
Women Entrepreneurship in Modern India Opportunities, Trends and Challenges

Kavitha B*, Basil Hans V

Department of Economics, St Aloysius Evening College, Mangaluru, India,
575003

Email: *bolar_kavi@yahoo.co.in

Abstract: *Modern business is witnessing robust activity and innovations in two areas – entrepreneurship and human resource management (HRM) and the two are not necessarily separate. Entrepreneurship is being redefined. With qualitative changes in development indices in general and women development in particular, newer and more challenging areas and roles for women are being explored and extended. Women entrepreneurs are being identified for their independent contributions. Development of women entrepreneurship is considered a lucrative leverage to acquire a level playing field for women, in a male predominant society and economy.*

In a country like India where some of the women are much neglected, there are some who have soared higher. Thanks to these powerful ladies, that they have faced struggles, challenges and made their way to the top list of entrepreneurs in India. This has not only helped the society economically but also has done a lot in terms of exposing the potential that a woman holds. Women as business leaders, team leaders, innovators etc. are having a multiplier effect on the process of women empowerment too. Women constitute around half of the total world population. So is in India also. In modern societies, they have come out of the four walls to participate in all sorts of activities. The global evidences buttress that women have been performing exceedingly well in different spheres of activities like academics, politics, administration, social work and so on. The focus on economic development has made women the ‘subjects’ rather than ‘objects’ of development and ‘change agents’ rather than ‘welfare recipients’. In the past rural women concentrated on traditional activities, but now due to the spread of education and favourable government policies towards self-employment and skill development, women have changed their attitude and diverted towards non-traditional activities too. (e.g. engineering, IT etc.). However, the dual role of women still remains a dilemma and a challenge. Here too many have succeeded in ‘management’ of resources including time. Entrepreneurship provides them a satisfaction and

assimilates a deep sense of accomplishment to create their own individuality in the society. This paper analyses the role and contributions of women entrepreneurs in different sectors. The objectives of this paper are (i) to evaluate the present status of women entrepreneurship and its determinants; and (ii) to identify the various problems and alternative avenues/strategies in promoting integrated women entrepreneurship in India. The study is a qualitative one and is based on secondary data.

Key Words: *Entrepreneurs, India, Innovative, Management, Strategies, Women.*

Introduction

“Whatever it is that you think you want to do, and whatever it is that you think stands between you and that, stop making excuses. You can do anything.” — Katia Beauchamp, co-founder and CEO, Birchbox.

The number of women starting and owning their own businesses has grown dramatically over the past decade. Concurrent with this trend, there has been an increase in the number of research studies focusing on or including women business owners in their samples. This paper reviews, and summarizes opportunities, trends and challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs. The word ‘entrepreneur’ comes from a thirteenth century French verb, *entreprendre*, meaning ‘to do something’ or ‘to undertake’. Entrepreneurship in normal parlance is taken as the “capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit” (Business Dictionary.com). For example opening a shop or installing a factory are acts of entrepreneurial capacity and competence. Hence it comes with inherent components of innovation and risk. According to Randy Duermyer, an entrepreneur is the one “who organizes a business or develops an idea and takes responsibility for its operations, its profits and its risks” (Khan, 2015).

Early economists gave more importance to ‘capitalist’ rather than ‘entrepreneur’. Since Joseph A Schumpeter’s contributions to the theories of profit and innovations (1930s) we have greater and exclusive interest about entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs do things that are not generally done in the ordinary course of business (Holt, 2016). Entrepreneurship is a purposeful and dynamic activity that links since with market. Today we speak of social entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship, group entrepreneurship and so on (Kumar, 2008).

Women have so much unexplored potential which has never been tapped (Shetty and Hans, Increased female entrepreneurial activity heralds a progress for women's rights and optimization of their economic and social living index. Women entrepreneurship is synonymous with women empowerment. Parallel to the male counterparts, female entrepreneurs are catalytic in job creation, innovation and more than tangible contribution to the GNP of the country (Bulsara, Chandwani & Gandhi, 2015).

The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, a women entrepreneur is defined as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women".

Women entrepreneurs are being identified for their independent contributions. Development of women entrepreneurship is considered a lucrative leverage to acquire a level playing field for women, in a male predominant society and economy. This paper analyses the role and contributions of women entrepreneurs in different sectors. The paper is organized into 6 sections. The second section provides the background of the study. The third section gives the picture about the purpose and plan of the study. In the fourth section trends and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in modern era are discussed. Fifth section reveals challenges and problems faced by the women entrepreneurs in modern era. And in the sixth section we give the conclusion.

Background of the Study

Considering the traditional role of women, going back to the Vedic Age, it is seen that the Rig Vedic age women were the co-partners in life and in pleasure and hazards. The position of women was high in the later Vedic ages; however the position of women deteriorated. They became minimally the vehicles of bearing sons and had to obey her authoritarian and dominating husband, regard him as her master and serve him faithfully. Women entrepreneurship in India is still at a nascent stage. Women are often heavily discriminated against in many countries including India. In some situations this may actually encourage women to start their own ventures because they may not secure employment or rise in pay and leadership within their current employment. In other situations, great struggle for equality in many countries

which is usually test identified as the equal opportunity for the job skill a position and the same pay. India, despite being a welfare state with planned economy and conscious efforts at social security in general and women development in particular, women were often made ‘subjects’ rather than ‘objects’ of development. Men are always considered as economic supporter for his family as well as for the nation and women are considered as a care taker of the family rather than an economic support (Khanka, 2014; Nandi & Kumar, 2014). But in the modern era opportunities are galore. Employment of a managerial economist has become inevitable. Only thing is that she has to be open for innovation and imbibing entrepreneurial spirit, come what may. In this era, we must seize the opportunity for entrepreneurial empowerment. India has already shown the world that this is possible – through the enabling mechanism of Self Help Groups (SHGs) for instance.

Particularly, the women enterprises are going beyond family and child welfare, from reproductive roles to productive roles; and from pappad-pickle-perfume triangle to techno-training and services, skill textures and medium and large enterprises, and the motivational spirit of women entrepreneurs is reinforcing (Hans, 2016).

Purpose and Plan of the Study

The purpose and plan of the study is as follows

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the present status of women entrepreneurship and its determinants.
2. To identify the various problems and alternative avenues/strategies in promoting integrated women entrepreneurship in India.

Methodology

The study is a qualitative one and is based on secondary data. Secondary data is obtained from the various published and unpublished records, books, magazines and journals.

Conceptual and Operational Framework

There has been a steady increase in the participation of women in small business indicating immense potential for entrepreneurial development among them. From the point of view of performance, it was observed that the

women enterprises in India have made significant contributions towards generation of employment, gross output asset creation and exports. Changes in the global and domestic environment have contributed towards the growth of women entrepreneurship in India.

Indian research reveals that studies conducted in the past have covered various aspects such as motivation, available support system and problem faced by women entrepreneurs. According to 1981 Census Report, there were only 1.5 lakhs self-employed women in the country, which was 5.2 percent of total of self-employed persons in the country. Government of India reports, "Women start small-scale industries exclusively run by them". There were more than 2,95,680 women entrepreneurs claiming 11.2 percent of total 2.64 million entrepreneurs in India during 1995-96. During Eighth Year Plan, the number of Small Scale Industries (SSIs) raised from 1.7 million to 2.5 million, adding 0.8 million in five year periods or 1.60 lakh every year. Among the SSI entrepreneurs approximately 9 percent of them were women entrepreneurs". In 2016 there were 15.27 female enterprises in rural areas and 12.45 in urban areas. But male enterprises were 84.73 in rural areas and 87.55 in urban areas.

Trends and Opportunities

India's 15 Most Successful Female Entrepreneurs

Gone are the days when women were considered no match for all powerful men in this world. The male dominated world was always reluctant to even acknowledge the fact that women were as good as men on parameters of hard work, intelligence quotient (IQ) and leadership traits.

The new generation women across the world have overcome all negative notions and have proved themselves beyond doubt in all spheres of life including the most intricate and cumbersome world of entrepreneurship.

Yes, there is a section among women who believe in short-cuts but at the same time there is no dearth of women who are confident, believe in themselves and have enormous fire in their bellies to take on the best in the business and beat them at their own game.

India too has its own pool of such bold and fearless women who have made a mark for themselves both within the country as well as overseas.

Indu Jain

Indu Jain belongs to the Sahu Jain family and is the current chairperson of India's largest media group, Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd., which owns the Times of India and other large newspapers. She is widowed with two sons. Indu Jain is known by many different identities such as that of a spiritualist, humanist, entrepreneur, an aficionado of culture and the arts, an educationalist but her most prominent and eminent role has been that of Chairman. Ms Jain was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India in January 2016.

Kiran Mazumdar Shaw

She is the founder Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Biocon Limited. Kiran received the prestigious Padma Shri (1989) and the Padma Bhushan (2005) from the Government of India.

Indra Nooyi

The most well-known face amongst Indian women entrepreneurs – Indra Nooyi is the CFO and President of PepsiCo. She has been conferred with prestigious Padma Bhushan for her business achievements and being an inspiration to India's corporate leadership.

Vandana Luthra

VLCC, a beauty and wellness giant has its presence in 11 countries across Asia, Africa and the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) and the credit goes to Vandana Luthra. Initially, a homemaker, Vandana started her journey in 1989 when the first of her two daughters was only 3 years-old. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2013 for her contribution and in 2015, she was listed as the 33rd most powerful woman in business in India by Fortune India.

Naina Lal Kidwai

From being Head of Investment Banking at ANZ Grindlays during 1982-1994 to Vice Chairman JM Morgan Stanley, Naina Lal Kidwai is one of the most successful and famous Indian business women of today. She is currently Country Head and Group General Manager HSBC Group India. Apart from working at HSBC, Kidwai has also held other eminent positions such as that of Global Advisor, Harvard Business School, non-executive director at Nestle SA and as a member of Governing Board NCAER,

Auditor General of India and several other positions. Indian government conferred Padma Shri award on Naina for her contributions in the field of Trade and Industry.

Chanda Kochhar

She is currently the MD & CEO of India's largest private bank ICICI Bank. Under Kochhar's leadership, ICICI Bank won the "Best Retail Bank in India" award in 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2005 and "Excellence in Retail Banking Award" in 2002; both awards were given by The Asian Banker. Kochhar personally was awarded "Retail Banker of the Year 2004 (Asia-Pacific region)" by the Asian Banker, "Business Woman of the Year 2005" by The Economic Times and "Rising Star Award" for Global Awards 2006 by Retail Banker International.

Ekta Kapoor

The woman who changed the face of Indian television – Love them or hate them, you just cannot ignore Balaji serials and Ekta Kapoor is the woman who single-handedly founded and made Balaji Telefilms the household name it is today. This baby-faced teenager, who once dreamed of marrying and settling down just like any other woman in India, is the creative head of Balaji Telefilms and counted as one of the top 10 women entrepreneurs of today. Her production house has many hit serials to its credit – 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi', 'Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki' and many others, making her the Queen Bee of the Indian soap opera scene.

Suchi Mukherjee

Limeroad was started in 2012 by Suchi along with Manish Saksena, Ankush Mehra and Prashant Malik. The company has risen a funding of \$20 Million from Light speed venture partners, Matrix partners and Tiger Global. Suchi was selected as 1 of 15 women worldwide 'Rising Talents, high potential leaders under 40. Suchi is an ex-ebay, Skype and Gumtree.

Richa Kar

Richa is the founder of online lingerie store Zivame. She grew up in Jamshedpur and completed her engineering from BITS Pilani (2002) and after having worked briefly in the IT industry she acquired Masters' degree from Narsee Monji Institute of Management Studies in 2007, and worked with a retailer and global technology company before starting Zivame.com.

Zivame is probably the first in the online lingerie space in India and has played a role in educating women across the country about intimate wear and shaping consumer behaviour.

Aditi Gupta

One the most common taboos is Menstruation, but with time, it is getting the attention that is needed for the society to accept the fact and talk openly about it. One such initiative has been taken by Aditi Gupta. In 2012, she co-founded Menstrupedia with Tuhin Paul, a crowdfunded initiative. The company provides a resourceful guide about menstruation which helps women to stay healthy and active during their menstruation.

Hats off to all of these women entrepreneurs!

Reasons for Developing Women Entrepreneurs

The following are the reasons for becoming women entrepreneurs

1. Innovative thinking
2. New challenges and opportunities for self-fulfilment
3. Employment generation
4. Freedom to take own decision and be independent
5. Family occupation
6. Need for additional income
7. Bright future of their wards
8. Role model to others, support to the family members
9. Education and qualification, self-identity and social status
10. To assume new and fresh challenges and opportunities for self-fulfilment.
11. To prove their personalities in an innovative, daring and competitive job.
12. To undertake changes to control the balance between their families' responsibility and business obligations.
13. To increase standard of living.

Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in Modern Era

The attitude of educated women has also changed. More and more women consider self-respect and development of personality as necessary goals of life. Women entrepreneurs are successful in both their roles at home and in their work places keeping a balance and organization between the two. The status and role of women have witnessed rapid changes in recent years. The thoroughly domesticated women who could not think beyond the welfare of their families have now awakened to action. They have a desire to succeed, which is the awakening of their dormant individuality. They know how to do hard work in a smart way that will reduce the burden of doing additional work (Fernandes, Crasta, and Hans,n.d.)

Modern women have created a substantial change in purchasing and performing roles; they are now doers what they themselves decide. This should be cashed in by governments and NGOs to develop networking among potential women entrepreneurs and their inexperienced counterparts – encourage innovative structural and functional changes with skills needed for success in business start-ups (Hans, 2018).

Today companies are assessed for empowerment rating too, because companies come in all kinds. Empowering Organizations have clear methodologies and open-ended strategies. When the team-leader is ready to empower others it is a sign that she has a strategy – operational and tactical. Her team serves as a device to implement the strategy (Hans, 2016).

Education and awareness programmes have encouraged women entrepreneurs. Women have setup establishments to manufacture solar cookers in Gujarat, small foundries in Maharashtra and TV capacitors in Orissa. These are non-traditional industrial units. Women also engage themselves in the traditional sectors of embroidery, lace, toys, doll making, mat-weaving and the production of fancy-cum-utility articles. Even non-economic issues are dealt with. Several SHGs in Dakshina Kananda District besides promoting income augmenting and employment generating activities also took up non-income issues like quality of life, ecology etc. Collective Wisdom and peer pressures were virtues of the Groups (Jayasheela & Hans, 2014).

Challenges and Problems for Women Entrepreneurs in India

In the man dominated society, the greatest deterrent to women entrepreneurs is that they are women. Any drastic changes in a cultural diverse environ like India is never easy. Perception of weakness, exploitation by middlemen etc. put barriers on the mobility and risk-taking ability of entrepreneurs in general and women in particular (Colaco & Hans, 2018). The problems faced specially by the women entrepreneurs are multiple and diverse.

Problems

1. Lack of Encouragement from Financial Institutions

Women Entrepreneurs in India have face many financial and social problems. Financial institutions are sometimes doubtful of women entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial abilities. The bankers consider women loaners are higher risk than men loaners.

2. Lack of Financial Resources

The bankers consider women loonies as higher risk than men loonies. The banker put unrealistic and unreasonable securities to get loan to women entrepreneurs. According to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) "despite evidence those women's loan repayment rates are higher than men's; women still face more difficulties in obtaining credit."

3. Low Mobility

Women entrepreneurs generally face the problem to travel from one place to another for business purposes.

4. Family Commitments

In India it is regarded as commitment or responsibility of the women to look after the children and other members of the family. It is difficult for the women entrepreneurs to strike a balance between business and home. Therefore, the success depends on the support given by the family.

5. Social Attitudes

In a men dominated society, despite constitutional equality, women do not get equal treatment. There is wide spread discrimination against women. This attitude prevents women entrepreneurs from becoming successful and independent entrepreneurs.

6. Lack of Education

In India literacy among women is very low. Due to this women are unaware of the latest technological development, basic accounting and market trends. This may lead to failure of business.

7. Personal Problems

Many women entrepreneurs lack the necessary initiative, suffer inferiority complex and are easily disheartened by failure.

8. Low Need for Achievement

Many studies have shown that women have preconceived notions about their role in life and this inhibits achievement. Women may not set goals (other than marriage) for themselves. It is partly due to their several role conflicts.

9. Over-Dependence

Most of the women entrepreneurs are seen to undertake purely as a subcontractor (i.e. ancillary unit) on raw materials, or manufacture items that are usually used by large-scale units. This leads to dependence on large-scale industries. The success or failure of women entrepreneurs depends on the success or failure of large-scale industries.

10. Lack of Raw Materials

The majority of the women are engaged in the unorganized sector like handicrafts, handloom, and cottage-based industries. For these sectors there is inadequate availability of raw materials.

11. Stiff Competition

Women entrepreneurs in the unorganized sector face intense competition from organized sector and male entrepreneurs in terms of quality and price of the product.

12. Lack of Training

The biggest problem is the lack of sufficient business training and this weakness is all the more glaring in the case of rural entrepreneurs who are uneducated. Due to social structure which is often culturally driven, women have different training needs when it comes to entrepreneurship and self-employment that helps to gain confidence.

13. Marketing Problems

Access to market is more difficult than access to finance. Accesses to market pose a very big challenge to entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs with adequate experience continue to face the problem of marketing their products.

14. High Cost of Production

The profitability, development and expansion depend on the cost of production. High cost of production due to problem of material, labour, infrastructure, human resource, etc., hinders the efficiency, development and expansion of an enterprise. Women entrepreneurs also face the same problem.

15. Lack of Awareness

Women entrepreneurs sometimes are not aware of technological developments and other information on subsidies and concessions available to them in respect of getting loan or getting industrial sheds or raw-materials, etc.

16. Lack of Self-Confidence

The element of risk is very high in business. The women entrepreneurs hesitate to take risk. The risk bearing ability is comparatively lower than men.

Suggestions

The secret of success, someone has said is: "I attribute my success to one thing – never run away from life. Face it boldly. Dare to be different".

1. Education has been instrumental in increasing the participation of women in entrepreneurial activities. The formal education not only helps in acquisition of requires knowledge for a job, which demands non-traditional skills but also imparts knowledge about the different occupational opportunities.
2. There should be an incessant attempt to motivate, give confidence, inspire and assist women entrepreneurs.
3. Government should provide better educational facilities and schemes to women folk.
4. There should be continuous monitoring, improvement of training programmers, practical experience and personality development programmes to improvise their over-all personality standards.

5. Establishment of proper training institutes for enhancing their level of work-knowledge, skills, risk-taking abilities, enhancing their capabilities. Training Centres should provide training to prospective women entrepreneurs free of cost and Entrepreneurship Successful Leading Business Women in India development Program should be much more practical oriented.
6. A women entrepreneur should herself set up an example by being successful and should act as a role model. Since children have a tendency to emulate their parents, the resultant effect would be automatic.
7. Establishment of proper training institutes for enhancing their level of work-knowledge, skills, risk-taking abilities, enhancing their capabilities.
8. Creating provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level with low rate of interest.
9. Provision should be made to provide land / sheds to deserving women entrepreneurs on priority basis. Group Women Entrepreneurship (GWE) may be promoted in rural sector by reinvigorating activities / skills on traditional crafts or practices with which they are acquainted.
10. A Women Entrepreneur's Guidance Cell should be set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs all over the state.
11. Positive attitudinal change in the society recognizing the role of women as entrepreneur may lead to the development of appropriate environment in which women will be able to exploit their entrepreneurial talents
12. Offering seed capital, upliftment schemes, women entrepreneurs fund etc. to encourage them economically.
13. To extend concessional rates facilities and schemes for women entrepreneurs to prosper in the field of enterprise acquainted.
14. Women entrepreneurs should be provided marketing facilities and subsidy for raw materials. Thus by adopting the above said suggestions in letter and spirit the problems associated with women can be solved.
15. New demands of HRM – strategies, innovations etc. – should be incorporated to the learning curve of female entrepreneurship to help them break barriers of conventional management. Example: gamification.

9 “C”s list for women entrepreneurs

1. Control
2. Confidence
3. Courage
4. Creativity
5. Conviction
6. Clarity
7. Contribution
8. Connections
9. Commitment

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

Conclusion

Women have the potential and the determination to set up, uphold and supervise their own enterprises in a very systematic manner. Appropriate support and encouragement from the Society in general and family members in particular is required to help them scale new heights in their business ventures. The right kind of assistance from family, society and Government can make these Women Entrepreneurs a part of the mainstream of national. There has been a steady increase in the participation of women in small business indicating immense potential for entrepreneurial development among them. From the point of view of performance, it was observed that the women enterprises in India have made significant contribution towards generation of employment, gross output, asset creation and exports. Women form the family, which participate to develop society and Nation. Entrepreneurial movement among women started late and is still in its infancy. Changes in the global and domestic environment have contributed towards the growth of women entrepreneurship in India. As observed the success of women entrepreneurs differs from State to State in India. It was also observed that women enterprises are concentrated in the micro segment of the MSME sector. To enlarge their participation in small and medium segments a stronger coordinated role of Indian Government, financial institutions, voluntary agencies and educational institutions with an integrated approach is necessary. Young female entrepreneurs should share their success stories in the world of e-commerce to speed up entrepreneurial movement in India.

References

- Bulsara Hemantkumar, P., Chandwani Jyoti, Gandhi Sailesh (2014). Women Entrepreneurship and Innovations in India: An Exploratory Study. *International Journal of Innovation*, 2(1); 32-44.
- Fernandes Divya, J., Crasta Shawna, Hans Basil V. (n.d.). Innovations in Human Resource Management – Lessons to Learn. Working Paper.
- Hans Basil V. (2016). Role and Responsibilities of Managerial Economists: Empowering Business through Methodology and Strategy. *Nitte Management Review*, 10(2): 27-43.
- Hans Basil V. (2018). Gender and Governance: Issues in Inclusive Growth. In Vikram Singh (Ed.), *Interrogating Women Empowerment the Global Experience*, New Delhi, Satyam Law International, 531- 547.
- Holt David H. (2016). *Entrepreneurship New Venture Creation*, Pearson India Education Services, Pvt Ltd., Noida.
- Jayasheela, Hans Basil V. (2014). Economic Empowerment of Women through SHGs among Social Groups: Evidence from the Grassroots. *Al-Shodana Journal*, 2(1): 35-56.
- Khan Mohammad Israr (2015). Women Entrepreneurship in India A Critique of Social and Economic Environment. Paper for Seminar D S College, Aligarh.
- Kumar Anil, S. (2008). *Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, New Delhi, I.K. Publishing House Pvt Ltd.
- Khanka, S.S. (2014). *Entrepreneurial Development*, New Delhi, S. Chand & Company Ltd.
- Nandy Sarmishta, Kumar Shalini. (2014). *Global Journal of Finance and Management*. 6(9): 967-976.
- Sowjanya Shetty, Hans Basil V. Role of Education in Women Empowerment and Development Issues and Impact. SAMPRATHI 2015 UGC Sponsored National Seminar on Education for Building People's Capacity Towards Sustainable Development, PG Dept. of MSW, St Aloysius College (Autonomous), Mangaluru, September 22-23, 2015.
- Sugaraj Jadhawrao Madhavi and Salve, P. S. (2014). A Study of Women Entrepreneurship and Their Problems in the Development in Western Maharashtra, *IOSR journal of Economics and Finance*, 3(2): 79-83.
- Vembly Colaco, Hans Basil V. (2018). Redefining Entrepreneurship in India – Women as Their Own Bosses. Paper presented at the National Conference on Youth Entrepreneurship in the Current Competitive Arena, Besant Women's College, Mangalore, October 31.