co-operatives with a view to eliminate middlemen. Scarce and imported raw materials may be made available to women entrepreneurs on priority basis. Steps may be taken to make family members aware of the potential of girls and their due role in society. Honest and sincere attempts should be undertaken by the government and social organizations to increase literacy among females.

In rural areas self-employment opportunities should be developed for helping women. Marketing facilities for the purpose of buying and selling of both raw and finished goods should be provided in easy reach. Facilities for training and development must be made available to women entrepreneurs. Family members do not like women to go to a distant place for training. Therefore mobile training centres should be arranged. Additional facilities like a stipend, good hygienic crèches, transport facilities, etc., should be offered to attract more women to training centres.

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