



International Journal of Allied Practice, Research and Review

Website: www.ijaprr.com (ISSN 2350-1294)

WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

Somlata Saini,
Extension Lecturer,
Government PG college, Narnaul

Abstract: In today's world Women Entrepreneurs has become an important part of the global business environment and had played a vital role for the sustainable economic development and social progress. Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as a woman or a group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise. Govt. of India has defined Women Entrepreneurs as owning and controlling an enterprise with 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. In India women have a key role in the society but a lower status in the entrepreneurial activities.

The main aim of this research paper is to find out the status of Women Entrepreneurs in India. The factors that motivates them to become an entrepreneur. It also studies the different policies made by the govt. to support Women Entrepreneurs and the obstacles faced by the women. On the basis of the study some suggestions are also given to encourage spirit of Women Entrepreneurs to become successful entrepreneurs.

Key Words: *Entrepreneur, sustainable economic development, Social progress.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has traditionally been defined as the process of designing, launching and running a business which typically begins as a small business, such as Start-up Company, which may offer a product, process or a service. Entrepreneur is a person who organizes or manages any enterprise which wants considerable initiatives and risk rather than works as an employee. He may also call the innovator of new ideas.

Women Entrepreneur has gained an increased attention in recent years in India. It has become the new engine for growth and the rising star of the economies of developing countries like India to bring prosperity and welfare. It not only contributes to economic growth and employment creation but also enhances the entrepreneurship diversity in any economic system and provides avenues for female expression and potential fulfillment.

Entrepreneurship has been a male dominant phenomenon from the very early age. But time has been changed the situations and brought women as today's most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs. The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07) aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action and ensuring Survival, Protection and Development of women and children through rights based approach.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Das, 2000 performed a study on women entrepreneurs of SMEs in two states of India, viz, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The initial problems faced by women entrepreneurs are quite similar to those faced by women in western countries. However, Indian women entrepreneurs faced lower level of work-family conflict and are also found to differ from their counterparts in western countries on the basis of reasons for starting and succeeding in business. Similar trends are also found in other Asian countries such as Indonesia and Singapore. Again the statistics showed that the proportion of business setup and operated by women is much lower than the figures found in western countries.
- Singh, 2008, identifies the reasons & influencing factors behind entry of women in entrepreneurship. He explained the characteristics of their businesses in Indian context and also obstacles & challenges. He mentioned the obstacles in the growth of women entrepreneurship are mainly lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs, social unacceptance as women entrepreneurs, family responsibility, gender discrimination, missing network, low priority given by bankers to provide loan to women entrepreneurs. He suggested the remedial measures like promoting micro enterprises, unlocking institutional frame work, projecting & pulling to grow & support the winners etc. The study advocates for ensuring synergy among women related ministry, economic ministry & social & welfare development ministry of the Government of India.
- Lall & Sahai, (2008), conduct a comparative assessment of multi-dimensional issues & challenges of women entrepreneurship, & family business. The study identified Psychographic variables like, degree of commitment, entrepreneurial challenges & future plan for expansion, based on demographic variables. Through stratified random sampling & convenience sampling the data have been collected from women entrepreneurs working in urban area of Luck now. The study identified business owner's characteristics as self 294 perceptions self esteem, Entrepreneurial intensity & operational problem for future plans for growth & expansion. The study suggested that though, there has been considerable growth in number of women opting to work in family owned business but they still have lower status and face more operational challenges in running business.
- Greene et.al. (2003), evaluate the research & publication contribution in the area of women entrepreneurship. The study categorized various journal & resources of research on the basis of certain parameters concerned with women entrepreneurship like gender discrimination, personal attributes, financing challenges, business unit, context and feminist perspectives.

- Damwad, (2007), describes the experiences, initiatives & obstacles faced at five Nordic Countries like Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway & Sweden toward women entrepreneurship. It broadly identifies few obstacles like financing, lack of knowledge & skills in business life, markets & entrepreneurial activity, work life balance including lack of growth & wishes to grow and most importantly women as other groups heterogeneous. The study compares early stage entrepreneurial male & female activity among Nordic countries with the same of USA. It also compares various programmes & schemes developed by Nordic countries & agencies that provide support to them. OECD & European Commission are focusing on methodologies in analyzing quantitative & qualitative women entrepreneurship. The Nordic countries need a framework for policy learning develop a proper policy mix towards promoting women entrepreneurship.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the factors that motivates women to become entrepreneurs.
- To study the policies made by the govt. for women entrepreneur.
- To find out the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature. Secondary data is used for the study and data has been collected from various research papers and different websites.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

For any developing country, Women entrepreneurs play the vital role particularly in terms of contribution to the economic development. Women entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important source of economic growth. By establishing their new venture women entrepreneurs generate new jobs for themselves and others and also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems. However, they still represent minority as women entrepreneurs, especially in India. Women entrepreneurs often face gender-based barriers to starting and growing their businesses, like discriminatory property, matrimonial and inheritance laws and/or cultural practices; lack of access to formal finance mechanisms limited mobility and access to information and networks, etc. Women's entrepreneurship can make a particularly strong contribution to the economic well-being of the family and communities, poverty reduction and women's empowerment. Thus, governments across the world as well as various developmental organizations are actively assisting and promoting women entrepreneurs through various schemes, incentives and promotional measures.

Over the past few decades women are coming out of the boundaries of houses and proving their ability and competencies in the business world. Today the roles of women are not confined to the traditional role of a mother or a housewife. The role of modern women is much wider than, what it was previously. A woman has to play multiple roles, besides playing the role of housewife/mother/daughter, she has to play different roles in community in the social settings simultaneously. Because of Indian culture traditional customs women, even after 63 years of independence, are facing bias. This has adversely affected the status of Indian business women.

FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE WOMEN TO BECOME ENTREPRENEUR

Self esteem, recognition, Self determination, and career goal are the key drivers for choosing to entrepreneurship by women .Sometimes, women choose such career path for proving their potential, caliber in order to achieve self satisfaction. However, dismal economic conditions of the women arising out of unemployment in the family and divorce can compel women into entrepreneurial activities.

The days have gone when women always passed her whole life within the boundaries of house now women are found indulged in every line of business. The entry of women into business in India is an extension of their normal home activities. But with the spread of education and passage of time women started shifting from doing work at home or kitchen to the business venture. 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. Many women start a business due to some traumatic event, such as divorce, discrimination due to pregnancy or the corporate glass ceiling, the health of a family member, or economic reasons such as a layoff. But a new talent pool of women entrepreneurs is forming today, as more women opt to leave corporate world to chart their own destinies. They are growing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation.

There are some fostering factors that are helpful to indulge a women in entrepreneurship and help them to fulfill their needs. These needs are motivational needs and facilitating needs.

- Motivational Needs includes economic necessity, independence, family occupation, education & qualification and success stories of friends and relatives.
- Facilitating needs includes adequate finance facilities, development training program, experienced and skilled people at work and cooperation of family.

STEPS TAKEN BY GOVT. FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Development of women has been a policy objective of the government since independence. Until the 70s the concept of women's development was mainly welfare oriented. In 1970s, there was a shift from welfare approach to development approach that recognised the mutually reinforcing nature of the process of development. The 80s adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on three core areas of health, education and employment. Women were given priorities in all the sectors including SSI sector. Government and non government bodies have paid increasing attention to women's economic contribution through self employment and industrial ventures. There are different schemes started by the govt. to help the women entrepreneurs. These are following:

- Mahila Vikas Nidhi

- District Industries Center
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
- Training programs

MAHILA VIKAS NIDHI: Under Mahila Vikas Nidhi, a cumulative help of Rs. 80.4 million was sanctioned. Various training-cum production centers set up by NGOs mostly relate to activities like sericulture, spinning, weaving, block printing, handloom products, handicrafts etc.

DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTER (DICs): DICs arrange various lectures and seminars etc. in girls colleges and technical institutes to encourage them to set up their own enterprises.

RASHTRIYA MAHILA KOSH: It was set up in 1993 to provide micro credit to poor women who had no access to financial institution at reasonable rates of interest with very low transaction costs and simple procedures. It proved quite useful for lower income group women.

TRAINING PROGRAMS: The govt. of India has started various training programs schemes exclusively for self-employment of women. The training programs include support for training and employment programs of women (STEP) and development of women and children in rural areas (DWCRA).

OBSTACLES FACED BY THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

- **Legal constraints in family law-** The institutional and legal environment is critical to the growth of female-owned enterprises. Laws regulating the private sphere specifically those regarding marriage, inheritance and land can hinder women's access to assets that can be used as collateral when securing a loan.
- **Heavy household responsibilities-** leave a demand on women especially those in rural areas who have more children. They are required to perform their traditional role as housewives and therefore, they have fewer hours of free time than men, both during the weekend and on weekdays.
- **Lack of family support-** Sometimes the family may make the women feel guilty of neglecting household duties in her pursuit of business obligations. Cultural traditions may hold back a woman from venturing into her own business.
- **Lack of capital-**traditional sources of finance like banks are reluctant to lend to women entrepreneurs especially if they do not have any male or family backing. This is especially true of lower income females. Women do not have adequate finance or legal knowledge to start an enterprise.
- **Lack of confidence and faith-** lack of role models undermines the self confidence of women entrepreneurs. The activity of selling is considered abhorrent to the female gender.

- **Conflicts between Work and Domestic Commitments-** Women's family obligations also bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations. "Having primary responsibility for children, home and older dependent family members, few women can devote all their time and energies to their business.
- **Gender gaps in education-** While women are making major strides in educational attainment at primary and secondary levels; they often lack the combination of education, vocational and technical skills, and work experience needed to support the development of highly productive businesses.
- **Lack of finance -** Access to finance is one of the most common challenges that entrepreneurs face and this is especially true for women who are further impeded by lack of personal identification, lack of property in their own name and the need for their husband's countersignature on many documents.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE GROWTH OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Right efforts from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the entrepreneurial activities. The following measures are suggested to empower the women to seize various opportunities and face challenges in business.

- There should be a continuous attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate women entrepreneurs.
- An Awareness program should be conducted on a mass scale with the intention of creating awareness among women about the various areas to conduct business.
- Attempts should be there to enhance the standards of education of women in general as well making effective provisions for their training, practical experience and personality development programs, to improvise their over-all personality standards.
- Organize training programm to develop professional competencies in managerial, leadership, marketing, financial, production process, profit planning, maintaining books of accounts and other skills. This will encourage women to undertake business.
- Vocational training to be extended to women community that enables them to understand the production process and production management.
- Skill development to be done in women's polytechnics and industrial training institutes. Skills are put to work in training-cum-production workshops.

Educational institutes should tie up with various government and non-government agencies to assist in entrepreneurship development mainly to plan business projects.

- International, National, Local trade fairs, Industrial exhibitions, seminars and conferences should be organized to help women to facilitate interaction with other women entrepreneurs.

- Women in business should be offered soft loans & subsidies for encouraging them into industrial activities. The financial institutions should provide more working capital assistance both for small scale venture and large scale ventures.

V. CONCLUSION

A major change in the traditional attitude and mindsets of the people in the society is required to eliminate the obstacles of women entrepreneurs. The basic requirement in development of women entrepreneurship is to make aware the women regarding her existence, her unique identity and her contribution towards the economic growth and development of country. 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. It is always viewed that a smart woman can pick up a job any day, but if she becomes an entrepreneur she can provide a livelihood to 10 more women at least..!! Highly educated, technically sound and professionally qualified women should be encouraged for managing their own business, rather than dependent on wage employment outlets. The unexplored talents of young women can be identified, trained and used for various types of industries to increase the productivity in the industrial sector.

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