

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO VENDORS IN AGARTALA

Raja Banik *

C. Arundhathi Bai **

ABSTRACT

Women are regarded as better half of the society. In traditional Indian societies, they were confined to four walls. In modern society, they come out of four walls to participate in all types of activities including entrepreneurship. Now a days' women entrepreneurship has become an important tool for women empowerment. Empowerment leads to self-fulfillment and women become aware of where they are going, what their position is in the society, their status; existence and rights. The role of women as business owners is gradually increasing, and in India empowering women through entrepreneurship has become an integral part of our development efforts. Women entrepreneurs also enhance living standard of their family which in turn help in development of the country. A sample of 20 women entrepreneurs are selected for the purpose on the basis of observation and interview. The present study "Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship: with Special reference to Vendors in Agartala" attempts to sketch the role of un-organized women entrepreneurs in transforming the standard of life of women.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Women Entrepreneurship, Development, Business Owners.

* **B.Ed, ICFAI University, Tripura**

** **Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, ICFAI University, TRIPURA.**

INTRODUCTION

The term “Women Entrepreneurship” refers to an act of business ownership and business creation that empowers women economically, increase their economic strength, and position in society. Entrepreneurship is a major strategy for economic development of a country. An entrepreneur is an important constituent of the development process and an integral part of the socio-economic of a society which requires full participation of all section of population including women. Entrepreneurship development among women can be considered a possible approach to economic empowerment of women. A women entrepreneur is economically more powerful than as a mere worker because ownership not only confers controls over assets but also give her the freedom to make decision. This will uplift her social status significantly. Though women are playing important role in society, their entrepreneurial activities are yet to be explored. Government has undertaken various policies during the five year Plan periods for the development of women entrepreneurship. Consequently, there has been considerable development of women entrepreneurship in Tripura.

Over the past 50 years, increased education accounted for about half of economic growth, and that had much to do with more girls achieving higher levels of education and achieving greater gender equality in the number of years spent in education (Thévenon et al., 2013). Gains in educational attainment by women have contributed to narrowing gender gaps in labour force participation, with increase of female employment. Furthermore, women are likely to work part-time or in (the public) sector where employment conditions are more conducive to reconciling work and family, and are less likely to break through the glass ceiling in the private sector. Women are also underrepresented in business ownership. Swami Vivekananda, One of the greatest sons of India, quoted that, ***“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved, it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing”***. The inclusion of “Women Empowerment” as one of the prime goals in the eight Millennium Development Goals underscores the relevance of this fact.

Women entrepreneurs have gradually played an important role in spurring economic development and job creation. Equality among men and women which is essential for development of society can possible through economic independence of women. As per

provisional reports of Census India, population of Agartala in 2011 is 400,007; of which male and female are 200,132 and 199,872 respectively. In India nearly half of the population consists of women. But their work participation rate is less than half of men. Now a days, entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women today are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the preserve of men and have proved that they are second to no one with respect to contribution to the growth of the economy. Women entrepreneurs have become a strong driving force in today's corporate world. Not only are they able to equalize their duties of both motherhood and entrepreneurship but they also comprise of almost half of all businesses owned today. It can be said that today we are in a better position where in un-organized women participation in the field of entrepreneurship is increasing at a considerable rate, efforts are being taken at the economy as well as global level to enhance un-organized woman's involvement in the enterprise sector at present.

This study has given emphasis on prospects and challenges of un-organized women entrepreneurship at Agartala. It is necessary to know the obstacles of un-organized women entrepreneurship and also find the factors that motivate them to engage in their business effectively. Hence a sample of 20 women entrepreneurs was selected for the study on the basis of observation and interview. This study "Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship with Special reference to Agartala" attempts to sketch the role of un-organized women entrepreneurs in transforming the standard life of women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The proposed study is intended to carry out the following objectives in view:

1. To know the educational background of the un-organized women entrepreneurs at Agartala.
2. To know the women socio-economic empowerment through entrepreneurship at Agartala.
3. To analyze the motivational factors & other factors that influence women to become entrepreneurs.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

Descriptive survey method was employed in the study. Semi structured interviews were conducted on the basis of self- made questionnaire. Primary data was collected from sample of 20 un-organized women vendors randomly whose ages were 18 years & above, at various urban market areas of Agartala. Basically the methods used for collecting primary data were observation and interview. The information related to the study was collected using a self prepared questionnaire by the personal direct interview method. Entrepreneurs were randomly selected.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The primary data collection was done in a very simple manner. At the very beginning questionnaire consisting of 26 questions was prepared with the help of guide. Later data was collected from various urban market areas of Agartala like Lake Chowmuhani Bazar, Math chowmuhani Bazar, Maharajganja Bazar, Battala Bazar etc.. Then information related to the study was collected from 20 un-organized women entrepreneurs by direct interview method and observation whose ages were 18 years & above. After the collection of required data, each women entrepreneur were asked to give a signature and also clicked photographs with their consent to observe their reaction. In this way the total procedure of data collection was completed.

DATA ANALYSIS

In the present study data was analyzed by content analysis. Data was analyzed by summarizing the main contents after examining and verifying the collected data.

Educational Background of the Un-Organized Women Entrepreneurs

It was found that most of the un- organized entrepreneurs are from rural areas. And few do their entrepreneurship in local market areas coming from urban areas. This shows how women entrepreneurs are trying to remove the rural urban disparity by opening business. It is also found that few entrepreneurs were able to read & write and rest studied up to Secondary level. But no such entrepreneur was found who studied more than Secondary level. Due to lack of higher education, these entrepreneurs are lagging behind. They must be aware about the development of

new technology, marketing, and other Governmental support which will encourage them to flourish.

Socio-Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship

Real empowerment is seen as women are able to do business in various fields according to their choice. Most of the entrepreneurs have fast food and tea stall. Few more were found selling vegetables, fruits and also flowers. Only 15% of the Entrepreneurs are related to the other business like recharge voucher selling or mobile companies, bag making etc. it is also found that most of the entrepreneurs have farming as the additional source of income. Few entrepreneurs are attached with fishing & poultry as additional sources of income. It shows that entrepreneurs are also dependent in other source of income to run their business, maintain their family etc... as well as trying to maintain and empower their status.

Skill building could also be seen as an instrument to empower the individual and improve their social acceptance. But it is unfortunate to know that nearly 85% of the entrepreneurs had no proper training in their skill development. Only 15% were found to have some training knowledge. Due to lack of proper training, no entrepreneur was found with better achievement. It was also found that most of the entrepreneurs have no bank account. Only around 25% of the entrepreneurs had bank account. It is may be said that entrepreneurs are not conscious with their future savings. And now it's time to have economic empowerment before it is too late.

Motivational Factors & other factors influencing women to become entrepreneurs

It is found that most of the entrepreneurs belong to 30-40 years age group. Maximum of them are below 50 years. Most of the entrepreneurs are married, around 30% are found unmarried and no such entrepreneur is found who is single. Marital status is found as an important factor to determine the un-organized women entrepreneurs. It can be said that women of different ages want to help their family and reduce poverty through entrepreneurship. Most of the entrepreneurs are getting support from their families. Few get support from their friends also. It is also found that most of the entrepreneurs get finance from spouse income. Appropriate support and encouragement from the society in general and family members in particular is required to help

women entrepreneurs scale new heights in their business ventures. These may be the factors influencing women to become entrepreneurs.

Few Photographs related to the study



CONCLUSION

From the present study it is found that most of the un-organized entrepreneurs are from rural areas, and have not studied beyond Secondary level. So it is clearly visible that un-organized women are not in to business, only for survival but to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities. Women education is contributing to a great extent to the social transformation. The future will see more women venturing in to areas traditionally dominated by men. It is also observed that in addition to their business entrepreneurs are dependent in other source of income to run their business and maintain their family. The socio background including factors, type and mode of business, training programmes are the important problems at Agartala. In spite of many obstacles un-organized women entrepreneurship can be raised anew

horizon of economic and social development of Agartala. Entrepreneurs are getting support from their families, friends and also appropriate support & encouragement from the society. The study concludes with the findings that much development is seen in self-confidence, self-reliance and independence of woman due to the involvement in the entrepreneurial activities.

SUGGESTIONS

Women entrepreneurs are contributing a lot in economic development in India. However, it is potentially empowering and liberating only if it provides women an opportunity to improve their well being and enhance their capabilities. Therefore the following efforts can be taken in to account for effective development of un-organized women entrepreneurs:

1. For un-organized women entrepreneurs finance is the first major problem. Hence, the Government can provide interest free loans to encourage un-organized women entrepreneurs. To attract more un-organized women entrepreneurs, the subsidy for loans should be increased.
2. Most of the un-organized women entrepreneurs are of the opinion that because of lack of proper training, they are unable to survive in the market. Hence, frequent training programs must be conducted with regard to new production technique, sales techniques etc.. this training should be made compulsory for un-organized women entrepreneurs.
3. Since the number of un-organized entrepreneurs from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Most Backwards communities is very low, awareness must be created to those women, by providing special attention.
4. Various schemes and plans of Government for the encouragement of un-organized women entrepreneurs should be strongly executed at different levels.
5. Un-organized women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to start their entrepreneurs as joint stock companies rather than as a sole trade and partnership concerns to avail the advantages of large scale operation.
6. Marketing product is one of the main problems for un-organized women entrepreneurs. Here women co-operative societies can be started to procure the products from un-organized women entrepreneurs. They will help them in selling their products at a reasonable price.

REFERENCES

1. Census of India Report – 2011, Govt of India.
2. Dhameja, S.K.(2002). *Women Entrepreneurs Opportunities, Performance, Problems*. Deep Publications pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
3. Ram Naresh Thakur (2009). *Rural Women Empowerment in India*. Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
4. Tiwari,A. (2007). *Women Enterpreneurship and Economic Development*. Swarup & Sons, New Delhi.
5. Tripura Human Development Report.