

Women Entrepreneurship Development: Challenges and Problems

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurs face a series of problems right from the beginning till the enterprise functions. Being a woman itself poses various problems to a woman entrepreneur. The problems of Indian women pertain to her responsibility towards family, society and their work. The tradition, customs, socio cultural values, ethics, motherhood subordinates to their husband and men, physically weak, hard work areas, feeling of insecurity, cannot be tough etc are some peculiar problems that the Indian women are coming across while they jump into entrepreneurship.

Women in rural areas have to suffer still further. They face tough resistance from men. They are considered as helpers. The attitude of society towards her and constraints in which she has to live and work are not very conducive. The study aims at understanding the problems for development of women entrepreneurship in India.

Keywords: - *Problems, Challenges, Women Entrepreneurship, Development*

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship is necessary to initiate the process of economic development of both developed and developing countries. It is also instrumental in sustaining the process of economic development. Every country tries to achieve economic development for prosperity and better life to people. So, contribution of both men and women is essential in economic activities for healthy nation building. But in India, women have to face many constraints in carrying out economic activities or undertaking any entrepreneurial work. Women have to face various socio-economic and other problems as entrepreneurs as they are not treated at par with men due to social and cultural traditions. In recent years, it is observed that there has been increasing trend in number of women enterprises in India as the result of changing scenario of the present world. Both men and women are participating in large number in the present world of business. Today, more and more women are undertaking various economic activities. They are playing very important role in socio-economic development of all countries. Because of their participation, global economy is being changed at present. All over the world, it is estimated that approximately one third of the business organizations are owned by women. In India, the position in this regard is near about the same..

Definition of Entrepreneur: The term „entrepreneur“ has been derived from the French word „entreprendre“ means to undertake. The term entrepreneur may be defined as “an entrepreneur is a person who combines capital and labor for production”.

Problems Faced By Women Entrepreneurs:

Indian women entrepreneurs face the following challenges in setting up and running business units:

1) Less Confidence: Women entrepreneurs are not confident about their strength and competence. Their family members don't stand by their entrepreneurial growth. In recent years, though the situation is changing, yet the women have to face further change for increased entrepreneurial growth.

2) Non-Availability of Finance: They have lack of access to funds, because they do not possess any tangible asset and credit in the market. Very few women have the tangible property in hand. So, they are suffering from inadequate financial resources and working capital.

3) Socio-cultural Disturbance: Women have to manage both home and business duties at a time. Such obligations may become a great barrier for some women in succeeding as an entrepreneur.

4) Lack of Managerial Skills: It is argued that women entrepreneurs have low level of management skills. They have to depend on other persons like office staff and middle men to get things done, particularly marketing function. They are at the mercy of middle men who pocket major part of the surplus or profit. Because of social conditioning, women are discouraged to develop the capacity of mobility and confidence required for marketing function. So, they lag behind in this domain.

5) Competition from Male Entrepreneurs: Competition from male counterparts develops hurdles to women entrepreneurs in business management process. Women entrepreneurs have to face the constraints of competition from male entrepreneurs due to less organizational skills than men.

6) Production Problem: Production in a manufacturing enterprise involves coordination of a number of activities. control of entrepreneur, there are others over which she has little control. Improper coordination or unintended delay in execution of any activity is going to cause production problems in the industry.

7) Lack of Knowledge of Availability of Raw Materials: For running business, entrepreneur requires to have knowledge of alternative source of raw material availability and high negotiations skills. Women entrepreneurs have lack of such knowledge and skills which affect their business adventures.

8) Lack of Education and Awareness: Entrepreneurs must have knowledge of latest technological changes; know how, etc for running business efficiently. But it needs high level of education among entrepreneurs. In a country like India, the literacy rate of women is found at low level compared to male population. So, they have not sufficient knowledge of technologies; know how, etc. that affect their business ventures adversely.

9) Low Level of Risk Taking Attitude: One pre-requisite of the entrepreneurial success is risk taking. It is normally believed that women being feminist gender have low risk taking ability. Because of this, they are suppressed by the protected environment and are not allowed most of the time to take any type of risk even if she has capacity to bear it.

10) Mobility Constraint: The Indian society is a conservative society which restricts the mobility of women entrepreneurs. Women are less mobile than men. The confidence to travel day & night and to different regions and States is lacking in women comparing with men.

11) 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.

12) 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 puts a break in the growth of women entrepreneurs..

13) 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 dominate with one another and hinders women entrepreneurs too. In rural areas, they face more social barriers. They are always

14) Tough competition:

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 organised sector and their male counterpart who have vast experience and capacity to adopt advanced technology in managing enterprises.

15) 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 changing technology which is a major factor of high cost of production.

16) Low risk-bearing capacity:

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

17) 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 out 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 than work related aspects.

18) 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 organisational working.

19) Limited managerial ability:

Management has become a specialised job which only efficient managers perform. Women entrepreneurs are not efficient in managerial functions like planning, organising, 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.

20) Legal formalities:

Fulfilling the legal formalities required for running an enterprise becomes an upheaval task on the part of an 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.

21) 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 result in less sales and lesser profit.

Conclusion

Women, being almost 50% population of India, have a pivotal role to play as far as economic development of country is concerned. The Government has increased the importance of women by adopting various schemes and programs for their participation in economic activities. The Indian society is shifting from conservative attitude to progressive attitude. So, women are getting more opportunities not only in entrepreneurial work but also in other domains of human life. Women should be encouraged to take the benefits of policy measures introduced by the Government promote the status and level of women entrepreneurs in the country. Increased support should be provided by the Government to help women entrepreneurs in order to overcome the challenges faced by them.

Women entrepreneurs also require support from their family and society. They should be provided easy financial help without putting unrealistic conditions by banks and financial institutions. If women entrepreneurs get support and encouragement from family, society, Government and financial institutions, such positive effort can open new avenues for them and increase the marketability and profitability of business owned by them. If the problems of women entrepreneurs are addressed properly, they can emerge as very successful entrepreneurs far better than men entrepreneurs

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