



WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract

Economic empowerment is a necessary condition for enabling women to seek justice and equality. Without economic strength, women cannot exercise their guaranteed rights. It is, therefore, necessary to seek participation of women as equal partners with men in all fields of work, equal access to all positions of employment, equal opportunities for work related training and full protection of women at work place. Economic empowerment of women, including reduction of female poverty require programmes that focus on identifying, developing and promoting alternative approaches to increase women's access to and control over the means of making a living on a sustainable and long term basis.

Key Words: Women, Empowerment, MSME.

Introduction

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector has emerged as a highly vibrant and dynamic sector of the Indian economy over the last five decades. MSMEs not only play crucial role in providing large employment opportunities at comparatively lower capital cost than large industries but also help in industrialization of rural & backward areas, thereby, reducing regional imbalances, assuring more equitable distribution of national income and wealth. MSMEs are complementary to large industries as ancillary units and this sector contributes enormously to the socio-economic development of the country.

Women Entrepreneurship and Public Policy

Since the beginning of gender-budgeting in the Union Government, various Ministries have started dedicated programmes for women, as also gender-specific provisions within the existing programmes. The Ministry of MSME has a specific scheme meant for women entrepreneurs called, "Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development" (TREAD), introduced during the 9th plan period, which has slightly been modified and is now put in operation. The scheme envisages economic empowerment of such women through trade related training, information and counseling, and extension activities related to trades, products, services etc. The project has three components: a) credit; b) training and counseling; and c) enlisting information on relating needs. The project covers a grant up to 30% of the total project cost as appraised by the leading institutions.

Andhra Pradesh is an agricultural state which produces the largest quantity of rice in India. Other food grains include millets, Jowar and Ragi. Cash crops include Tobacco, Groundnut, Chillies, Turmeric, Oilseeds, Cotton, Sugar and Jute. Agriculture accounts for a third of its GDP and 70% of employment. The state has largest deposits of quality chrysolite asbestos in the country. Other mineral deposits are coal, copper, manganese, mica, coal and limestone. AP's strength lies in its fully diversified industrial base, with the thrust on high- tech sectors including FT, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and Nano Technology. Traditional sectors such as textiles, leather, minerals, and food processing are also being further developed for high value addition. Major industries in the state are in machine tools, synthetic drugs, pharmaceuticals, heavy electrical machinery, fertilizers, electronic equipments, aeronautical parts, chemicals, asbestos, glass, cement and cement products and watches. In the small scale sector, there are pesticides and insecticides production, engineering workshops, automobile units and repairs, chemical industries, utensils manufacturing, wooden furniture, electrical items/ cotton ginning and edible oil, etc. More than 95 per cent of the total number of industrial enterprises in the state are MSMEs (174,000 units) and only 4,800 units are large enterprises. The fourth census of MSMEs conducted by the state government revealed that 10 per cent had shut shop. Most of the MSMEs units are in natural geographic clusters such as: Readymade Garments, Jeans Garments and Powerloom in Anantpur, Rayadurg, Chitradurg, Chittoor. Nagari, Guntur, Karimnagar. Sirsilla, and Warangal; Brass and Aluminium Utensils in Chittoor, Ventimalta, Srikalahasti, Chundur and Rajahmundry. Steel Furniture in Krishna, Chundur, Kavadiguda, Charminar and Vijayawada; Marine Foods in Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and Kakinada. East Godavari district houses most of the rice mills and refractory units. While Murshidabad and Hyderabad host leather tanning units electric and electronic goods, foundry operations, pharmaceuticals (both bulk drugs and formulations) are concentrated in Hyderabad.

Findings

1. The study shows that out of six hundred population three hundred respondents have responded. It is also observed 28.7% are from urban area and 71.3% are from rural area. It is also clear that they are operating since a long time in rural areas.



2. The study focuses on family size also, of which 68.3% respondents belong to nuclear families.
3. Regarding the length of experience maximum experience of respondents is in between 6 to 10 years.
4. Out of the total number of respondents 52.7% of them are operating their enterprises in the service sector.
5. The respondents who are operating sole proprietorship as a MSME program are 77.7%. Maximum number of respondents come under sole proprietorship.
6. The study shows the main reason for starting the firm is to promote self interest i.e., 36.7%
7. From the data collected it is evident that 50.4% of the respondents managed their business themselves.
8. The opinion survey on operating area of respondents enterprises, 59% of respondents operate the business near their residence,
9. It has come to light that the government financial support for women entrepreneurs is not forthcoming so it accounts to 66%.
10. It is observed that out of 102 respondents the financial support taken through Bank subsidiaries is 51.9%.
11. It can be analyzed that 70.3% of the respondents have not utilized the training provided by the government.
12. The study shows that capital invested in the business is in the range of 1- 5lakhs i.e., 41% of respondents have given the opinion.
13. The study focused on employment generation by women entrepreneurship. It reveals 76.7% are providing employment below 25 members, 100 above employees are only 1%.
14. Some of the seasonal business operated by respondents also feel that the problems like seasonal disturbances always occur in their business.

Suggestions for Betterment of Women Entrepreneurship in Andhra Pradesh

There should be a continuous attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and cooperate women entrepreneurs. Government should encourage and support women by providing infrastructural facilities, finance, training programmes, skill development programmes etc.

1. Awareness programme should be conducted on a mass scale with the intention of creating awareness among women about the various areas to conduct business.
2. Attempts should be made to enhance the standards of education of women in general as well making effective provisions for their training, practical experience and personality development programmes, to improve their over- all personality standards.
3. Organize training programmes to develop professional competencies in managerial, leadership, marketing, financial, production process, profit planning, maintaining books of accounts and other skills. This will encourage women to undertake business.
4. Vocational training to be extended to women community that enables them to understand the production process and production management.
5. Women Entrepreneur Guidance cell may be set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs.
6. Skill development to be done in women's polytechnics and industrial training institutes. Skills are put to work in training-cum-production workshops.
7. Educational institutes should tie up with various government and non-government agencies to assist in entrepreneurship development mainly to plan business projects.
8. International, National, Local trade fairs, Industrial exhibitions, seminars and conferences should be organized to help women to facilitate interaction with other women entrepreneurs.
9. Women in business should be offered soft loans & subsidies for encouraging them into industrial activities. The financial institutions should provide more working capital assistance both for small scale venture and large scale ventures. Infrastructure, in the form of industrial plots and sheds, to set up industries is to be provided by the state run agencies.
10. Making provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level.

Conclusions

A woman's practical needs are closely linked to the socially defined gender roles, responsibilities, and social structures, which contribute to a tension between meeting women's practical needs in the short-term and promoting long-term strategic change. By helping women meet their practical needs and increase their efficacy in their traditional roles, microfinance may in fact help women to gain respect and achieve more in their socially defined roles, which in turn may lead to increased esteem and self-confidence. Although increased self-confidence does not automatically lead to empowerment, it may contribute decisively to a woman's ability and willingness to challenge the social injustices and discriminatory systems that they face. This implies that as women become financially better-off their self confidence and bargaining power within the household increases and this indirectly leads to their empowerment. Finally, given that empowerment is a process, the impact of the MSME program may take a long time before it is significantly reflected on



the observable measures of women empowerment. The country needs to mobilize and utilize fully all its resources including human resources. The participation of women in economic activities is necessary not only from a human resource point of view but also is essential even from the objective of raising the status of women in the society. The economic status of the women is now accepted as an indicator of society's stage of development and therefore it becomes imperative for the government to frame policies for development of entrepreneurship among women. The long-term objectives of the development programmes for women should aim to raise their economic and social status in order to bring them into the mainstream of national life and development. For this, due recognition has to be accorded to the role and contribution of women in the various social economic and political and cultural activities.

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