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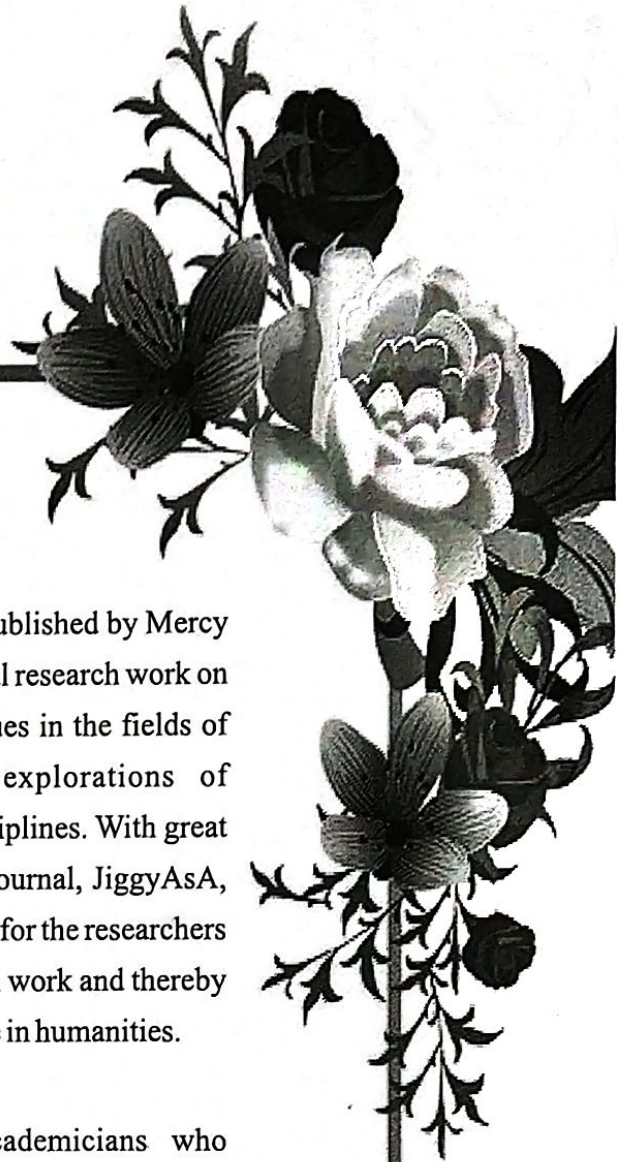
From the Editor's - Desk

JiggyAsA, National Arts Journal, published by Mercy College, Palakkad, Kerala publishes original research work on traditional, contemporary and relevant issues in the fields of Arts and Humanities. It promotes explorations of interdisciplinary links among different disciplines. With great delight, I introduce the Volume 14 of the journal, JiggyAsA, which tries to provide an academic platform for the researchers to explore and publish their unique research work and thereby contribute to the advancement of knowledge in humanities.

I thank all researchers and academicians who contributed their research papers for publication in jiggyAsA. I would like to express thanks to all the members of the editorial team, reviewers and authors. Looking forward to your continued encouragement and support.

With warm personal regards

Deepa N.
(Chief Editor)



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Empowering Women Through Entrepreneurship Development In India

Nijil Jacobi

Abstract

Entrepreneurs play a key role in any economy. These are the people who have the skills and initiative necessary to take good new ideas to market and make the right decisions to make the idea profitable. The reward for the risks taken is the potential economic profits the entrepreneur could earn. Women entrepreneurship development is an essential part of human resource development. Female entrepreneurship represents a vast untapped source of innovation, job creation and economic growth in the developing world. The barriers to women's entrepreneurship are various: Women face greater obstacles in accessing credit, training, networks and information, as well as legal and policy constraints. The development of women entrepreneurship is very low in India, especially in the rural areas. Entrepreneurship amongst women has been a recent concern. Women have become aware of their existence, their rights and their work situation. However, women of middle class are not too eager to alter their role in fear of social backlash. The progress is more visible among upper class families in urban cities. This paper focuses on women entrepreneurs' problems and the Government initiatives to solve their grievances.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, women entrepreneurship, human resource development, challenges

Introduction

In any developing world, entrepreneurship represents a vast untapped source of innovation, job creation and economic growth. The role played by entrepreneurship initiatives in the economic as well as social development of any society is highly significant in the present day world. Today, the entrepreneurship field seems to be widely opened in front of the citizens, attracting them to be a part in it. This opened door is attracting and promoting women entrepreneurs to a great extent, bringing them to the forefront in becoming a part or participant of the socio-economic development of our nation through their entrepreneurial initiatives in different fields.

There are mainly two reasons for which the women entrepreneurship needs to be studied separately. The first reason is that women entrepreneurship has been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. Women entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others and by being different; they also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems as well as to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, they still represent a minority of all entrepreneurs. Thus there exists a market failure discriminating against women's possibility to become entrepreneurs and their possibility to become successful entrepreneurs.

The second reason is that the topic of women entrepreneurship has been largely neglected both in society in general and in the social sciences. Not only women have lower participation rates in entrepreneurship than men but also they generally choose to start and manage firms in different industries than men tend to do. The industries (primarily retail, education and other

service industries) chosen by women are often perceived as being less important to economic development and growth than high-technology and manufacturing. Furthermore, mainstream research policies and programmes tend to be “men stream” and too often do not take into account the specific needs of women entrepreneurs and would-be women entrepreneurs. As a consequence, equal opportunity between men and women from the perspective of entrepreneurship is still not a reality. Thus women entrepreneurship is both about women's position in society and the role of entrepreneurship in the same society.

Women entrepreneur: Definitions

“Women who innovate initiate or adopt business actively are called woman entrepreneurs.” There are many definitions for women entrepreneurship. Some of the definitions include the following.

According to Joseph Schumpeter, women entrepreneurs may be defined as a “Woman or a group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise”.

According to Kamal Singh, “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.”

Women Entrepreneurship in India

The Indian economy has been witnessing a drastic change since mid-1991, with new policies of economic liberalization, globalization and privatization initiated by the Indian government. India has great entrepreneurial potential. Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, a woman run an enterprise is defined as “an enterprise owned and controlled by 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”. Women entrepreneur constitute 10 % of the number of the number of entrepreneur in the country. This has been a significant growth in self-employment of women with women now starting new ventures at three times the rate of men. They constitute 50% of the population of our country with a lower literacy rate than men. This statistical fact indicates that for the economic growth of the nation, women should not be encouraged to make their share of economic contribution towards the country.

One way of achieving is by making women come out and become entrepreneurs. In the traditional society, they were confined to the four walls, playing household roles, but in the modern society, they are coming out to participate in all sorts odd activities. Normally, women entrepreneurship is found in the extension of their kitchen activities, mainly in preparing commercially the 3“P”s namely, Pickles, Papads and Powder. Few of them venture into service industry relating to hospitality, catering, educational services, consultation or public relations beauty clinics, etc. At present, women involvement in economic activities is marked by a low work participation rate, excessive concentration in the unorganized sector and employment in less skilled jobs. Any strategy aimed at economic development will be lop-sided without involving women who constitute half of the world population. Evidence has unequivocally established that entrepreneurial spirit is not a male prerogative. Women entrepreneurship has

gained momentum in the last three decades with the increase in the number of women enterprises and their substantive contribution to economic growth.

In this dynamic world, women entrepreneurs are an important part of the global quest for sustained economic development and social progress. In India, though women have played a key role in the society, their entrepreneurial ability has not been properly tapped due to the lower status of women in the society. It is only from the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards that their role has been explicitly recognized with a marked shift in the approach from women welfare to women development and empowerment. The development of women entrepreneurship has become an important aspect of our plan priorities. Several policies and programmes are being implemented for the development of women entrepreneurship in India. Women enter entrepreneurship due to economic factors which pushed them to be on their own and urge them to do something independently. Women prefer to work from their own work residence, difficulty in getting suitable jobs and desire for social recognition motivate them towards self-employment.

Challenges faced by Indian Women Entrepreneurs

Women in India are faced with many problems to get ahead their life in business. The greatest deterrent to women entrepreneurs is that they are women. A kind of patriarchal-male dominant social order is the building block to them in their way towards business success. Male members usually consider it a big risk in financing the ventures run by women. The financial institutions are skeptical about the entrepreneurial abilities of women. The bankers consider women loonies as higher risk than men loonies. The women entrepreneurs are suffering from inadequate financial resources and working capital. The women entrepreneurs lack access to external funds due to their inability to provide tangible security. Very few women have the tangible property in hand. 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" (Starcher). The business success is depends on the support the family members. The interest of the family members is a determinant factor in the realization of women folk business aspirations.

Besides the above basic problems the other problems faced by women entrepreneurs are as follows:

Family ties: Women in India are very emotionally attached to their families. They are supposed to attend to all the domestic work, to look after the children and other members of the family. They are over burden with family responsibilities like extra attention to husband, children and in laws which take away a lots of their time and energy. In such situation, it will be very difficult to concentrate and run the enterprise successfully.

Male dominated society: Even though our constitution speaks of equality between sexes, male chauvinism is still the order of the day. Women are not treated equal to men. Their entry to business requires the approval of the head of the family. Entrepreneurship has traditionally been seen as a male preserve. All these put a break in the growth of women entrepreneurs.

Lack of education: Women in India are lagging far behind in the field of education. Most of the women (around sixty per cent of total women) are illiterate. Those who are educated are provided either less or inadequate education than their male counterpart partly, due to early marriage, partly due to son's higher education and partly due to poverty. Due to lack of proper education, women entrepreneurs remain in dark about the development of new technology, new methods of production, marketing and other governmental support which will encourage them to flourish.

Social barriers: The traditions and customs prevailed in Indian societies towards women sometimes stand as an obstacle before them to grow and prosper. Castes and religions dominated with one another and hinder women entrepreneurs too. In rural areas, they face more social barriers. They are always seen with suspicious eyes.

Shortage of raw materials: The scarcity of raw materials or availability of proper and adequate raw materials sounds the death-knell of the enterprises run by women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs really face a tough task in getting the required raw material and other necessary inputs for the enterprises when the prices are very high.

Problem of finance: Women entrepreneurs suffer a lot in raising and meeting the financial needs of the business, Bankers, creditors and financial institutes are not coming forward to provide financial assistance to women borrowers on the ground of their less credit worthiness and more chances of business failure. They also face financial problem due to blockage of funds in raw materials, work-in-progress finished goods and non-receipt of payment from customers over time.

Tough competitions: Usually women entrepreneurs employ low technology in the process of production. In a market where the competition is too high, they have to fight hard to survive in the market against the organized sector and their male counterpart who have vast experience and capacity to adopt advanced technology in managing enterprises.

High cost of production: Several factors including inefficient management contribute to the high cost of production which stands as a stumbling block before women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs face technology obsolescence due to non-adoption or slow adoption to change in technology which is a major factor of high cost of production.

Low risk-bearing capacity: Women in India are by nature weak, shy and mild. They cannot bear the amount of risk which is essential for running an enterprise. Lack of education, training and financial support from outside also reduce their ability to bear the risk involved in running enterprises.

Limited mobility: Women mobility in India is highly limited and has become a problem due to traditional values and inability to drive vehicles. Moving alone and asking for a room to stay in the night for business purposes are still looked upon with suspicious eyes. Sometimes younger women feel uncomfortable in dealing with men who show extra interest in them in work related aspects.

Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude: Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude is a matter of concern for women entrepreneurs. They have no entrepreneurial bent of mind. Even after attending various

training programmes on entrepreneurship women entrepreneurs fail to tide over the risks and troubles that may come up in an organizational working.

Limited managerial ability: Management has become a specialized job which only efficient managers perform. Women entrepreneurs are not efficient in managerial functions like planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating, staffing, directing, motivating etc. of an enterprise. Therefore, less and limited managerial ability of women has become a problem for them to run the enterprise successfully.

Legal formalities: Fulfilling the legal formalities required for running an enterprise becomes an upheaval task on the part of a women entrepreneur because of the prevalence of corrupt practices in government offices and procedural delays for various licenses, electricity, water and shed allotments. In such situations women entrepreneurs find it hard to concentrate on the smooth working of the enterprise.

Exploitation by middle men: Since women cannot run around for marketing, distribution and money collection, they have to depend on middle men for the above activities. Middle men tend to exploit them in the guise of helping. They add their own profit margin which results in less sales and lesser profit.

Lack of self-confidence: Women entrepreneurs because of their inherent nature, lack of self-confidence which is essentially a motivating factor in running an enterprise successfully. They have to strive hard to strike a balance between managing a family and managing an enterprise. Sometimes she has to sacrifice her entrepreneurial urge in order to strike a balance between the two.

How to develop Women Entrepreneurs?

To be a successful entrepreneur, women have to overcome all these challenges. Some of the ways by which the women entrepreneurship can be efficiently and effectively promoted are discussed below. These include:

Consider women as specific target group for all developmental programmers.

Better educational facilities and schemes should be extended to women folk from government part.

Adequate training program on management skills to be provided to women community.

Encourage women's participation in decision-making.

Vocational training to be extended to women community that enables them to understand the production process and production management.

The creation of government offices of women's business ownership is one way to facilitate this. Such offices could have programme responsibilities such as providing women's business centers, organizing information seminars and meetings and/or providing web-based information to those wanting to start and grow a business.

Incorporate a women's entrepreneurial dimension in the formation of all Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) related policies and make periodical evaluations of its impacts.

Promote the development of women entrepreneur networks. These are major sources of knowledge about women's entrepreneurship and valuable tools for its development and promotion.

Improve the factual and analytical underpinnings of our understanding of the role of women entrepreneurs in the economy. This requires strengthening the statistical basis for carrying out gender-related cross-country comparative analyses and longitudinal studies of the impact of important developments and policies, especially over time.

Steps taken by the Government to facilitate Women Entrepreneurship in India

The Government of India has formulated various training and development cum employment generations programs for the women to start their ventures. These programmes are as follows:

1. Steps taken during different plan periods

During Seventh Five-Year Plan: In the seventh five-year plan, a special chapter on the "Integration of women in development" was introduced by Government with following suggestion:

Specific target group: It was suggested to treat women as a specific target groups in major development programs of the country.

Arranging training facilities: It is also suggested in the chapter to devise and diversify vocational training facilities for women to suit their changing needs and skills.

Developing new equipment: Efforts should be made to increase their efficiency and productivity through appropriate technologies, equipment and practices.

Marketing assistance: It was suggested to provide the required assistance for marketing products produced by women entrepreneurs.

Decision-making process: It was also suggested to involve the women in decision-making process.

During Eight Five-Year Plan: The Government of India devised special programs to increase employment and income-generating activities for women in rural areas. The following plans were launched during the Eight Five Year Plan:

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

"Women in agriculture" scheme were introduced to train women farmers having small and marginal holdings in agriculture and allied activities.

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

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.

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

During Ninth Five-Year Plan: 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:

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

Women Component Plan, a special strategy adopted by Government to provide assistance to women entrepreneurs.

SwarnaJayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana and SwaranJayantiSekhariRozgarYojana were introduced by government to provide reservations for women and encouraging them to start their ventures.

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

State Industrial and Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has introduced following schemes to assist the women entrepreneurs. These schemes are:

MahilaUdyamNidhi

Micro Cordite Scheme for Women

MahilaVikasNidhi

Women Entrepreneurial Development Programmes

Marketing Development Fund for Women

2. Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs of India

This provides a platform to assist the women entrepreneurs to develop new, creative and innovative techniques of production, finance and marketing. There are different bodies such as NGOs, voluntary organizations, Self-help groups, institutions and individual enterprises from rural and urban areas which collectively help the women entrepreneurs in their activities.

3. Training programmes: The following training schemes especially for the self-employment of women are introduced by government:

Support for Training and Employment Programme of Women (STEP).

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA).

Small Industry Service Institutes (SISIs).

State Financial Corporations.

National Small Industries Corporations.

District Industrial Centres (DICs)

4. MahilaVikasNidhi: SIDBI has developed this fund for the entrepreneurial development of women especially in rural areas. Under MahilaVikasNidhi 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.

5. RashtriyaMahilaKosh: In 1993, RashtriyaMahilaKosh was set up to grant micro credit to poor women at reasonable rates of interest with very low transaction costs and simple procedures.

Supportive Measures for Women's Economic Activities and Entrepreneurship

A. Direct & Indirect Financial Support

- Nationalized banks

- State finance corporation
- State industrial development corporation
- District industries centers
- Differential rate schemes
- MahilaUdyogNidhi scheme
- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)
- State Small Industrial Development Corporations (SSIDCs)

B. 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 (NSIBET)
- Women's University of Mumbai

C. Federations and Associations

- National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE)
- India Council of Women Entrepreneurs, New Delhi
- Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
- Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka (AWEK)
- World Association of Women Entrepreneurs (WAWA)
- Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)

Recommendations for Development of Women Entrepreneurship Initiatives

Some of the recommendations for the development and promotion of women entrepreneurship activities and start-ups are discussed below.

Recommendations for policymakers and governments:

Ensure that legislation provides equal opportunities for women and men.

Where legislation is gender-neutral, ensure that nondiscrimination is actually practiced.

Partner with private sector companies (including financial institutions) to enhance regulatory frameworks for the benefit of women entrepreneurs (e.g., credit reporting, opening hours of financial institutions).

Explore opportunities for supplier diversity policies that promote sourcing from SMEs (including from women-owned enterprises).

Further knowledge about opportunities and obstacles faced by women-owned enterprises.

Recommendations for the private sector:

Conduct market research to identify the potential business case for women-targeted interventions.

Look for opportunities to finance women-owned SMEs, including sources of finance and equity capital.

Join programs that provide knowledge on how to profitably reach the women's market (e.g., the Global Banking Alliance for Women for financial institutions).

Explore partnerships that better link access to finance with capacity-building programs (including targeting entire value chains).

Identify support-program mechanisms for women entrepreneurs that can have an impact on the entire value chains where women entrepreneurs are concentrated.

In partnership with research institutes, improve results measurement frameworks so as to better capture the success factors of capacity-building programs for women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women today are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the preserve of men, and have proved that they are second to no one with respect to contribution to the growth of the economy. Women entrepreneurship must be molded 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. Women have the potential and determination to setup, uphold and supervise their own enterprise in a very systematic manner, appropriate support and encouragement from the society, family, government can make these women entrepreneur a part of mainstream of national economy and they can contribute to the economy progress of India.

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