

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS: A STUDY OF TUMKUR DISTRICT, KARNATKA

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INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. The Government of India has defined a woman entrepreneurship as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women". In India, women constitute around 48 percent of the population but their participation in the economic activities is only 34 percent. As per the Human Development Report (2007), India ranks 96th on the gender related development index of 137 nations.

The gender empowerment measures, which estimate the extent of women participation in the country's economic and political activities, rank India as 110th of the 166 nations. In the emerging complex social scenario, women have a pivotal role to play. Now women have taken up entrepreneurial role in order to create a meaning for themselves. The traditional roles of house wives are gradually changing into women entrepreneurs. Some of the factors responsible for these changes are better education, changing socio cultural values and need for supplementary income. When proper exposure, education and knowledge are imparted to them, Indian women will prove themselves to be potential productive force for the development of the nation.

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. There is a need for changing the mindset towards women so as to give equal rights as enshrined in the constitution. The progress towards gender equality is slow and is partly due to the failure to attach money to policy commitments. In the words of president APJ Abdul Kalam "empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured".

CONSTRAINTS FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

SOCIAL SUPPORT

The society plays a prominent role in entrepreneurial venture and success. Many researchers have been conducted to study the attitude and support to women entrepreneurs across the region. Some research concludes that, women received strong support from their social environment which she may have built either due to start up types requiring more social support or hesitation to enter the business formation forces.

MARKETING CHALLENGES

The other hand women face marketing challenges in the form of competition from cheaper and substitute product, delayed payment and liberal credit terms. Women entrepreneurs neither have knowledge nor access to proper market, thus they sell their product through the middle man. This middle man exploits them and entrepreneur received for price than desired even if the demand of product is high.

CAPITAL

Finance is a critical resource for venture creation. It is very important that women entrepreneurs have adequate knowledge and information of the various financial institutions which are rendering financial incentives and many other help for the women entrepreneurs in the region.

OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Women entrepreneur in India not only struggle at the time of establishment of enterprises but at operation stage also, they have lots to overcome with different functional difficulties. Usually women faced two fold operational problems and she has to overcome with problems of production process like, scarcity of raw material, lack of technical skills, lack of utilities and infrastructure facility.

MANAGERIAL SKILL

It is normally believed that women have low managerial skill. But in fact women are stronger in more logic based skills though they are weaker in self-promotion and handling frustration. The increasing number of female students and their excellent performance in management education is a proof to the fact.

MOBILITY CONSTRAINTS

Women in India have got restricted mobility, our society is a conservative society, and the career of women was limited to four walls of kitchen. Although now, women have got relatively more freedom in terms of entrepreneurial activity but also by the family members if they move out after normal hours. Though women faced lots of problems being mobile in entrepreneurial activity, the mobility problem has been solved to certain extent by the expansion of education awareness to all.

DUAL ROLE

The most exploited individual of the day are the working women, as they have to perform dual responsibility, one at work and another as family as mother of wife. The level of women exploitation on family responsibility ground depends on her social dependence. Women also face the conflict of performing of home role as they are not available to spend enough time with their families. They spend long hours in business and as a result, they find it difficult to meet the demands of their family members and society as well. Their inability to attend to domestic work, time for education of children, personal hobbies, and entertainment adds to their conflicts.

RISK MANAGEMENT

One prerequisites of the entrepreneurial success is risk taking. It is normally believe that women being feminist gender have low risk taking ability. They are being suppressed by the protected environment and are not allowed most of the time to take any type of risk even if she is willing or she has the ability to bear.

ENTREPRENEURIAL APTITUDE: Many women take the training by attending the Entrepreneurship Development Programmes without entrepreneurial bent of mind. Women who are imparted training by various institutes must be verified on account of aptitude through the tests, interviews etc.

QUALITY OF EDPS

All women entrepreneurs are given the same training through EDPs. Second-generation women entrepreneurs don't need such training as they already have the previous exposure to business.

CREDIT FACILITIES

Women are often denied credit by bankers on the ground of lack of collateral security. Therefore, women's access to risk capital is limited. The complicated procedure of bank loans, the inordinate delay in obtaining the loans and running about involved do deter many women from venturing out. At the same time, a good deal of self-employment program has been promoted by the govt. and commercial banks.

RAW-MATERIALS

Women entrepreneurs encounter the problems of shortage of raw-materials. The failure of many women co-operations in 1971 such as these engaged in basket making were mainly because of the inadequate availability of forest-based raw materials.

COMPETITION

Many of the women enterprises have imperfect organizational set up. But they have to face severe competition from organized industries.

HIGH COST OF PRODUCTION

High cost of production undermines the efficiency and stands in the way of development and expansion of women's enterprises, government assistance in the form of grant and subsidies to some extent enables them to tide over the difficult situations. However, in the long run, it would be necessary to increase efficiency and expand productive capacity and thereby reduce cost to make their ultimate survival possible, other than these, women entrepreneurs so face the problems of labour, human resources, infrastructure, legal formalities, overload of work, lack of family support, mistrust etc.

Steps taken by the Indian government to support women entrepreneurs: At present, the Government of India has over more than 26 schemes for women entrepreneurs operated by different departments and ministries. Some of these are:

1. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
2. Khadi And Village Industries Commission (KVIC)
3. Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
4. Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)
5. Entrepreneurial Development programme (EDPs)
6. Management Development programmes
7. Women's Development Corporations (WDCs)
8. Marketing of Non-Farm Products of Rural Women (MAHIMA)
9. Assistance to Rural Women in Non-Farm Development (ARWIND) schemes
10. Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)
11. Working Women's Forum
12. Indira Mahila Kendra
13. Mahila Samiti Yojana
14. Mahila Vikas Nidhi
15. Micro Credit Scheme

16. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
17. SIDBI Mahila Udyam Nidhi
18. Mahila Vikas Nidhi
19. SBI Stree Shakti Scheme
20. NGO,,s Credit Schemes
21. Micro & Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programmes (MSE-CDP).
22. National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes
23. Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana (RGMVP)
24. Priyadarshini Project-A programme for Rural Women Empowerment and Livelihood in Mid Gangetic Plains,,
25. NABARD – SEWA bank Project.
26. Exhibitions for women, under promotional package for Micro & Small enterprises approved by CCEA under marketing support

METHODOLOGY

The study Gathered lists of women entrepreneurs from AWAKE, FKCCI, KASSIA and Commercial Banks in Tumkur district. These lists constitute sampling frame of the present research after a thorough study. Women entrepreneur with a minimum of Rs.2.00.000 turnover per annum and minimum of 3 years' experience were considered for the study.

The women entrepreneur's represents manufacturing and service sector including trading and merchandising activities 25 each from these two sectors have been picked up.

The present study is empirical and analytical study in nature with purposive simple random sampling.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs in Tumkur City.
2. To propose suggestions for the study.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

1. 50% of the respondents are aged between 25 to 35 years and 38% between 36 to 45 years.
2. 10 % of the women entrepreneurs are divorced and 2% are single living with parents.
3. 75% of the women entrepreneurs are Hindus.
4. 35% of the women entrepreneurs are graduates and 25 % are qualified with SSLC. 8% with Post graduation and 5% with technical qualification.
5. 40% belong to joint family and 60% were from nuclear family.
6. 27% of the women entrepreneurs are with partnership and 73 are with sole ownership.
7. To be independent and empowered are the factors behind being women entrepreneurs.
8. Women entrepreneurs find difficulty in managing dual role.
9. 68% of the women entrepreneurs expressed that they feel stressed.
10. 55% of the women entrepreneurs are member in professional institutions.
11. 65% of women entrepreneurs received training to start business.
12. 65% of the women entrepreneurs felt that they need family support to manage the business.
13. 25% of the women market products through the fairs and exhibitions conducted by govt institutions.
14. 60% of the women entrepreneurs market products by advertisement.
15. 80% of the women entrepreneurs' availed loan for business and 20% with self finance.

16. 80% of the women entrepreneurs are aware about government schemes available for women entrepreneurs.
17. 73% of women entrepreneurs fall out of Income tax limits.
18. Only 30% of the women entrepreneurs are trained with management development.
19. 56% of the women entrepreneurs are aware about EDP's.
20. 85% of the women entrepreneurs are confident about the future of the firm.
21. 38% of the women entrepreneurs are finding difficult to coordinate with production/service and market/Customers.
22. 45% of the women entrepreneurs are finding difficulties in finding the markets for product.
23. 65% of the women entrepreneurs are finding difficulty in price fixation.
24. 45% of the women entrepreneurs are facing the problem of storing.
25. 70% of the women entrepreneurs are finding difficulty in branding the products.
26. 90% of the women entrepreneurs are poor in understanding market strategy.
27. 74% of the women entrepreneurs find problem in extending the market.
28. 55% of the women entrepreneurs find application of technology as big challenge in business.
29. 69% of the women entrepreneurs want government to buy the products.
30. 90% of the women entrepreneurs find male dominance in the business.
31. 100% of the women entrepreneurs expect a big subsidy in loan, and tax.

SUGGESTIONS

1. To set up women entrepreneurs Special economic zone in the district
2. To establish women entrepreneurs park at each district.
3. To initiate a state/national/international network of women entrepreneurs.
4. Technical assistance in price fixation.
5. Government support to market the products globally and locally.
6. Regular training on MDP's and EDP's for women entrepreneurs.
7. Training on soft skills and technical skills are also needed.
8. Government to take steps for the women entrepreneurs of OBC's to set ventures through Banks.
9. Banks should not fix any education limitations for availing loan.
10. Compulsory membership in professional organisation to get technical and market support.
11. Government to organise Regular meet of women entrepreneurs.
12. Government to purchase the products of women entrepreneurs.
13. Consulting Unit for women entrepreneurs should set up by Govt.
14. Guidance cell should set up by Govt. for women entrepreneurs

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges in global markets and also to be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena. Women entrepreneurs have become a strong driving force in today's world. Women have the potential and the determination to set up, uphold and supervise their own enterprises in a very systematic manner. Appropriate support and encouragement from the Government and Society in particular and family members in general is required to help them to scale new heights in their business ventures. The right kind of assistance from family, society and Government can make these Women Entrepreneurs a part of the mainstream of national economy and they can contribute

to the economic progress of India in this era of globalization.

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