

Women as Entrepreneur in India: Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT: - Women make around half of world's population and hence are half of human capital. They are thus, a potential source of the economic development of the country. In traditional patriarchal societies, "they were confined to the four walls of the house but in modern era they are breaking the shackles to participate in the economic development of the country. The old-age traditional thought process which considered women as homemakers only needs to be changed. Government is making various efforts for the development of women not only in job sector but also as entrepreneurs. This paper highlights the problems and prospects related with the development of women as entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Women, Entrepreneur, Finance, Stigma.

I. INTRODUCTION

India has traditionally been dominated by a patriarchal mind set where the economic participation of women is a distant dream. Despite of the fact that they comprises of nearly 50 per cent of human capital which is a potential source for the economic development of the country, they are kept at periphery of a process of economic development. The stigmatic thought process has always regarded them as homemakers who have the prime duty to look after family. Even if they are receiving education still it is not able to provide them employment. Hence, they lack the capacity of earning their livelihood. In the backdrop of this problem; self-employment is regarded as a way out. The Indian government as well as planning commission is trying to bring women in the mainstream of economic development. Women entrepreneurship is seen as an effective way out to solve the problem of rural and urban poverty. Women entrepreneurship in India faces lots of hindrances like lack of organization, problems related with running business due to lack of finances, want to support system. The transition from homemakers to successful business women is not easy. Women in India, are showing increasing interest in economic independence. They are coming up with ideas of starting small and medium scale enterprises.

Women should be regarded as care of economic development as they are around fifty per cent of human capital which has not yet been tapped by developing countries like India but they have been kept at centrifugalized by the old age thought process which is plagued by gender discrimination. The efforts of this gender

have been devalued, discriminated, unpaid and unaccounted. Most of the significant activities performed by them are family obligations which are not counted economically and hence are excluded from Gross National Product (GNP) estimates. Women have been marginalized by the planners in the development policies; as passive beneficiaries of social and health services. The productive roles in the society performed by them are explicitly ignored in development planning.

II. PROBLEMS

1. The biggest obstacle in development of women as entrepreneurs is that they are women. The age old patriarchal thought process dominated by male members regard them as passive gender.
2. The financial institutions are skeptical about the entrepreneurial abilities of women. The banks consider them as inefficient to pay back the loans.
3. They suffer from the handicap of financial sources and lack of working capital. They are unable to provide with tangible assets as security of their loans.
4. The family obligations also restrict them from being successfully entrepreneurs. The primary responsibilities of a women are taking care of family, children and older members of the family.
5. The lack of support to women especially married ones in extending business and managing. It is another hindrance.
6. Marketing is the backbone of any successful business as it helps to create and explore new markets and reinforce the existing markets. Women lack the support for marketing as they are socially less mobile. Even when they try to do, they seek help of male members.
7. The competition faced by females from male counterparts is another problem. The lack of competitive spirit overshadows their management abilities.
8. Knowledge of technology, business know-how and professional education are significant factor in promotion of business. Education of female is in sorry state in India and even if they are educated, this education is not competent enough to make them skillful professionally.

9. Risk avoidance attitude is another problem faced by women. They lack quick decision making powers due to stigmatic old and traditional mindset. While taking vital decisions related with investment of money, changing scale of business and re-investing the profits, they seem to depend on male members of family.

III. SCHEMES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR

1. In lieu of encourage women in setting up their own business, government has started this scheme namely, "Trade related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development Scheme for Women" (Tread) during the 11th five year plan. The scheme promotes development of women by empowering them and enhancing their entrepreneurial skills by the following schemes :
 - (i) Giving grant upto 30 per cent of the total project cost to non-government organization (NGO's) for promoting entrepreneurship among women. The remaining 70 per cent of the project cost would be financed by the landing agency as loan.
 - (ii) Grants upto 1 lakh per programme to training institutions and non-government organizations for promoting entrepreneurship among women.
 - (iii) Need-based grants upto `5 lakh to national Entrepreneurship Development Institutions and any other research oriented institutions.
2. **Development of Micro and Small Enterprise Clusters:** The cluster is a group of enterprise having 100 members atleast depending on then density of population and other factors.
3. **Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises :** This scheme was launched in August, 2004 to ensure the flow of credit to micro and small scale enterprises by minimizing the risk perception of financial institutions and banks in lending without giving collateral security. The guarantee cover is upto 75 per cent of the loan given.
4. **Support for entrepreneurial and managerial development :** It regularly organises series of Entrepreneurship Development Programme to train the upcoming entrepreneurs in improving their technical know-how.
5. Many of the programmes are designed for weaker sections, minorities and women especially.
6. Organising of exhibitions for women lender promotional packages especially for micro and small scale enterprises approved by CCEA.

IV. CONCLUSION

The women faces dual problem of role conflict and overburdening of multiple roles as society expect them to play the traditional roles more seriously. The self image has been deteriorated due to lack of strong mental built-up. They

generally cannot spend more time in their respective enterprises and hence they find it difficult to maintain the balance between household chores and career. The culture of gender discrimination has inhibited their skill, abilities and attitudes. No doubt, government is doing a lot for them by launching various plans, programmes and policies but still a lot more needs to be done. In addition to it, in this 21st century, more and more families in India are becoming nuclear and hence the role of men and women as assigned by old-age patriarchal thought is blurring. Women are coming with lots of ideas to become economically independent. They should not confine themselves to job sector only, infact they should engage in employment generation and bring out their best entrepreneurial talent. They need unconditional support of their family and society at large to do the same.

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