
**A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

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Abstract

The number of women starting and owning their own businesses has grown dramatically over the past decade particularly after the post liberalisation period. The policy and institutional framework for developing entrepreneurial skills, providing vocation education and training has widened the horizon for economic empowerment of women. However, women constitute only one third of the economic enterprises Concurrent with this trend women-owned businesses enterprises are playing a more active role in society and the economy, inspiring academics to focus on this interesting phenomenon including women entrepreneurs in their research studies. Government of India has also introduced National Skill Development Policy and National Skill Development Mission in 2009 in order to provide skill training, vocational education and entrepreneurship development to the emerging work force The increasing presence of women in the business field as entrepreneurs has changed the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country. In this scenario this paper focuses on the problems, issues, challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, how to overcome them and to analyse policies of Indian government for and problems faced by them while pursuing their business.

Key Words:

Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship development. Problems and Challenges,

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship is emerging as an important avenue in gaining economic independence for women. The role of women entrepreneurs has changed over the years in the world. It has been shifted from kitchen to higher level to professional activities. The factor contributed to this role is by providing better education; changing socio cultural values and need for supplementary income who brought these changes. Various studies support the motivational factor, which encourages women to have independent occupation and stand on their legs and to take independent decisions on their life and career. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to pull and push factors, to do something new and as a challenge such a situation is pull factor, while women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion is push factor.

Participation and their importance have been commendable in the country's economic growth and development. As per World development report 2012 represents that women owned businesses shows great potential source of future of economic growth and job creation. Therefore, many initiatives have started by United Nations to promote and motivate women entrepreneurship in developing and under developed countries such as efforts in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Looking at the above opportunities, India has also supported many women entrepreneurs by providing loans and advances, helping them for establishing their business, making self-sufficient by providing vocational skills and creating many jobs for other women in the respective areas.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study is planned with the following objectives:

1. To study the role of various factors in promoting the businesses of women entrepreneurs.
2. To discuss the problems faced by women entrepreneurs in India.
3. To discuss the measures needed to improve the state of women entrepreneurship in India.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY:

The study focuses on extensive study of Secondary data collected from various books, National & international Journals, publications from various websites which focused on various aspects of Women Entrepreneurship.

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

While empowering women entrepreneurs faced the following problems.

1. **Family Responsibilities and Commitments:** In businesswomen have to devote long hours and as a result, they find it difficult to meet the demands of their family members and society as well. As such they become incapable

- in attending to domestic work, attending to the needs of their children which lead to conflict in their personal lives and they find it difficult to work as an women entrepreneur
2. **Limited Mobility:** Unlike men, women mobility in India is highly limited due to many reasons. Cumbersome exercise involved in starting an enterprise coupled with officials humiliating attitude towards women compels them to give up their spirit of surviving in enterprise altogether.
 3. **Low Literacy Levels:** In India around 3/5th (60%) of women are still illiterate. Illiteracy is the root cause of socio economic barriers of hurdles. Due to lack of education and that too qualitative education, women are not aware of business, technology and market knowledge. Also lack of education causes low achievement motivation amongst women. Thus lack of education creates problems before women to set up competitive enterprise.
 4. **Problems In Getting Financial Assistance:** Finance is the 'life blood' of every business undertaking be it is small, medium or large enterprises. Usually women entrepreneurs face the problems of arranging finance on two important grounds. Primarily women do not have assets on their own names to use as collateral securities for obtaining loans and funds from banks and other financial institutions. Secondly, banks and financial institutions help finance small and medium size firm operators to get financial assistance. But these banks and financial institutions don't readily provide credit to women entrepreneurs because they doubt the credit worthiness of women entrepreneurs. The irony is that according to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), woman's loan repayment rates are higher than men's but still financial institutes doubt their loan repayment abilities.
 5. **Traditional views on the role of women in the society:** Another dominant reason is the attitude of the people /society towards women entrepreneurs business prospects. The often prevailing attitude that the women's place is at home and that her first priority is to look after the home and family constrain many married women from venturing into entrepreneurship. Even for the women who are interested, the fact that marriage often results in geographical displacement, makes serious entrepreneurship the last option. Thus, they are under a social pressure which restrains them to prosper and achieve success in the field of entrepreneurship.
 6. **Cultural Factors:** In general in our country women lead a protected life. They are even less educated and economically not stable nor self-dependent. All these factors reduce their ability to bear risk and uncertainties involved in the business unit, which is the most important criteria of every business activity.
 7. **Marketing Problems:** Women entrepreneurs face problems in marketing of their products as this area is mainly dominated by males and women fail to make a mark in this area. Women entrepreneur also find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular and they often take the help of middlemen in marketing their products who often charge high commission from them.
 8. **Gender Biasedness Prevailing in Society:** The male - female competition is another factor, which develop hurdles to women entrepreneurs in the business management process. Despite the fact that women entrepreneurs are good in keeping their service prompt and delivery in time, due to lack of organizational skills compared to male entrepreneurs women have to face constraints from competition.

CHALLENGES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

1. **Work Life Balance:** The family structure is generally male dominated, hence the Male members think it a big risk financing the ventures run by women. Apart from the above point Women's family obligations also bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations. "Having primary responsibility for children, home and older dependent family members, few women can devote all their time and energies to their business."
2. **Fear of Success:** One of the biggest challenges facing is fear of failure that is the top concern of women who go to start their startups. Failures is a very real possibility in any business venture that becomes reasons that many women break their interests in to become an entrepreneur, but because they find their journey too uphill to become one. Women should neglect that discouraging inner voice and work hard for their goal, step forward or getting outside of their comfort zone.
3. **Lack of self-confidence and self-esteem amongst women:** A strong mental outlook and an optimistic attitude amongst women are required amongst women to be an entrepreneur. But it has been noticed that in our country women lack these qualities required in setting up their own enterprises. Thus, not having the required confidence that is needed by today's women to move ahead creates resistance in their being a good entrepreneur.
4. **Emotional Choices:** As compared to men in business, women tend to be most likely more emotionally driven side that can influence their decision making and communication styles. In some ways, women are inborn to nurture, which can create problem in making tough and difficult business decisions. There is a different way to operate a business by women and men.
5. **Unable to adopt to Technical Changes:** Women have limited access to vocational and technical training. In fact, women on average have less access to education than men, and technical and vocational skills can only be developed on a strong foundation of basic primary and secondary education. Gaining relevant skills and knowledge can also be more difficult for women since they frequently have double work burden/responsibilities, thus making them less able than men to attend formal and informal trainings. Therefore, lack of early adoption of technology by the women entrepreneurs is another major challenge which they come across in their business.
6. **Unawareness of the Supports and Incentives:** India being a developing country has made efforts at both central as well as state level to solve this problem by way of introducing policy measures towards promoting women entrepreneurs. The government of India in its annuals often announces special growth and provision to assist self-

employment in women. But it has not worked out effectively and very few women entrepreneurs are able to avail them. Despite the efforts the problem still exists as most of the women entrepreneurs in the region have neither approach nor awareness about these policies due to low education level. Women engage in this venue are unhappy with support system due to harassment from the officials and high corruption. There is a strong need for attitudinal change because policies, programmes and seminars alone cannot change the women status.

7. **Low Accessibility to markets:** The ability to tap into new markets requires expertise, knowledge and contacts which is very much essential to succeed in business. Women often lack access to training and experience in on how to participate in the market place and are therefore unable to market goods and services strategically. In addition, they have often not been exposed to the international market, and therefore lack knowledge about what is internationally acceptable. The high cost of developing new business contacts and relationships in a new country or market is a big deterrent and obstacle in particular women-owned businesses. Women may also fear or face prejudice or sexual harassment, and may be restricted in their ability to travel to make contacts.

Measures to Improve Women Entrepreneurship:

Women entrepreneurship in India faces many challenges and requires a radical change in attitudes and mindsets of society. Therefore, programs should be designed to address changes in attitude and mindset of the people. Women of the present times should be made aware regarding her unique identity and her contribution towards the economic growth and development of the country.

At the same time, there are various schemes like the World Bank sponsored programmes that can be undertaken for such purposes. Programmes can be conducted in which established and successful women entrepreneurs can advise and warn for the coming women entrepreneurs against the challenges they will face against being entrepreneur to boost the morale and confidence level of the upcoming entrepreneurs. Government should also play an important role by setting up policies and plan that supports entrepreneurship opportunities. Setting up good infrastructure is also required to build entrepreneurship opportunities and the following are the some of the various schemes designed by government for empowering women.

- Management Development programmes Women's Development Corporations (WDCs)
- Marketing of Non-Farm Products of Rural Women (MAHIMA)
- Assistance to Rural Women in Non-Farm Development (ARWIND) schemes
- SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi
- Mahila Vikas Nidhi
- SBI's Stree Shakti Scheme
- Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana (RGMVP)
- Priyadarshini Project- A programme for 'Rural Women Empowerment and Livelihood in Mid Gangetic Plains'
- NABARD- KfW-SEWA Bank project

Though there were many schemes designed by government for empowering women it is not easy to promote women entrepreneurship in India as it requires elimination of various obstacles that includes changing the traditional attitudes and mindsets of people in society towards women. To provide opportunities of women entrepreneurship in India one needs to make aware the women regarding her position towards the value she can add towards economic growth and development of country.

Conclusion:

We can conclude that today we are in a better position wherein women participation in the field of entrepreneurship is increasing at a considerable rate. Efforts are being taken at the economy as brought promise of equality of opportunity in all spheres to the Indian women and laws guaranteed equal rights of participation in political process and equal opportunities and rights in education and employment were enacted. But unfortunately, the government sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women i.e. the urban middle class women. At this juncture, effective steps are needed to provide entrepreneurial awareness, orientation and skill development programs to women. The role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is also being recognized and steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship.

Lastly we can say that the unexplored talents of young women can be identified, trained and used for various types of industries to increase the productivity in the industrial sector and there by enhance women entrepreneurs.

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