

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR IN INDIA

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### **Abstract**

*Entrepreneur is a key factor of entrepreneurship. Today women entrepreneurship becomes significant tool for women empowerment. The women Entrepreneurs should shift their attention from depending on others. They should train themselves to be an independent woman. The women entrepreneur faces many problems in aspects of financial, marketing, health, family, and problems. This paper focused towards the problems and opportunities of women entrepreneurs in India. This paper touched upon the areas of meaning and definition of entrepreneurship, functions of women entrepreneurs in India, problems of women entrepreneurs, challenges and opportunities of women entrepreneurs and also it highlights women empowerment in India. It concluded that women need for enterprises little training, some financial support and motivation at all levels-home, the society and the government. This paper suggested Govt. should provide separate financial fund of women's entrepreneur and arrange special training programmes of women entrepreneurship and also the Govt. should felicitate top ranked women's entrepreneur.*

**Keywords:** *Women entrepreneur, Problems, opportunities, Challenges, Empowerment.*

### **Introduction**

Nearly half of the Indian populations comprise of women. But, their participation in the economic development of the nation is lower as compared to men; this is because of the fact that women in this country are restraints by the age old cultural and religious dogmas, to take an active part in economic development of the country increased recently, this is because of the increasing level of women education, economic need of the women, unemployment problem and their own personal ambitions. Women Entrepreneurship is an important phenomenon. Since there is the constant need to utilize the skill of entrepreneurship among women for economic development and women empowerment. The women Entrepreneurs should shift their attention from depending on others. They should train themselves to be an independent woman. For this reason, the change in the economic, social, religions, cultural and psychological factors of the society have to be taken into consideration. The risk taking ability of women Entrepreneurs is an important function for the women Entrepreneur for successfully running an enterprise. She should have confidence to take financial risk etc., the women Entrepreneur herself should set the organizational goal and objectives in tune with the changing market demand. The women Entrepreneurs should have the ability to adapt to new technologies. The different type of enterprises where women Entrepreneurs are doing business includes handloom, handicrafts, readymade garments, eatables, incense stick making, doll making, tailoring, embroidery in traditional sector, beauty parlour, restaurant, retail marketing, DTP and Xeroxing etc.

### **Meaning and Definition**

An entrepreneur is a person having specific skill, ability, knowledge, awareness and self-confidence who bears the risk of operating a business in the face of uncertainty about the future conditions. The term "entrepreneurship" comes from the French verb "entreprendre" and the German word "unternehmen", both means to "undertake". The word "entrepreneur" was applied to business initially by the French economist Richard Cantillien, who describes as entrepreneur as a person who purchases the means of production for combining them into marketable products at profit motive in future. An entrepreneur is a person who starts an enterprise.

## Definition

“Women who innovate initiate or adopt business actively are called women entrepreneurs.” Women entrepreneurship is based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise.”- J. Schumpeter (Oct 28, 2013)

## Functions of Women Entrepreneurs:

Women entrepreneur performs all the functions while establishing an enterprise. However, Federick Harbison has enumerated five entrepreneurial function of women entrepreneur as follows:

1. Exploration of the prospects of starting a new business enterprise,
2. Undertaking of risks and handling of economic uncertainties involved in the business.
3. Introduction of innovations or imitation of innovations.
4. Co-ordination, administration and control.
5. Supervision and leadership.

## Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs

Recent surveys indicate that the gender gap in entrepreneurship persists at different levels and varying widely in India. Yet a quick scan of current research suggests that there are some commonalities as to the proximate and ultimate determinants of these differences:-

### 1. Access to financial resources

Even though the literature is not conclusive, a common challenge for women to establish and run a business is access and control over finance. Women entrepreneurs appear to have less access to external sources of capital than men when securing finances.

### 2. Inadequate training and access to information

One challenge often mentioned in research on women entrepreneurs in developing countries is that they enjoy a relatively low level of education and skill training. This, combined with a lack of career guidance, generally seems to limit their access to various publically and privately offered support services including business development services and information 252 on business growth. Others found that a lack of experience and skills also accounted for the fact that women entrepreneurs had a preference in industry orientation and thus were less well represented in industrial activities. In particular professional agencies have not been efficient in disseminating information to entrepreneurs, and that the training and assistance provided by support services do not meet the specific needs of women entrepreneurs. Similar challenges identified in other developing countries are a lack of access to ICTs, insufficient entrepreneurial and management skills, together with problems in finding the markets and distribution networks.

### 3. Work-family interface

Another more recently frequent mentioned challenge is the combination of the business with family responsibilities, which may undermine the success of the business. Women entrepreneurs indicate that they deploy several strategies to cope with the double workload and challenges deriving from combining business with family but while self-employment may provide flexibility. The amount of time spent caring for children are negatively related to success (as measured by self-employment duration). Furthermore, the location of the business at home may also undermine the legitimacy of the business as perceived by customers and creditors. Furthermore, some studies indicate that women strongly rely on support from husbands, partners, and relatives in order to successfully start and grow a business. Much more research is needed on the topic of coping strategies to combine business with family in general and specifically, on how to engage husbands and other family members in supporting women entrepreneurs in developing countries.

### 4. Women's safety and gender based violence

Others identify the issue of safety and protection of women entrepreneurs, especially those operating in the informal economy. Even though less documented in academic research, there are numerous stories of killings, harassment and rape of female vendors and micro-business owners. This results in stress, constant fear and not having the opportunity to freely choose your business location and time of opening hours which seriously limits the chances and choices of becoming a successful entrepreneur for women in some developing country.

### 5. Lack of societal support

Furthermore, research point out that normative constraints and societal attitudes based on cultural and religious beliefs in some countries are not supportive of the work of women in general or that of women in entrepreneurship in particular . In a variety of countries, the perception is that entrepreneurship is an appropriate career choice for men and not women, or only for the poor and not the educated, which in most cases are women. These perceptions are mostly based on the association of entrepreneurship with traditional male stereotypes.

### 6. Legal barriers and procedures

Varying across countries, the lack of government support in terms of policy, laws and services has been identified as a barrier for women entrepreneurs. Even though this varies greatly across countries, most research indicates that regulations, taxation and legal barriers can pose serious obstacles for running and starting a business. This may affect both men and women to a certain extent.

### Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs

- ❖ Education is a boon to mankind, while lack of education to a person is a bane now-a day. Throughout the world, we can observe that the ratio of women entrepreneurs is growing 253 tremendously. The emergence as well as development of women entrepreneurs is quite visible in India and their over-all contribution to Indian economy is also very significant.
- ❖ Today the role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is inevitable because women are entering not only in selected professions but also in professions like trade, industry and engineering.
- ❖ The industrial structure and the enterprises are undergoing a radical change. Information Technology has transformed the very technique of doing business. Individually, business ownership provides women with the independence they crave and with economic and social success they need. Nationally, business ownership has great importance for future economic prosperity. Globally, women are enhancing, directing, and changing the face of how business is done today. Ultimately, female business owners must be recognized for who they are, what they do, and how significantly they impact the world's global economy.
- ❖ Women should be considered as specific target group for all development programmes.
- ❖ Govt. should extend better educational facilities and schemes to women folk. Adequate training programs on management skills should be provided to women community. Encourage women's participation in decision making. Vocational training should be extended to women community to enable them to understand the production process and management.
- ❖ Training on professional competence and leadership skills should be extended to women entrepreneurs. Activities in which women are trained should focus on their marketability and profitability. State Finance Corporations and financing institutions should permit by statute to extend purely trade related finance to women entrepreneurs. And lastly women's development corporation has to gain access to open-ended financing.

### Status of Women Entrepreneurs in India

Nature has made a division of labour entrusting upon men and women different responsibilities for the betterment of the process of evolution. In this division of labour, the women have been endowed upon with the gift of motherhood and upbringing of the future generation. The women, the mother, have been the symbol of continuity of culture, tradition and religion, being the binding force of the family system. Quality of life has depended upon how well or how badly the women have performed this duty of hers. Gradually, women withdrew to the four walls of the home for the care of the children, while man worked outside, foraging for food. With the advance of science and technology, a certain amount of change has come about. An increasing number of women want to participate in the economic activities of the nation. Thus we find the emergence of women entrepreneurs. A woman entrepreneur is a person who is an enterprising individual with an eye for opportunities, and an uncanny vision, commercial acumen, with tremendous perseverance and above all a person who is willing to take risks with the unknown because of the adventurous spirit she possesses.

### **Problems faced by Women Entrepreneur in India**

Women entrepreneurs face a series of problems right from the beginning till the enterprise functions. Being a woman itself poses various problems to a woman entrepreneur, the problem of Indian women pertains to her responsibility towards family, society and her work. The tradition, customs, socio cultural values, ethics, motherhood subordinates to her husband and men, physically weak, hard work areas, feeling of insecurity, cannot be tough etc are some peculiar problems that the Indian women are coming across while they jump into entrepreneurship. Women in rural areas have to suffer still further. They face tough resistance from men. They are considered as helpers. The attitude of society towards her and constraints in which she has to live and work are not very conducive. Besides the above basic problems the other problems faced by women entrepreneurs are as follows:

#### **1. Family Ties**

Women in India are very emotionally attached to their families. They are supposed to attend to all the domestic work, to look after the children and other members of the family. They are over burdened with family responsibilities like extra attention to husband, children and in laws which take away a lot of their time and energy. In such situation, it will be very difficult to concentrate and run the enterprise successfully.

#### **2. Male dominated society:**

Even though our constitution speaks of equality between sexes, male chauvinism is still the order of the day. Women are not treated equal to men. Their entry to business requires the approval of the head of the family. Entrepreneurship has traditionally been seen as a male preserve. All these put a break in the growth of women entrepreneurs.

#### **3. Lack of education:**

Women in India are lagging far behind in the field of education. Most of the women (around sixty per cent of total women) are illiterate. Those who are educated are provided either less or inadequate education than their male counterpart partly due to early marriage, partly due to son's higher education and partly due to poverty. Due to lack of proper education, women entrepreneurs remain in dark about the development of new technology, new methods of production, marketing and other governmental support which will encourage them to flourish.

#### **4. Social barriers:**

The traditions and customs prevailed in Indian societies towards women sometimes stand as an obstacle before them to grow and prosper. Castes and religions dominate with one another and hinder women entrepreneurs too. In rural areas, they face more social barriers. They are always seen with suspicious eyes.

#### **5. Shortage of raw materials:**

The scarcity of raw materials, sometimes nor, availability of proper and adequate raw materials sounds the death-knell of the enterprises run by women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs really face a tough task in getting the required raw material and other necessary inputs for the enterprises when the prices are very high.

#### **6. Problem of finance:**

Women entrepreneurs suffer a lot in raising and meeting the financial needs of the business. Bankers, creditors and financial institutes are not coming forward to provide financial assistance to women borrowers on the ground of their less credit worthiness and more chances of business failure. They also face financial problem due to blockage of funds in raw materials, work-in-progress finished goods and non-receipt of payment from customers in time.

#### **7. Tough competition:**

Usually women entrepreneurs employ low technology in the process of production. In a market where the competition is too high, they have to fight hard to survive in the market against the organized sector and their male counterpart who have vast experience and capacity to adopt advanced technology in managing enterprises

#### **8. High cost of production:**

Several factors including inefficient management contribute to the high cost of production which stands as a stumbling block before women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs face

technology obsolescence due to non-adoption or slow adoption to changing technology which is a major factor of high cost of production.

**9. Low risk-bearing capacity:**

Women in India are by nature weak, shy and mild. They cannot bear the amount risk which is essential for running an enterprise. Lack of education, training and financial support from outsiders also reduce their ability to bear the risk involved in an enterprises.

**10. Limited mobility:**

Women mobility in India is highly limited and has become a problem due to traditional values and inability to drive vehicles. Moving alone and asking for a room to stay out in the night for business purposes are still looked upon with suspicious eyes. Sometimes, younger women feel uncomfortable in dealing with men who show extra interest in them than work related aspects.

**11. Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude:**

Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude is a matter of concern for women entrepreneurs. They have no entrepreneurial bent of mind. Even after attending various training programmes on entrepreneurship women entrepreneurs fail to tide over the risks and troubles that may come up in an organizational working.

**12. Limited managerial ability:**

Management has become a specialized job which only efficient managers perform. Women entrepreneurs are not efficient in managerial functions like planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating, staffing, directing, motivating etc. of an enterprise. Therefore, less and limited managerial ability of women has become a problem for them to run the enterprise successfully.

**13. Legal formalities:**

Fulfilling the legal formalities required for running an enterprise becomes an upheaval task on the part of a women entrepreneur because of the prevalence of corrupt practices in government offices and procedural delays for various licenses, electricity, water and shed allotments. In such situations women entrepreneurs find it hard to concentrate on the smooth working of the enterprise.

**14. Exploitation by middle men:**

Since women cannot run around for marketing, distribution and money collection, they have to depend on middle men for the above activities. Middle men tend to exploit them in the guise of helping. They add their own profit margin which results in less sales and lesser profit.

**15. Lack of self confidence:**

Women entrepreneurs because of their inherent nature, lack of self-confidence which is essentially a motivating factor in running an enterprise successfully. They have to strive hard to strike a balance between managing a family and managing an enterprise. Sometimes she has to sacrifice her entrepreneurial urge in order to strike a balance between the two.

**Woman Entrepreneur Empowerment in India**

Women have survived so far. They weren't killed before they could take their first breath, they weren't asked to stop studying and they had the freedom to dream and to follow their dreams. But does that mean they are really empowered? Empowering women is giving the right to be on the streets, allowing the same access hours. It's not chastising and not feeling that we need to be taken care of and to be helped. When it comes to choosing to drop a friend off at her house, waiting outside for the light to switch on at her window and on the other hand to not assume that the girl is an idiot who cannot see herself home, she asked the audience to choose who would be a better friend And defying the popular answer, she chose the latter. Being women, she tend to assume that she need protection, that she is not strong enough or brave enough to stand up alone. But women need to get their identity right and understand that they don't have to be protected, that they can be smart, beautiful and independent...all at the same time. There are quite a few differences between men and women when it comes to entrepreneurship. Men mostly become entrepreneurs with the end aim being to make money. Women tend to create something to make a positive impact on the world. Women bring to the table a specific skill set, be it stronger communication skills or better listening skills. Typical women entrepreneurs tend to be a little risk averse, aiming at slow and steady growth, also tending to help empower other women in the process. Bridging skill gaps, social and cultural gaps...letting a woman know that she is in no way

inferior to others, all of this will help ensure empowerment of women and this help make the women entrepreneur more empowered.

List for women entrepreneurs

- ❖ Control
- ❖ Confidence
- ❖ Courage
- ❖ Creativity
- ❖ Conviction
- ❖ Clarity
- ❖ Contribution
- ❖ Connections
- ❖ Commitment.

These all are the traits which are needed for successful women entrepreneurs.

**How to Become a Successful Business Woman (Entrepreneur)**

- ❖ Believe in yourself
- ❖ Have a strong mission
- ❖ Prepare your mindset
- ❖ Be willing to fail
- ❖ Start a business
- ❖ Increase your business skills
- ❖ Understand your business to the core
- ❖ Manage your time effectively
- ❖ Take care of your customers
- ❖ Stick to the process

**Suggestions**

- Govt. should provide separate financial fund of women's entrepreneur.
- We should provide her special infrastructure facilities whatever she needs.
- Govt. should arrange special training programmes of women entrepreneurship
- Govt. should felicitate top ranked women's entrepreneur.
- Women entrepreneur should more competitive and efficient in the local & International market.
- Use should invite successful women entrepreneurs from foreign countries.

**Conclusions**

Women entrepreneurs have become a strong driving force in today's corporate world. Even though women entrepreneurs faced so many problems in aspects of financial, marketing, health, family, and problems. Some guidelines should be given by the govt. and the financial institution to the women entrepreneur at time to time. What women need for enterprises little training, some financial support and motivation at all levels-home, the society and the government. Its hope that suggestion forwarded in the article will help the entrepreneurs in particular to look this problems and develop better schemes by the govt.

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