

AN INSIGHT INTO PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Today's women entrepreneurs not necessarily come from the big business families or from the upper income groups of the population, they are coming from all walks of life and from all parts of the country. Even rural and semi-urban entrepreneurs are taking giant leaps for womankind. From promoting small cottage industry crafts to founding organic food companies and initiating new-age education modules – women across India are turning their dreams into reality with great determination and diligence. Interestingly, women are now breaking the glass ceiling consistently. From running sports media firms to construction companies and security and detective agencies – women are dabbling in every field that have traditionally been bastions of only male domination. But being an entrepreneur, however, isn't easy as start-ups have their own set of obstacles and issues. Women in particular have a bigger mountain to climb, far more challenges to overcome.

Keywords: *Women Entrepreneurship, Finance, Education*

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting of new organizations and particularly new business when new opportunities are identified. Women-entrepreneurs are effectively contributing in all most all the segments of the economy. According to ILO, “Women are fifty per cent of the world’s population, do the two third of the worlds work, receive ten per cent of the world income and own less than one per cent of worlds property”. It is a well-established fact that the national economy will become sound only if women will participate in income generating activities of the country. Hence the study of women entrepreneurship is significant in India.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to examine the challenges of women entrepreneurship in India.

III. METHODOLOGY

The statistical data for the study have been collected from the secondary sources. Secondary data have been collected from the various publications of economic survey reports, books, journals and periodicals.

IV. PROBLEMS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

In olden days, the Indian woman was only use to perform household works. And while there is absolutely nothing wrong in doing so, but today the Indian woman is proudly flaunting the many other facets of her personality. She is now a powerhouse who is fighting for her rights and making her mark in every field whether it is politics, business, science, sports, the arts and in society on the whole. At the same time, like the rest of the world, India is experiencing the start-ups boom as well. All one need is a unique idea, the required knowledge, a sound business plan, start-up finance and the willingness to work hard – and the fruition of one’s dreams is definite possibility. In this golden age of globalization, digitalization and start-up booms, India is clearly seeing a revolution vis-à-vis women entrepreneurs. The woman entrepreneur in India has various qualities. A woman or a group of women manages the whole business of enterprise. She prepares various plans and executes them under her own supervision and control. There may be some persons to help her but ultimate control lies with the woman. A

woman entrepreneur is now providing at least 51 percent of the employment generated in her enterprise to women. A woman entrepreneur takes calculated risk. She faces uncertainty confidently and assumes risk. She has to tie up capital and wait for good returns. A woman entrepreneur likes to take realistic risks because she wants to be a successful entrepreneur. The most critical skill required for industrial development is the ability of building a sound organization. A woman entrepreneur assembles, coordinates, organizes and manages the other factors namely land, labour and capital. It is essential to be a self confident for a woman entrepreneur. She should have faith in herself and in her abilities. She should have the confidence to implement the change and overcome any resistance to change. A woman entrepreneur should have courage to own the mistakes and correct them. The main function of a woman entrepreneur is to make decision. She takes various decisions regarding the activities of her enterprise. She decides about the type of business to be done and the way of doing it. A woman entrepreneur must be clear and creative in decision making process. A woman entrepreneur is one who incubates new ideas, starts her enterprise with these ideas and provides added value to society based on their independent initiative.

Today's women entrepreneurs do not come only from the established business families or from the higher-income sections of the population, they come from all walks of life and from all parts of the country. Even rural and semi-urban entrepreneurs are taking giant leaps for womankind. A Kashmiri girl created 'Dial Kashmir' – an app that became the much-needed digital yellow pages in Kashmir. India's first surfing club was started by a young woman, who followed her heart all the way out to the ocean. From promoting small cottage industry crafts to founding organic food companies and initiating new-age education modules – women across India are turning their dreams into reality with determination and diligence. Not only that, women are now breaking the glass ceiling consistently. From running sports media firms to construction companies and security and detective agencies – women are dabbling into fields that have traditionally been bastions of male domination. Being an entrepreneur, however, isn't easy. Start-ups come with their own set of obstacles and issues. Women in particular have a bigger

mountain to climb, far more challenges to overcome.

1. **Shortage of Finance:** The foremost problem faced by the women entrepreneur is the inadequate financial recourses and working capital. It is difficult for them to afford external finance due to absence of tangible security and credit standing in the market. Women have very less property and bank balance to their name. Male members of the family do not want to invest their capital in the business run by women due to lack of confidence in their ability to run venture successfully. The complicated procedure of bank loans also creates lot of problems for them in getting the required funds. Women entrepreneurs even face problems in getting requisite working capital financing for day-to-day business activities. Women entrepreneurs have to depend upon their personal saving and loans from family friends. Most of the women entrepreneurs fail due to lack of proper financing facilities, because finance is life blood of every business activities. Women are yet to make significant mark in quantitative terms. Marketing and financial problems are such obstacles where even training doesn't significantly help the women. Some problems are structural in nature and beyond the control of women entrepreneurs.

2. **Raw materials:** Another major problem that the women entrepreneurs face is the procurement of raw materials. The failure of many entrepreneurial units is due to the inadequacy of raw materials. The prices of raw materials are quite high.

3. **Competition:** Women are still struggling to find their footing in a man's world and entrepreneurship is no different. There is a lot of competition between existing and upcoming businesses anyway, add to that a woman trying to make it big without proper financial aid and organizational machinery to help her with advertising and marketing, promotions and canvassing.

4. **Lack of Education:** This is a major hindrance for women as it can be both a foundation of success or failure in any sphere of life. Nearly 60% of the women are reportedly illiterate in India which has always been one of the greatest socio-economic problems faced by our country till date. Due to lack of education and even basic awareness, women are far from happenings around the world, especially about technological disruptions, rising and

falling markets and business knowledge of any kind.

5. **Work-Life Balance:** Women especially married women with children shoulder plenty of responsibilities. Naturally, they find it had flitting between home, family, and business and it really can be considered an ‘art’ to be able to achieve a work-life balance with so much on your plate. Working for yourself does bring about a lot of flexibility, but every business is a roller-coaster ride for the most part, and managing the same can become extremely difficult with childcare, taking care of old parents and of course, one’s spouse. Needless to say, it counts as one of the problems of women entrepreneurs.

6. **Fewer sectors are Women friendly:** Despite the policies and measures to promote gender equality, men still dominate India’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. According to a recent survey, most women-owned businesses in the country are operating in low-revenue sectors, while men control the more profitable sectors like manufacturing, construction, and the like. The male-centric nature of many industries also forces women entrepreneurs to operate in sectors that are historically called “women-friendly”, such as education, apparel, and beauty care, among others. It limits their experience, opportunities, and capabilities to a significant extent.

7. **Lack of Social and Institutional Support:** Most women business owners are not socially supported for their business from families, peers, and immediate ecosystems. Lack of mentorship from the business community is also one of the main challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the country.

8. **Poor Funding Prospects:** As unfair as it might sound, the funding scene in India has massive gender biases. Women-led businesses in the country lack access to capital due to the prejudices of investors and other factors. According to a report by Innoven Capital, of all the companies that received funding in 2019, only 12% had at least one female founder.

9. **Lack of Entrepreneurial Environment:** Entrepreneurship is a long journey that involves a lot of learning, un-learning, and up skilling. An environment that exudes a strong entrepreneurial spirit is crucial for a person to become a successful business owner. However, many women often suffer from the lack of such a productive environment. To begin with,

many women are forced to manage their businesses from home due to family responsibilities. Consequently, they lose out better opportunities to go out, interact with the business community, and build their market access. It also impedes their learning opportunities, access to resources and mentors, and more.

10. **Limited Mobility:** Limited mobility is one of the basic problems of women entrepreneurs in India. They cannot travel alone or stay at hotels for business purposes without worrying about safety. What's more, many hotels in India still don't allow women to check-in unless accompanied by a man.

11. **Low Risk Bearing Ability:** In order to invest in and run a successful business, the entrepreneur needs to be able to bear some inherent risk. Women often do not have financial freedom and do not have practice in making independent decisions. They also lack confidence in their own decisions, which makes them risk-averse. This is gradually changing as with each passing generation women are taking charge of their finances and mitigating the risks.

Suggestions for the Development of Women Entrepreneurs

Right efforts on from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the entrepreneurial activities. Following efforts can be considered for effective development of women entrepreneurs.

- Government should consider women as specific target group for its all developmental programs.
- Women should be provided with the better educational facilities and schemes from government part.
- Adequate training programs should be organized on imparting management skills to women community.
- Encouraging the women's participation in decision-making at all levels.
- Vocational training to be extended to women community which will definitely enable them to understand the manufacturing processes as well as the basics of production management.

- Skill development programs should be initiated in women's polytechnics and industrial training institutes.
- Training-cum-production workshops should be arranged for the women community for imparting necessary skills.
- Special training on professional competence and leadership skill should also be extended to women entrepreneurs.
- Training and counseling on a large scale for existing women entrepreneurs should be provided for removing psychological problems like lack of self-confidence and fear of success.
- Counseling in collaboration with committed NGOs, psychologists, managerial experts and technical personnel should be provided to existing and emerging women entrepreneurs in India.
- Continuous monitoring and improvement of training programs is also essential for the purpose of improving their quality and effectiveness.
- The main focus of Activities in which women are trained should also include marketability and profitability.
- Special provisions should be made for marketing and sales assistance on the part of government.
- For encouraging more passive women entrepreneurs the Women training programme should be organised which should emphasize on recognizing her own psychological needs and expression.
- State finance corporations and financing institutions should be allowed as per law to extend purely trade related finance to women entrepreneurs.
- Women's development corporations should have access to open-ended financing.
- The financial institutions should be provided with more working capital assistance both for small and large-scale ventures.
- Provision should be made for micro credit system and enterprise credit system for the women entrepreneurs at local and district level.
- Repeated gender sensitization programs should be organized for training the financiers to treat women with dignity and respect as persons in their own right.

- Infrastructure, in the form of industrial plots and sheds, for setting up of new industries should to be provided by state run agencies.
- Marketing outlets should also be provided by Industrial estates for the display and sale of products manufactured by women.
- A Women Entrepreneur's Guidance Cell should be set up for handling the various problems of women entrepreneurs all over the state.
- Programs for encouraging entrepreneurship among women should be extended at local level.
- Training in entrepreneurial attitudes should start at the high school level through well-designed courses, which will build confidence through use of various behavioral games.
- More Governmental Schemes for motivating women entrepreneurs should be initiated for engaging the women in small scale and large-scale business ventures.
- It is necessary to involve Non-Governmental Organizations in women entrepreneurial training and counseling programs.

V. CONCLUSION

Independence of our country brought the dream of equality of opportunity in all sphere to the Indian women and laws also guaranteed for their equal rights of participation in political process and equal opportunities and rights in education and employment. But unfortunately, the government sponsored development activities were directed mainly towards a small section of women. Most of them are still unaffected with the various efforts made by the Government in this direction i.e. the urban middle-class women. If we look at the present position, the majority of women are still not empowered by any change or development plans. The various reasons for the limited achievement of the goals of developmental plans for women are well sighted in the discussion part of this article. The best way to address the problems faced by women entrepreneurs is to create a nurturing entrepreneurial ecosystem – one that provides them with access to resources, a safe and secure work environment, and social and institutional support. Collaborative and community-inspired workplaces like coworking offices will immensely be helpful in this endeavor. It is hoped that the suggestions forwarded in the article will help the entrepreneurs in particular and policy-planners in general

to look into this problem and develop better schemes, developmental programs and opportunities for encouraging the women folk to enter into more entrepreneurial ventures.

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