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## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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### ABSTRACT

*In modern era, when women are showing their capabilities in various walks of life, the entrepreneurial classes of women are playing an increasingly prominent role in the various sectors of industrial growth and economic development. Entrepreneurship amongst women is a relatively recent phenomenon. The world today is looking for entrepreneurs who are honest, enthusiastic, innovative, hard worker, motivator and optimistic. And it is found that women do possess these traits somewhat in greater quantum than that of men. Hence, one must be optimistic to have prosperous tomorrow for women entrepreneurship in a developing country like us.*

**KEYWORDS:** Women, Entrepreneurship, communication, Entrepreneurs, Childhood, Economic Development

### INTRODUCTION

The development of entrepreneurship among women is a major step to increase women participation in economic development. It will enhance economic growth and provide employment opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Providing economic opportunities for women can also improve the social, cultural, educational and health status of women and their families. Women, at present, have broken the monopoly of men and taken rapid strides and proved themselves that they are not inferior when compared to men. An attempt is made in this paper to focus on the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs and suggestions for their bright future.

### PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women face some problems not as an entrepreneur but as women. Therefore when compared to men the problems of women entrepreneurs are more in number. The various problems encountered by these entrepreneurs cannot be isolated they are inter-linked with one

another and have to be considered as an integrated whole. Hisrich, R.D. Marie O' Brien (1981) reported that "Almost 45% had problems of obtaining lines of credit, problems in marketing management and inventory control. About 50% of the respondents rated the problem of overcoming some of societies believes that women are not as serious as men about business. Significant problems due to lack of business training and knowledge occurred for female entrepreneurs". Women entrepreneurs encounter many problems in their efforts to develop the enterprises. The following are some of the important problems, which women entrepreneurs of the day are experiencing.

#### 1. Lack of Need for Achievement:-

Economic independence, autonomy, initiative are basic requirements for becoming a successful entrepreneur. But these basic requirements are absent or found in negligible quantities in women in India. She sees herself only in the image of a perfect mother, wife and house-maker. This results in a conflict, which inhibits achievement, independence and progress. Therefore, when the very urge is absent, how can she be motivated to

an entrepreneur?

## 2. Shyness:-

Their Shyness is considered as an ornament within the four walls of their homes but when it comes to deal with business environment, it becomes their greatest liability. This shyness further leads to poor communication ability and lack of self-confidence.

## 3. No Risk-Bearing Capacity:-

Throughout their life women are protected lot, in childhood she is protected by her parents, in adulthood she is protected by her husband, and in-laws and in old age she is protected by her husband and her children. So she never got an opportunity to take any risk in her life. Therefore, she has no confidence to bear the risk all alone.

## 4. Lack of Education and Experience:-

In India, urban women are comparatively more educated and aware of their rights and opportunities than the rural women. The overall literacy percentage among females is 54.16% and men 75.85% in India. Lower literacy level and experience when compared to men hinder the women to carry out their activity. Many women cannot communicate effectively to the outsider, especially higher officials because of lack of exposure to the outside world. Women of India have been perfectly trained to listen, obey and leave decisions to the male members of the family. Due to lack of education, she is unaware of technological knowledge, marketing knowledge etc.

The lack of education and experience among women entrepreneurs has a direct effect on the preparation of viable project report. The bankers take project report as a pre-requisite for formal lending to the entrepreneurs. Many a times the application for loan has get rejected due to faulty preparation of the project report.

## 5. Family Involvement:-

According to a study eight out of ten women interrupt their careers for the sake of family. In India it is almost only woman's duty to look after the children and other members of the family. Man plays secondary or an insignificant role. Her involvement in family problems leaves very little energy and time to come out of her shell and play a significant role in economic development.

## 6. Male Dominated Society:-

Equal Treatment to men and women is absent at the family level and social level, When a women steps into the middle management or top management levels, she has to face hostile subordinates. The male superiority ego complex creates a barrier in the pathway of success. This situation is found sometimes even between a husband and wife and usually under such circumstances, a women succumbs to male domineering ego.

## 7. Bias of Officials:-

The subtle bias of the officials of the government

and financial institutions towards aspiring women entrepreneurs has scuttled their growth. There is a wrong notion in the minds of the officials that women entrepreneurs are incompetent and lacks professionalism.

Women are viewed as women but not as a businessperson. This built-in-gender bias has aggravated the problems of women entrepreneurs.

## 8. Title to Property:-

The Indian constitution is an egalitarian charter as a text but fails in actual fact to ensure gender justice to women. The wide spread practice of inheritance which distributes property to only male survivors, ensures that women do not have clear title to land or any other property. As a result they have no collateral security to offer to the banks or other financial institutions.

## 9. Information:-

Women entrepreneurs are scared of the information about the facilities available like, bank finance, training facilities, schemes run by the government, legal aspects etc. The lack of information makes it very difficult for her to select technology, market and location and also to tackle problems related to labour and finance.

## 10. Marketing:-

Marketing is one of the serious hurdles for the women entrepreneurs. For marketing the products, they have to depend upon a middleman who exploits them and eats up a substantial amount of margin.

## 11. Finance:-

As about half of all informal sector small enterprises worldwide are run by women, access to bank credit is vital for them. At present, women are just marginally covered by the banking system. It has been estimated that only around 11 per cent of the total borrowings are by women in India. Many factors have been responsible for this inadequate utilization of bank credit by women, eg:- inadequate size of loans, insistence on collateral, time taken to process loans, tight repayment schedule, ignorance of banking procedure due to illiteracy, lack of experience in formulating bankable projects, lack of marketing, accounting and management skills.

## THE PROSPECTS

Women entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy all over the world. Women have some strong features required and relevant for entrepreneurship development such as, ability to manage details, dedication to work they take-up, tolerance and smooth attitude towards people. There is also a belief that women are more capable of facing risk and absorbing misfortunes than men. The declaration of the International Decade of Women (1975 to 1985) and the setting up of a separate ministry for women and child welfare in 1985 have given an added significance to the women entrepreneurship. The recent reservation

policy on women and the changing attitude of the society in present days towards women indicates that, bright future is waiting for them. To bring women on par with men and make her prosperous in the field of entrepreneurship the following measures are to be taken with interest and without bias.

### 1. Education and Training:-

Education plays an important role in determining ones socio-economic status in the entire society. Unfortunately in the traditional Indian society it was presumed that education for women was futile, waste of time and disturbs traditional outlook. But it should be noted that education is a prerequisite for progress and development of an individual. The authorities concerned should arrange work related training courses, seminars, symposiums, workshops, conferences etc, which should be convenient to the women entrepreneurs to attend.

### 2. Overcoming Cultural Barriers:-

Women were tied-up with cultural barriers. She is confined to home and home related work. Though, it is not an easy task to overcome these barriers but hard steps are to be taken to liberate women by educating and changing the human attitude towards the women.

### 3. Strengthening Existing Agencies:-

Different agencies play an important role in the development of women entrepreneurship. It is a high time to strengthen these agencies by providing the necessary facilities. However, if women cultivate the problems solving skill the dependency upon these agencies could be reduced to some extent.

### 4. Design Library:-

There is a need for the adoption of the concept of a "Design library" offering centralized services for product development, designing, consultation and upgrading of skills through continuous coordination with women entrepreneurs. It is worth mentioning in this context the project undertaken by the Ahmedabad based self-employed women Association (SEWA).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

It is necessary that women entrepreneur organizations and enterprises must provide equal opportunities to women and take initiatives to help them. More and more efforts have to be made to develop an atmosphere and environment conducive to women participation in equal footing in all matters of entrepreneurship development. Several steps can be taken by institutions, agencies and governments to encourage and facilitate greater involvement of women at all levels.

- 1) Access to information on entrepreneurs should be provided in large measures for all women throughout the country.

- 2) Associations of women entrepreneurs should assume responsibility of creating a greater awareness among young women.
- 3) Serious efforts should be made for maximum utilization of all viable information and technologies for promoting the cause of women entrepreneurs.
- 4) Efforts should also be made in the direction of starting Diploma/Certificate Courses etc., on Entrepreneurial Management and Development.
- 5) The family members of women entrepreneurs should also actively participate and extent all possible support in the matter of managing units set up by the women entrepreneurs.
- 6) Adequate insurance coverage should be provided to the industrial and business units promoted by women entrepreneurs against the business risks (financial losses) in order to safeguard the interest of the enterprise as well as the employees in the enterprise.
- 7) Information standing to various opportunities available to the women entrepreneurs should be made available to them promptly.
- 8) The legislative measures for dealing with the problem of small scale units run by women entrepreneurs should be relaxed and more liberal policies and attitudes should be adopted in these matter.
- 9) No union activities should be allowed in the first five years of the formation of business.
- 10) Rural women entrepreneurs should be provided with special training facility for developing their talents and skills etc.,
- 11) Orientation programmes and Facilitation Cells Centers in all educational Institutions can be organized to guide them and provide the necessary information about the schemes and opportunities, available to them.
- 12) Trade Association can provide expert guidance to women entrepreneurs in Matters pertaining to Labour Laws, Factory Act and statutory provisions.
- 13) The SFC, DIC, AWE, NABARD, IOBI, SIDBI etc., should set up guidance cells for such women entrepreneur. These cells should identify such persons, fund their project preparation costs, follow-up the proposals with the banks and get sanction IT on the banks. In case the project is sanctioned, all such costs can be capitalized and added to loan amount. In this way, a large number of women can be brought to the various economic

ventures without any real subsidy.

- 14) The central and state governments should promote entrepreneurship, by responding to the needs of women and creating an environment through removal of constraints and simplifying the flow of information and access to credit, skill development and support services etc.

## CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the growth of our economy. But they have a lot of problems. Even today women have been denied of equal opportunities and justice in spite of the constitutional guarantees. The law enforcing agencies should have an eye over the implementation of laws available towards the development of women. In order to run industrial enterprises on efficient lines, proper training, motivation and wide exposure become extremely important. Lastly there must be change in the attitude of society towards women than only she can stand on her own and lead an independent life.

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