



WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA – AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Half the world is woman. Educating a woman means educating a family. These two popular sayings underscore the critical and timeless roles women play in society. Women entrepreneurs are key players in any developing country particularly in terms of their contribution to economic development. Therefore, it is now quite significant to discuss about the concept, meaning, growth, problems and its solutions of women entrepreneurs in India.

KEY WORDS: Entrepreneurship, Women Entrepreneur, Problems, Employment, Agriculture.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR

Women entrepreneurs are those women who take the lead and organize the business or industry and provide employment to others. It signifies that section of female population who venture out into industrial activities. It may be defined as a woman or group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise. "A woman entrepreneur can be defined as a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving self economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment

opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life "(Kamal Singh). However, Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, a woman run a enterprise is defined as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51%of the employment generated in the enterprise to women".

REASONS FOR BECOMING A WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR

Many studies have concluded that women started their own businesses for a variety reasons. These reasons generally included the followings: Economic Independence, Establishing their own creativity, Achievement of Excellence, Establishing their own identity, Developing risk taking ability, Equal status in society, Greater freedom and mobility and Additional income to the family.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Economic development and growth is not achieved fully without the development of women entrepreneurs. The Government of India has introduced the following schemes for promoting women entrepreneurship because the future of small scale industries depends upon the women-entrepreneurs:

(i) Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana and EDPs were introduced to develop entrepreneurial qualities among rural women.

(ii) 'Women in agriculture' scheme was introduced to train women farmers having small and marginal holdings in agriculture and allied activities.

(iii) To generate more employment opportunities for women KVIC took special measures in remote areas.

(iv) Women co-operatives schemes were formed to help women in agro-based industries like dairy farming, poultry, animal husbandry, horticulture etc. with full financial support from the Government.

(v) Several other schemes like integrated Rural Development Programs (IRDP), Training of Rural youth for Self employment (TRYSEM) etc. were started to alleviated poverty.30-40% reservation is provided to women under these schemes.

(vi) Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) scheme was lunched by Ministry of Small Industries to develop women entrepreneurs in rural, semi-urban and urban areas by developing entrepreneurial qualities.

(vii) Women Comkpoonent Plant, a special strategy adop0ted by Government to provide assistance to women entrepreneurs.

(viii) Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana and Swaran Jayanti Sekhari Rozgar Yojana were introduced by government to provide reservations for women and encouraging them to start their ventures.

(ix) New schemes named Women Development Corporations were introduced by government to help women entrepreneurs in arranging credit and marketing facilities.

(x) State Industrial and Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has introduced following schemes to assist the women entrepreneurs. These schemes are: (a) Mahila Udyam Nidhi, (b) Micro Cordite Scheme for Women, (c) Mahila Vikas Nidhi, (d) Women Entrepreneurial Development Programmes and (e) Marketing Development Fund for Women

(xi) Consortium of Women entrepreneurs of India provides a platform to assist the women entrepreneurs to develop new, creative and innovative techniques of production, finance and marketing.

(xii) The following training schemes specially for the self employment of women are introduced by government: (a) Support for Training and Employment Programme of Women (STEP), (b) Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), (c) Small Industry Service Institutes (SISIs), (d) State Financial Corporations, (e) National Small Industries Corporations(f) District Industrial Centres (DICs)

(xiii) SIDBI has developed this fund for the entrepreneurial development of women especially in rural areas. Under Mahila Vikas Nidhi grants loan to women are given to start their venture in the field like spinning, weaving, knitting, embroidery products, block printing, handlooms handicrafts, bamboo products etc.

(xiv) Rashtriya Mahila Kosh was set up to grant micro credit to poor women at reasonable rates of interest with very low transaction costs and simple procedures.

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women entrepreneurs face a number of problems right from the starting of business till running the venture.

(a) Marketing Problems: Women entrepreneurs face the problems in marketing their products. It is the main problem of women entrepreneurs. Because, they have to depend on middle men for the marketing activities. Middle men tend to exploit them by way of add their own profit margin which result in less sales and lesser profit. Women entrepreneurs also find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular.

(b) Financial Problems: Women entrepreneurs face a lot in raising and meeting the financial requirements of the business concerns. Generally financial institutions are not ready to provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs. Obtaining the support of bankers, managing the working capital, lack of credit resources are the major financial problems encountered by Women entrepreneurs.

(c) Shortage of raw materials: The scarcity of raw materials and non availability of proper and adequate raw materials are most common problems met by the women entrepreneurs in running the business.

(d) Heavy Competition: Many of the enterprises run by women do not have perfect organizational set up. They employ low technology in the process of production. But they have to face tough competition from organized business concerns.

(e) Family Conflicts: Women in India are very sentimentally attached to their families. If Women are enters in the field of business, they must face the conflict of performing of home role. They are over burden with family responsibilities They spend more time in business, as a result, they find it difficult to meet the demands of their family members and society as well. In such situation, it will be very difficult to concentrate and run the enterprise successfully.

(f) Lack of education and training: Due to lack of adequate education and proper training, women entrepreneurs remain in dark about the development of new technology, new methods of production and other governmental support which will encourage them to flourish.

(g) Legal formalities: The legal formalities required for running an enterprise becomes an uphill task in India. In such situations women entrepreneurs find it difficult to enter into the field of business.

(h) Other problems: Society's attitude towards women entrepreneurs, male domination, lack of confidence in women are also haunting the women entrepreneurs in India.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEVELOP WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

It was suggested to treat women as a specific target groups in all major development programs of the country. The Government should devise and diversify vocational training

facilities for women to suit their changing needs and skills. Efforts should be made to increase their efficiency and productivity through appropriate technologies, equipments and practices. It was suggested to provide the required assistance for marketing the products produced by women entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION

The growth and development of women entrepreneurs required to be accelerated because entrepreneurial development is not possible without the participation of women. Therefore, a congenial environment is needed to be created to enable women to participate actively in the entrepreneurial activities. There is a need of Government, non-Government,

promotional and regulatory agencies to come forward and play the supportive role in promoting the women entrepreneur in India.

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