



A STUDY ON ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF SHGs A special reference with Salem District

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Abstract

In the post-independence India, the status of woman has undergone a perceptible change and the rate of change is accelerating. Women are more willing to accept challenges and assume responsibilities in various fields. As a result, today, we have a significant number of women doctors, engineers and administrators, but their participation in business and industry, requiring entrepreneurship, is still poor. The quest for economic independence and better social status forced women into self-employment and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship development among women has picked up momentum in recent years. Several factors contributed to this most welcome phenomenon. The policies of central and state governments have undergone sweeping changes in the recent past, particularly in the post liberalization era. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1991 highlighted the necessity to provide special training programmes to develop women entrepreneurship. The resolution further adds that the objective of such programmes is to increase the representation of women in the field of business and to enhance their economic and social status. There is also greater awareness among Indian women about entrepreneurship as a career. The growing awareness is mainly due to the fact that the profile of Indian women has undergone perceptible change in the recent past. At the dawn of international women's year 1975, the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi spoke firmly, "Since time immemorial woman has been discussed about mainly as a decorative objective. But when she has stepped out of this niche, by and large response has been one of cynicism and derision. Women liberation is not a luxury for India but an urgent necessity to enable the nation to move ahead to a life which is more than satisfying materially, intellectually and spiritually". National and state policymakers have undertaken initiatives that foster continuing growth of women - owned businesses. Educational institutions are creating new opportunities for women who are interested in entrepreneurship. Corporations have developed national and global marketing initiatives to meet in a better way the needs of women business owners and to provide them with the products and services needed to expand their businesses. Hundreds of media articles and television / radio broadcasts highlights about the growth, accomplishment and challenges of business ownership by women. Thus, true development of women entrepreneurs is slowly achieved.

Keywords: *Self Help Groups, Women Empowerment, Entrepreneurial Skills.*

Introduction

Indian women are increasingly active in the economy that were previously considered male domain. But the development of women entrepreneurship is very slow 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. Now-a-days self-help groups (SHGs) are playing a very important role in developing entrepreneurial skills among women. SHGs are not only developing entrepreneurship among women in rural areas but also in urban centres. Innovative thinking and farsightedness, quick and effective decision making skill, ability to mobilize and marshal resources, strong determination and self confidence, preparedness to take risks, accepting changes, access and alertness to latest scientific and technological information are the basic qualities in women. Therefore they are actively running their own business ventures with the help of SHGs. Though women entrepreneurship is a recent phenomenon, many women are venturing into entrepreneurship in all kinds of business, economic activities and service sector. Though in the initial stage, women entrepreneurship developed only at urban centres, lately it has extended its wings to rural areas too. Rural Women do not have in-depth knowledge about SHGs. Hence, it is very important to develop such programmes that can give them complete knowledge about these schemes so that they can take maximum benefit out of them. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) have paved the way for economic independence of rural women. The participation of rural women in entrepreneurial ventures from rural areas is very low. Therefore, there is a need to formulate such schemes which can increase their participation in entrepreneurial ventures. Based on the above problems, this study is very helpful to identify and measure the status of women SHGs in rural areas of Salem District.

Review of Literature

Nagayya and KoteswaraRao (2010) states that micro-finance refers to credit provided to the poor for self-employment and other financial and business services. They review the recent trends in the SHG-Bank linkage programme at National and State level with special reference to Andhra Pradesh in detail and certain aspects of the other three southern States, viz. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.

Satpal Sunil Phougat and SilenderHooda (2010) stated that there is lack of diversities in the Self-Help Groups activities in the State. Highest amount of resource have been spent on primary sector and mainly on milk cattle. There is less attention has given in other areas such as handlooms, handicrafts and other activities in the State. The problem of marketing of the goods



by Self Help Groups is a big constraint in achieving the targets. So, there is need for proper attention to solve such type of problems under SGSY.

Angel Anila.A (2012) Self Help Group plays an important role in developing the rural women in self employment. Micro finance through the Self Help Groups developed the entrepreneurial skills among rural women community and to get self-employment. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said, "To awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and nation moves." Now the women are awakened by the self help groups.

Statement of the Problem

Developing countries lay more stress on women development and their active participation in the main stream of development activities. In various national development programmes more importance is given on organizing women into self help groups. Self help group is considered as a powerful instrument for poverty alleviation in the rural areas. Self help groups have stories of women who not only are better off economically as a result of access to financial services, but who are empowered as well. Simply getting cash into the hands of women (by way of working capital) can lead to increased self-esteem, control and empowerment. By helping them to achieve greater economic independence and security, which in turn gives them the chance to contribute financially to their households and communities because women "tend to keep nothing back for themselves they contribute decisively to the well-being of their families". Researchers were found many problems in women entrepreneurs' development. Some of which are discussed as follows and the relevant measures to overcome these problems are also discussed herewith.

1. Women entrepreneurs have low-level of managerial skills as they lack motivation.
2. Women entrepreneurs have little knowledge about availability of raw materials, financial facilities, latest technologies and Government subsidy.

Objectives of the study

The study has following objectives:

1. To study the entrepreneurial skills of women in selected rural areas of Salem district,
2. To suggest measures to activate both entrepreneurs and non entrepreneurs.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on primary data. Primary data are collected through a pre- tested interview schedule and the data are tabulated by using SPSS for the purpose of analysing. Statistical tools like percentage analysis and frequency analysis are applied for the interpretation of data. Simple random sampling technique is used for selecting samples.

Sample Design

The multi-stage sampling technique was followed in this study. In the first stage, Salem district is selected as it is one of the districts where SHGs are popular. Among the districts, Salem secures second place in getting training for SHGs in Tamil Nadu. In the second stage, there are 20 blocks in Salem district; each block has a number of groups and 100 groups (Rural area) among 6081 groups were selected at random by using lots. In the third stage, the list of members was obtained from each group and 5 members were selected at random. Thus 500 members were selected for the study.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Innovative Skills

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
New methods of production	163	32.6
Self interest in innovation	182	36.4
Upgradation through training	79	15.8
Upgradation through literature support	76	15.2
Total	500	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 reveals that 36.4 % of the members are self interested in innovation and 15.2 % of them are upgraded with literature support.



Table 2 Nature of Planning Skill

Nature	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Knew business objectives	134	26.8
Clarity about targets	292	58.4
Have a business budget	38	7.6
Knowledge about cost reduction techniques	36	7.2
Total	500	100

Source: Primary Data

It is appreciable as 58.4 % of women entrepreneurs have clarity about their targets. Lack of knowledge about business objectives, business budget and cost reduction techniques dampen the planning skills of women entrepreneurs chosen for study.

Table 3 Risk Taking Ability

Knowledge about	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Business risks	36	7.2
Financial risks	52	10.4
Marketing risks	97	19.4
Personnel risks	37	7.4
Risk reduction strategies	278	55.6
Total	500	100

Source: Primary Data

From Table 3 one can infer that the chosen sample have little knowledge about risks. Though the knowledge about risk reduction strategies are comparatively good, it can still be enhanced through education and training.

Table 4 Decision Making Skills

Skills concerning decision making	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Analytical ability	36	7.2
Aware about business environment	58	11.6
Problem solving ability	266	53.2
Knowledge about the impact of different decisions	140	28.0
Total	500	100

Source: Primary Data

Though the problem solving ability of the chosen sample population is encouraging as per table 4, rest of the skills relating to decision making need emphasis.

Table 5 Leadership Skills

Nature of	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Ability to direct	41	8.2
Impress upon subordinates	77	15.4
Work done through others	74	14.8
Ability to improve leadership qualities	121	24.2
Suggest to lead the business	187	37.4
Total	500	100

Source: Primary Data

It is visible from the table 5 leadership skills of the chosen sample are not dynamic as “the ability to direct” is the minimum i.e., 8.2 %.

Findings

Innovative skills

Women entrepreneurs have to sustain the self interest and the remaining have to concentrate and upgrade their innovative skill.



Planning skills

Cost is an important factor for planning and implementation of business targets. Hence, it is advisable that the entrepreneurs have to acquire knowledge concerning cost reduction techniques.

Risk Taking skills : Women entrepreneurs are familiar with risk reduction strategies.

Decision making skills : Entrepreneurial challenges sharpen the decision making skills of women members of SHGs.

Leadership skills : This study clearly indicates that the leadership skills are sharpened by women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

SHGs today play a major role in poverty alleviation in rural India. Without empowerment, there cannot be growth. The research is very helpful to ascertain the real state of rural women. Women empowerment through SHGs is an ideal, realistic and practical strategy. SHGs help to attain the expected economic changes. The members of SHGs in Salem district have witnessed a lot of new dimensions for the successful running and functioning of SHGs. The District Industries Centre and other Entrepreneurial Training Institutes should take necessary steps to see that their programmes reach. Business management competence and entrepreneurial capacity must be built up in developing countries. However, entrepreneurship cannot just be taught but must be experienced. It is essentially a trial and error procedure. This experience, what works and what does not work, must then be passed on as practical knowledge in the educational system. Modernization of the work - place, introduction of new technology for increased production, increase of workers, along with the increase in the purchasing power, upgrades their status both socially and economically. Increased self - confidence through participation in trade and generation of income have blessed most of these women with a peaceful home and a prosperous future.

References

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