

PROBLEMS OF RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of Women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of Women entrepreneurs has grown over a period of time, especially in the 1990s. Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology, increased investment, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizable employment for others and setting the trend for other Women Entrepreneurs in the organized sector. The Women in business is a recent phenomenon in India. The spread of education and increased awareness are aiding women to spread their wings in to areas which are hitherto the monopoly of men. The number of women entrepreneurs in the field of engineering, electronics and energy are on the rise. Majority of the educated Women entrepreneurs having qualities such as accepts challenges, ambitious, enthusiastic, hard-working, skillful etc.

Keywords

Women entrepreneur, Rural Women, Problems of Women Entrepreneur, Women contribution, Women business

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship can help women's economic independence and improve their social status. Automatically the women get empowered once they attain economic independence. The development of women entrepreneurship enables

society to understand and appreciate their abilities. It enhances their status and leads to integration of women in nation – building and economic development. It provides them psychological satisfaction and imbibes a deep sense of achievement to create their enhanced identity in society.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF ENTERPRENEURS

To be successful entrepreneurs one has to acquire and develop certain qualities, namely:

- 1) High motivation for achievement of goal,
- 2) Insatiable drive and persistent enthusiasm,
- 3) Ready to take risk and face challenge,
- 4) Technical expertise,
- 5) Spirit of innovation,
- 6) Hard working, dedication, commitment and self – confidence,
- 7) Willingness to take advice/ learn from the failure and use of Feedback,
- 8) Effective management of time.

2. TO RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

In India comprise 40% of the population. Yet they have secondary position in the society. Their role is confined within the four walls of the household activities. In the male dominated society discrimination against the fair sex is still being practiced in different forms. At this juncture can we expect that a Women can act as entrepreneurs? In yester-years the life of Indian women was like a well – defined predictable master plan. It began with a girl playing with dolls and built to the crescendo of marriage.

However, in this modern age things have been changed a lot. Spread of education coupled with a revolutionary change in the field of information and technology brings a significant change of the status of women in the society.

3. PRINCIPLES OF RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Rural entrepreneurship should not only set up enterprises in rural areas but should be also using rural produce as raw material and employing rural people in their production processes. Rural entrepreneurship is, in essence, that entrepreneurship which ensures value addition to rural resources in rural areas engaging largely rural human resources. In other words, this means that finished products are produced in rural areas out of resources obtained in rural areas by largely rural people.

The basic principles of entrepreneur which applied to the rural development are:

- Optimum utilization of local resources in entrepreneurial venture by rural population
- Better distributions of the farm produce resulting in the rural prosperity
- Entrepreneurial occupation rural population to reduce discrimination and providing alternative occupations as against the rural migration.
- To activate such system to provide basic '6 m'- manpower, money , material, machinery, management and market to the rural population.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To study dynamic perspective of rural entrepreneurship
- To suggest practical suggestions for development of rural entrepreneur

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research paper is conceptual in nature. In order to develop basic insight regarding the concept, the researcher has made use of secondary data. The researcher has referred books, journals, magazines, and newspapers in addition to visits to various websites. The earlier researchers study in the area of rural marketing has led to the conceptualization of this research.

This research paper is supported by case studies mainly highlighting the optimistic picture rural entrepreneurship in India.

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Over 5 decades of independence of India and even after industrialization, the agricultural sector till continue to be the backbone of our economy and our society too. Other core feature of the

agricultural workforce is that their share in total workforce of the country is about 70 percent. One of the negative results the agriculture workforce is that this sector is overcrowded as far as employment is concerned. Again the continuous increase in population is definitely obscuring the rural development. Whereas urban migrations of the farm-workers also have negative impact like unemployment problem and increased numbers of population below poverty line.

Entrepreneurship in rural areas is finding a unique blend of resources, either inside or outside of agriculture. This can be achieved by widening the base of a farm business to include all the non-agricultural uses that available resources can be put to or through any major changes in land use or level of production other than those related solely to agriculture. Thus, a rural entrepreneur is someone who is prepared to stay in the rural area and contribute to the creation of local wealth. Moreover the economic goals of an entrepreneur and the social goals of rural development are more strongly interlinked than in urban areas. For this reason entrepreneurship in rural areas is usually community based, has strong extended family linkages and a relatively large impact on a rural community.

Thus the rural entrepreneurship is a vital for rural economic development. There are several reasons for the increasing interest in entrepreneurship especially in rural regions and communities.

- ◆ The rural entrepreneurs play important role in driving local and national economies.
- ◆ the structure of rural economies is essentially composed of small enterprises, which are responsible for most of the job growth and the innovation. Moreover, small businesses represent an appropriate scale of activity for most rural economies.
- ◆ Traditional approaches to recruitment and retention are just not working for most places, and states are looking for viable alternatives which mainly include entrepreneurship.
- ◆ Rural entrepreneurs have successfully diversified into or started new businesses in markets as diverse as agri-food, crafts, recycling, leisure and health.
- ◆ Diversification into non-agricultural uses of available resources such as catering for tourists, blacksmithing, carpentry, spinning, etc. as well as diversification into activities other than those solely related to agricultural usage, for example, the use of resources other than land such as water, woodlands, buildings, available skills and local features, all fit into rural entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial combinations of these resources are,

for example: tourism, sport and recreation facilities, professional and technical training, retailing and wholesaling, industrial applications (engineering, crafts), servicing (consultancy), value added (products from meat, milk, wood, etc.) and the possibility of off-farm work.

Equally entrepreneurial, are new uses of land that enable a reduction in the intensity of agricultural production, for example, organic production.

◆ Dynamic rural entrepreneurs can also be found. They are expanding their activities and markets and they find new markets for their products and services beyond the local boundaries.

◆ Although agriculture today still provides income to rural communities, rural development is increasingly linked to enterprise development. Since national economies are more and more globalized and competition is intensifying at an unprecedented pace, affecting not only industry but any economic activity including agriculture, it is not surprising that rural entrepreneurship is gaining in its importance as a force of economic change that must take place if many rural communities are to survive. However, entrepreneurship demands an enabling environment in order to flourish.

* Entrepreneurship so defined pertains to any new organization of productive factors and not exclusively to innovations that are on the technological or organizational cutting edge, it pertains to entrepreneurial activities both within and outside the organization. Entrepreneurship need not involve anything new from a global or even national perspective, but rather the adoption of new forms of business organizations, new technologies and new enterprises producing goods not previously available at a location (Petrin, 1991). This is why entrepreneurship is considered to be a prime mover in development and why nations, regions and communities that actively promote entrepreneurship development, demonstrate much higher growth rates and consequently higher levels of development than nations, regions and communities whose institutions, politics and culture hinder entrepreneurship.

7. WOMEN ENTERPRISES IN PRACTICE

The Government of India has defined women enterprise as “an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial investment of 51 % of capital and giving at list 51 % of the employment generated in the enterprise to women.” In India the following features have been found in respect of Women entrepreneurship.

1) Women account for only 5.2% of the total self employed persons in the country.

- 2) There were more than 1, 53,260 Women entrepreneurs claiming 9.01% of the total entrepreneurs in India during 1998-99.
- 3) Decision relating to site selection for establishment of enterprise of for women is based on proximity to home.
- 4) Women entrepreneurs face more difficulties than their male counterparts in the start up stage of enterprise due to lack of experience of technical training and marketing.
- 5) Self-assessment by Women entrepreneurs shows great differences from the characteristics normally associated with male entrepreneurs such as: passive Vs active; private Vs social.

In past rural women concentrated on traditional activities, but now due to spread of education and favorable government policies towards self - employment and skill development, women have changed their attitude and diverted towards non-traditional Activities too. We find Women entrepreneurs engaged themselves in different type of Activities such as: Engineering, Electronics, Readymade Garments, Textile Designing, Jewelers Designing. Handicrafts. Doll-making, Toy- making. Painting. Knitting. Plastics, Soap. Ceramics, Creches, Canning. Leaf Paper Products, Mushroom farming, Beekeeping, Duckery, Poultry, Dairy. Fishing and Drv-fishing. Livestock Management, Floriculture, etc.

8. PROBLEMS FACED BY RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The problems faced by Women entrepreneurs are briefly analyzed below:

1) Access to Start-up Finance

Access to start-up finance is the greatest single issue faced by women entrepreneurs. It is observed that women entrepreneurs face greater problems in this regard than small business in general. As family members are not in favor of supporting their ladies to take up the business in which they have skills, naturally they will be unwilling to support with the finance required for starting a business unit.

2) Working Capital Management

Another key disturbing factor for women entrepreneur is managing the working capital. Working capital is required for maintaining finished stock to meet the market demand, for production and meeting marketing and other administrative expense. It will be very difficult for women entrepreneurs to avail such loan facilities from financial institutions as they are unable to provide security.

3) Marketing Skills

Regarding marketing skills, women entrepreneurs have the problem of access to markets as their marketing skills are weak compared to male entrepreneurs. Maintaining existing business and access to fresh business requires strategic marketing skills. This is the most commonly repeated problem faced by women entrepreneurs after finance.

4) Access to Technology

Co-ordinating factors of production is really a challenge to Women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs cannot easily co-ordinate the production process particularly with the ever changing technology. Very few women can sustain such production instants. Women who aspire to become entrepreneurs cannot keep pace with technology advancement. This puts down their initiative to become entrepreneurs.

5) Regulatory Requirements

Regarding administrative and regulatory requirements, may face that this is a significantly greater problem for women entrepreneurs than their male counterparts. Micro- enterprises of every type experience these problems. It is because of the disproportionate effect of compliance costs on small companies compared with large firms. In spite of this, women entrepreneurs do not face that it, is a major issue.

6) Management Skills

Another vital problem encountered by Women entrepreneurs is lack of management skills. In majority of the cases Women entrepreneurs lack management skills. Because they have lower propensity of previous business experience. Besides this, support providers discriminate against women entrepreneurs to a greater extent providing these skills.

7) Lack of Confidence

Other problems' like society's attitude towards Women entrepreneurs, unequal opportunities between women and men and very important amongst all the 'Lack of Confidence' in women are also haunting entrepreneurs.

8. SUGGESTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Thus we can say that women face lots of problems in the male dominated society. There are many unwritten rules, which the society scrupulously follows. Most of the rules pertain to women and encompass a wide variety of social activity like women's education, their employment hours of work, dress outing, and the like can interact only with known persons.

The following suggestions are made to solve the problems of women entrepreneurs.

- 1) Central and State governments should assist Women entrepreneurs to participate in International trade fair, exhibition and conferences.
- 2) Several policy initiatives have been made by the government like Manila smoky, Swarnajayanthi, Gram Swarojgar Yojna (SGSY), Development of Women and Children of Rural Areas (IAY) and many other policies. Recently, the government has enacted the national policy for the empowerment of women : 2001. The goal of the policy is to bring about the advancement development and empowerment of women.
- 3) The family members of Women entrepreneurs should also actively participate and extended all possible support in the matter of managing units set up at by Women entrepreneurs.
- 4) Efforts should be made in the direction of simplification of the procedures. Formalities, rules and regulations, etc. required to be fulfilled by the women entrepreneurs in all matter of registration of their and seeking assistance, subsidies, concessions, relief etc, from different departments and governments sponsored organization involved in providing a variety of services to women entrepreneurs.

9. CONCLUSION

In present scenario due to modernization, urbanization, globalization and development of education, with increasing awareness, women are now seeking gainful participation in several fields. The entrepreneurship among women will help them in earning money and becoming economically independent. Due to social networking women will develop self-confidence, awareness and ability to marshal environmental support. This will lead to an improvement is not only the women, from the point of view of better health, education and skill but an improvement in her living condition also by being able to use cleaner fuel, better house, better sanitation, facilities and. infrastructural facilities. This will lead to saving of resources like time, energy, transforming women into stronger personality and an overall improvement in her quality of life.

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