

Women Entrepreneurship: Journey and Contributions for Economic Development in India

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ABSTRACT

Economic, cultural, social and psychological factors are the determining factors for emergence of entrepreneurship in any country. It is believed that the women entrepreneurs are growing at a faster speed in terms of entrepreneurial population worldwide. However, it differs both in terms of practice as well as research. In India, after the economic liberalization and globalization the women entrepreneurship has gained a lot of importance. The government has developed the policy and institutional framework to improve the skills of women by providing them needed education and training to empower them economically. However, still women share is not more than one-third of economic enterprises. In spite of the rapid growth in the field of women entrepreneurship, there is less evidence of research made on this subject. Literature review reveals limited work has been done in this field and there is still a long way to go to build a strong theoretical base as far as research on women entrepreneurship is concerned. The need is felt to build transactional network to enable the growth of the women enterprises in the country. For this purpose, it is necessary to develop professional communities.

This paper will try to understand the concept, journey and challenges of women entrepreneurship In India. This will also study various success stories and the contributions made by women entrepreneurs for the economic development in India. This concept based introductory paper aims to outline the previous researches made, by referring to the literature review available on women enterprises and entrepreneurs in India. An effort will be made to understand the various challenges being faced and the view of the government as well as support provided by them to meet such challenges. The paper will attempt to make some suggestions to achieve the objectives of economic development with the help of women entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial journey, Social norms, Development.

INTRODUCTION:

There is a phenomenal growth in the number of self-employed women in different countries of the world after the Second World War. Women are now more cognisant about their existence, roles, and rights. Women entrepreneurs are making significant impact on different segments of the economy in various countries such as United States, Australia, Canada, Great Britain and Germany and they are working in almost all kinds of industries whether it is education, insurance, manufacturing, tourism, hotels and retail trade. In India also, women entrepreneurship is gaining importance. The government's policy since 1991 for liberalizing the economy and heading towards globalization has made positive impacts. The government is also quite keen to empower the women by making them economically independent. The managerial capabilities of the women have been acknowledged and there are stories of successful business women entrepreneurs whether it is social field or economic sector, they are performing very well. The government has introduced national skill

development mission and through national skill development policy is focussing on entrepreneurial development, vocational education and skill development of the women.

But if we study the history, we find that women have been discriminated throughout the world because of one reason or others. Women have never been accepted as the bread earners and her entrepreneurial activities were not developed. She was expected to take care of the domestic responsibilities. However, from 17th Century, the women began to come forward and started engaging them in business enterprises for trading of the goods. 18th Century and 19th Century saw emergence of women, thinking changed, female entrepreneurs were accepted in the society and it was seen that women preferred using products manufactured by the women.

As per Women's Global Entrepreneurship study conducted in US, UK and India, commissioned by Dell (2012), found India as ideal country for a woman starting a business in 2012. Now, women entrepreneurs are recognized as a source of economic growth. They provide solutions to the society in terms of finding jobs for themselves and others. However, they are still in minority as far as their participation in economic enterprises is concerned. There are gender-based issues and social and cultural factors are discriminatory and do not support them. Because of which the mobility of the women is limited and they are not able to develop their network.

The contribution of women in the social entrepreneurial factors is worth acknowledging and appreciating. They have been instrumental in providing innovative solutions to take care of various evils of the society. Women entrepreneurs have great passion for the social issues and are instrumental for the progress of the society in various fields such as health care, education, manufacturing and social sector.

In India, particularly in Southern States, the percentage of women led enterprises is more than 50 percent. Women are leading for the production of agricultural products and supplying of milk to the various households. In spite of all these submissions the literature review findings suggest that we are yet to achieve the target of building a strong base for development of women entrepreneurship and lot of research is needed. As per the Jennings and Brush (2013), the business model of doing the business has been male-centred. The research has further revealed that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities are gender-phenomena but can be rooted in families. Brush (1992) said that there exist some differences and some similarities between male and female as far as business is concerned. There are differences with regard to educational background, motivation to do a business enterprise and their approach for business creation and growth.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This conceptual paper on women entrepreneurship is hereby presented to illuminate the various issues associated with women entrepreneurship. The paper will discuss the women entrepreneurship in India and their contributions towards the economic development of the society. Paper also has objectives to review and analyse the literature review published on this subject.

The paper has been divided into five sections. Section I will deal with abstract and objectives. Section II will discuss the concept of women entrepreneurship and will highlight the research made by various authors and researchers. We shall be revisiting the concepts so developed with the help of literature review available. Section III of the paper will discuss women entrepreneurs in India and their contributions in economic and social sectors. Section IV will highlight the government views and the policies made to support the women entrepreneur in the country. Section V will talk about various challenges being faced by the women enterprises and entrepreneurs and will attempt to suggest ways and means to overcome that.

Research review approach will be followed and we shall be doing our discussions by researching the e-data basis. On the basis of research, we shall discuss our directions for future references and approach to develop women entrepreneurship and the paper will conclude by giving recommendations and suggestions.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Lot of studies have been done on women entrepreneurship and research papers have been published in Journals and Newspapers. The present literature suggests that for "developing entrepreneurship phenomena and economic development, the women can play an important role" (Sarfaraz, Faghih, and Majd, 2014). Further researchers have advocated about entrepreneurship as gender-phenomena. However, also supported that entrepreneurial activities can be rooted in families.

Keeping in view the conflicting statements and the evidences as found with regard to research on entrepreneurship, we need to understand and focus on our research from different angles. Ahl (2006) has also recommended for shifting position in favour of studying "How women entrepreneurs construct their lives and businesses?" and how social orders are gendered. Suggestions have been made to study the impact of various

factors such as economic and social policy, labour market situations, legislation for studying the subject of women entrepreneurs. Further De Bruin, Brush, and Welter (2006) have affirmed that as far as research for women entrepreneurship is concerned, it is a very early childhood stage. There is need to do more research on women entrepreneurship and to promote the community and define the subject and area of women entrepreneurship. Going by the records, it is found that “on the subject of women entrepreneurship the first academic book was published in 1985” (Goffee and Scase, 1985).

Yadav and Unni (2016) studied growth in the field of women entrepreneurship based on review of literature published from 1980s till 2016. In their review they found that initial studies assumed no difference in entrepreneurship on the basis of gender and found no need for separate investigation on women entrepreneurship. They found there is need to study women entrepreneurship theories in conjunction with feminist theories to develop more constructionist approach towards women entrepreneurs.

Initially, it was believed that by and large men and women entrepreneurs are same and there is no need to have separate investigation on the subject women entrepreneurship. Later on, the differences, treatment, focus, gender-biased, gender-barriers, felt the need of making comparative studies which will include research from various countries to examine women entrepreneurs and concept of women entrepreneurship. Ahl and Nelson (2010) have presented an analysis on gender entrepreneurship and have recommended to consider male and female entrepreneurs as independent variables and they have strongly advocated for further research on differences between male and female entrepreneur behaviour. They have suggested that there is a need to have a revisit on prospective on gender differences and entrepreneurial research and include in its scope, femininity and masculinity and study men and women from different aspects. Further, Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter, and Welter (2012) has described the stage of women entrepreneurial research at adolescence. Goyal and Yadav (2014) have addressed various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in developing countries. They have talked about socio-cultural biases, the struggle of women to have access to the finance and their institutional and entrepreneurial education is at a very low level. They have recommended addressing these complex challenges and doing more research on the subject. Henry, Foss, and Ahl (2016) has emphasised that the studies have comparison between men and women entrepreneurs but the information on different industrial sectors is less. Feminist critics are less and there is a need to adopt innovative methods like qualitative approaches to deeply inquire about the subject. If we analyse the various reviews of literature on female entrepreneurship, we find that by and large different scholars have recommended for making more researches on the subject to understand the impact of various factors such as family, culture, industry, society, government on women enterprises. They have also suggested that there is a need to do more research on women entrepreneurs in the developing countries.

The studies have taken care to understand the impact of economic policies, government decisions, family policies on the growth of women entrepreneurship. Brush, De Bruin, and Welter (2009) has advocated for using the organizational framework to study and review the economic, academic literature with regard to women entrepreneurship. They have proposed that the holistic understanding of the concept of women entrepreneurship should be done and a gender aware framework should be developed. They have founded an institutional theory and have built a framework of market, money and management popularly known as 3-Ms and have added motherhood and macro environment to make it a 5-Ms framework to study the women entrepreneurship. It is found that till 1980s, serious researches have not been made about the female entrepreneurs as there is evidence of piece-meal studies as said by Bowen and Hisrich (1986). It is found that the initial studies made recommendation which did not have the focus. It is recommended to develop and build theoretical explanations which will grow gender-based studies with regard to business owners by extending the theories to have feminist prospective.

Women Entrepreneurs in India:

India has been a favourite destination for business particularly after the globalization and liberalization followed by various initiatives taken by present government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from 2014 by announcing various policies and supporting legislations to counter the struggles and challenges faced by entrepreneurs in India. The Indian women have also excelled in the area of business and industry. They have shown to the world that given the support they have proved to be a successful business woman. In country like India where the women had been neglected but there are certain success stories, as women have soared very high and have become successful entrepreneurs in India. They have not only helped the society economically, there have made a very big contribution towards the social entrepreneurship also. They have contributed a lot for the economic and societal development of the country and the nation looks forward to improve the women entrepreneurial base in the country. In the following sections, we shall discuss the stories of successful women

entrepreneurs in India who have proved that the women in any way are not less than men in terms of achievements and performance, and she can win the world if she decides:

Vandana Luthra with the support of 6,000 professionals, Padamshree awarded in 2013 and ranked at 33 powerful women in business. By Forbes India in 2015. She began in a male dominated environment faced criticism and worked very hard for wellness and beauty is considered as a famous and established cosmetologist, and nutritionist.

Suchi Mukherjee, the owner of the company Limeroad began her company in 2012 with a strong team of 200+ IITs Graduates with the right skills and attitudes, has been able to achieve good heights in building and consumer product goods sector.

Richa Kar, the founder of online lingerie store Zivame, has changed the concept of inner wear by removing the shyness and a new element of fashion in the female inner wear section that too in a conservative country like India. Began with an initial investment of Rs. 30 lakhs, seeking money from family and friends, zivame.com went online and is a success story.

Falguni Nayar, IIM Graduate, owner of the company, Nayaka.com, former MD of Kotak Mahindra Company, Nayaka sells more than 35,000 products from Indian as well as foreign companies covering 650 brands is handling more than 15,000 orders a day from consumers between the age of 22 and 35 years.

Vani Kola, 51 years of the age, educated from Arizona State University, is called a mother of venture capitalism in India. She has been successful entrepreneur in Silicon Valley for 22 years, have now shifted to India to create high growth enterprises. She has set up a company named as Kalaari Capital which is India's leading investors in early stage businesses. They had made investment in 55 companies and look after entrepreneurs' different aspects of growth and facilitate the success for them. Fortune described her most powerful woman in business. She is profiled in various books also.

Pranshu Bhandari, a young girl, the age of less than 30 years, graduate from Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS), Mumbai, launched her Start-up on English Learning Applications in October, 2014 and got more than 3 million installs in 8 months, working on the language and succeeded through promotion of language English. In 2015, she was listed in Forbes India's 30 for creating an app which is one of the top 10 educational app in the world, has got various other awards from Google Play Store, and Internet and Mobile Association of India.

Sharda Sharma, running the company Your Story, again a young woman, has worked on 'How to handle adversaries and negativities in life?' focussed on the concept of listening and learning stories of others. She has more than 15,000 stories on the website. With a minimum support system. She is marshalling the various stories which are coming from different diverse backgrounds with the aim of advising them "How to handle negativity" and "How to face adversities in life".

Upasana Taku, educated from Stanford University, US has worked with PayPal, Zaakpay, launcher of MobiKwik. MobiKwik is the first recharge platform which got converted into first mobile wallet of India. She created the mechanism to make the payments through phone which works as a wallet for you.

Shahnaz Husain, owner of the company Shahnaz Herbal, began her career as a house wife worked against all odds became the queen of Herbal Beauty Care. The Government of India awarded her "Padam Shri" in the year 2006. She has business in 138 countries with more than 6,000 franchises. She has specialization on cosmologies, trichology and have studied skin disorders due to use of synthetic products. She began her project with a minimum investment of Rs.37,000/- in 1977 in a very modest way in her own house and now she is a figure which is known worldwide.

Women Social Entrepreneurship:

Anita Ahuja, dealing with Handbag projects, is a founder of Conserve India has worked with Rag Pickers and used plastic wastes to make material for handbags.

Smita Ghosh working for FabIndia, founder of Rangсутra, brought employment to the rural India by doing community development and improved the environment.

Salooni Malhotra has created opportunities for the youth of the rural India. She has specialized in rural BPO with the help of IIT incubators.

Ishita Khanna, founder of Eco Sphere has worked in the field of Eco tourism in Himachal Pradesh. She has contributed with the help of an NGO to produce berry pulp which is helping to build community and employment levels in the Himachal Pradesh.

Ansu Gupta, founded Goonj again an NGO, with the target of utilizing waste material as a tool to develop and her work has been recognized as largest civic participation movement in India.

Ela Bhatt started SEWA in 1972 with the objective of providing the services to the poor and creating a venue of self-employment of women in the field of legal and educational services. NGO take care of child care and provides financial help to the needy and deserving people.

List is unending, the contributions made by women entrepreneurs in the field of economic development and contributing towards the inclusive growth of the societies are worth appreciation.

The government support and policies for women entrepreneurship in India:

In India, micro, small and medium enterprises, various development organizations, the Ministry through entrepreneurship development programmes organize various programmes to improve capacity, competence and skills of the women to improve their confidence, creativity and potentials to set up the businesses. The purposes of organizing such programmes are to help the women in terms of education, trainings and development.

Prime Minister Rozar Yojana is working for the benefit of women through various clustered development programmes. Various schemes have been launched by Central and State Governments. Some of them are : Anna Poorna scheme launched by State Bank of Mysore to provide the loan upto Rs.15,000 as a working capital. Istri Shakti package for women entrepreneurs launched by State of Bank of India to offer loans to such enterprises who have women as partners having share of more than 50 percent. Bhartiya Mahalia Bank Business loan providing assistance to women entrepreneurs who want to start their businesses in retail sector, the maximum loan can go upto Rs.20 crores and no collateral security is required for the loan up to Rs. 1 crore. Dena Shakti scheme provides assistance to women who want to start business in the field of agriculture, retail stores and small enterprises. Concessional loans are given up to Rs. 20 lakhs, Cent Kalyani Scheme initiated by the Central Bank of India to help the budding women entrepreneurs; help is given to set up the industries in villages for agriculture related activities. Mahila Udyam Niti scheme launched by Punjab National Bank to promote women entrepreneurs to start day-care centres, autorickshaws, start beauty parlours, etc. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Nitti Ayog have redrafted the guidelines as per the present-day need, the main aim is to impart skills in various sectors like embroidery, horticulture, food processing, agriculture, Stand Up India a programme launched for underprivileged Women entrepreneurs, scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes

Challenges and Roadmap:

As per sixth economic census released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, out of 58 million entrepreneurs, the women entrepreneurs are only 8 million, approximately 14% of the total entrepreneurship. Out of which 2.76 million working in agriculture sector whereas 5.29 million women which is more than 65% of the women work in non-agriculture sector.

There are many challenges because of cultural, economic and political socio-cultural barriers which deal with prospection and role of women in business enterprises. Discriminatory, social and cultural norms in our society discourage the women to set up the businesses and expand them. The male enterprises preferred to have suppliers and customers in the male category. The hindrance because of attitudes and perceptions and having the prejudice views against rural and urban women entrepreneurs has been the cause of non-development of women entrepreneurship in our country. Various obstacles relating to policy and legislative support have not given equitable and supportive treatment to the women. There is need to address various challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in India and take such measures which will improve and develop various mechanisms for the strengthening and developing of women enterprises in our country. The challenges are:

Attitude and perceptions: Lack of confidence in women by the male dominated society and less exposure of the women to set up enterprises because of lack of education, training and skill development is the main cause of hindrances for the women to set up the enterprises. Not only non-availability of infrastructural support, women entrepreneurs also have to face lot of attitudes and perception problems vis-a-vis male counterparts which make it difficult for them to set up business in the country.

The Finance Issues: Women encounters lot of barriers in terms of credit needed to set up and develop the enterprises. It can be because of lack of awareness or due to complex procedures, biased attitudes in favour of male entrepreneurs. The facility of core capital is not available for the women entrepreneurs which limit their capacities to approach the market to acquire other human and non-human resources.

Social Systems: The social cultural systems in our country is against the women to set up enterprises and they face lot of difficulties. The inheritance and land law system does not support women entrepreneurship. Male members have more control over the financial and non-financial assets of the family which is seldom shared with the women entrepreneurs. The situation is same whether it is rural sectors or urban sectors. Our

sociological factors do not have confidence in the capacity and competence of women entrepreneurs.

Education and Training: Indian system of education does not create entrepreneurs. It does not have knowledge centres and training institutes which can enhance the skills and knowledge to do the business in the country. It is a challenge for the women to have access to those resources. The problem of distances, social practices and various other exclusions have restricted the women to remain immobile and depend on men to support them who hardly support as they believe that it is their domain to work and earn in the society.

Leadership Issues: The women have performed excellently in every field as the research says or as is seen. But the problem is to accept them as the leader by the men who consider themselves as more capable, qualified and trained. In a male dominated society because of psychological barrier women are not accepted as a leader. In spite of having world class education, experience and qualities of being a skilful intelligent hardworking with strong determination possessing all leadership qualities, women are not accepted as a leader.

Road-Map and Recommendations:

The recommendations are with regard to policies, finance, attitudes, perceptions, education, training and so on.

Dedicated Mechanism: It is necessary to develop dedicated mechanism to avoid gender-biases and strengthen social protection for women. It is also necessary that procedures should be streamlined and made easy for registration of business and issue of licences by creating one stop or one-window for not only guiding and information but also for follow up and execution. The officials of the government should be trained and instructed to have a constructive dialogue with the women entrepreneurs to motivate them to start their businesses.

Easy Access to Finance: Mechanism need to be developed for promotion of financial products and easy availability of credit support system to women entrepreneurs following the gender responsive scheme. Once again, one window mechanism to be developed to make it easy and fair for the women applicants, seeking credit. The financial institutions for funding and promoting women entrepreneurship should follow collective guarantee schemes.

Diversity Management: Keeping in view geographical, political, cultural and economic diversity in the country, the problems arising because of socio-cultural barriers between the men and women should be addressed. Efforts must be made to encourage the women to set up their businesses. Any kind of discrimination with the women by male suppliers and operators should be discouraged. Social perceptions and attitudes should be developed in favour of women entrepreneurs and policy of the prejudice against women should be condemned.

Education and training: It is necessary that education, training programmes should be conducted for women entrepreneurs specially or even collectively without any gender-bias. Public awareness programmes and campaign should be organized to motivate women's participation to embrace entrepreneurship. People should be educated about the benefit of the domestic responsibilities to be discharged on sharing basis. The use of culture, religion and social network to promote the values for women's participation in the entrepreneurship should be promoted.

Gender Responsive Policies: It is recommended that law making agencies should define the roles of various institutions to ensure to adopt and follow gender responsive policies for the development of business enterprises by promoting women entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial development agencies should strengthen social protection schemes and ensure that the women enterprises develop.

Skill Development: Capacity development of women entrepreneurs with the objective of providing them tailor made training and follow up as per the need of the women entrepreneurs to improve their skills, capacity and competence and train them in the field of finance, marketing, management and product development should be promoted. There is a need to develop mechanism for systematic promotion of the capacity building skill development programmes through multiple channels or community forums as the need may be.

CONCLUSION:

Given the opportunity, women will deliver results and show their excellence in various walks of life including the entrepreneurship. The need of the hour to intensify the motivational efforts to develop entrepreneurial stream among the women and extend support to them with the help of scientifically designed mechanisms for technical and financial support. There is a need of government organizations to play a bigger role to stimulate and nurture the spirit of entrepreneurship among women. Integrated approach of co-existence of men and entrepreneurship is needed for the success of the Indian economic system. There is a need to support entrepreneurial journey by empowering them with skills, knowledge and resources. India is witnessing first

generation women entrepreneurs both in economic as well as social sectors. Inclusive growth, self-employment, transformational change can only happen with the help of women as a regular partner. It is necessary to do more of research into women enterprises and create theoretical base and ground for adopting entrepreneurship by the women. Cultural biases psychological and social barriers should be curbed and awareness campaign should be launched to change the attitudes and perceptions of male dominated society to a society where both men and women entrepreneurship to do work with shoulders to shoulders for the economic psychological, social and entrepreneurial development of the country which will bring lots of benefits and better inclusive growth resulting in more contribution towards the GDP of the country.

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