Women Entrepreneurs in India - Prospective and Challenges

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1. Introduction

Pandit Jawaharlal Lal Nehru has remarked “When women move forward, the family moves, the village moves and then ultimately the Nation moves forward.” Women are one of the most relevant untapped resources if you talk about entrepreneurship. Female entrepreneurship is gaining attention and importance in light of the evidence of the importance of new business creation for economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship refers to the act of setting up a new business so as to take advantages from new opportunities. Entrepreneurs are responsible for shaping the economy and they help in creation of new wealth and new jobs by inventing new products, process and services. We all understand that economic development of the today’s woman is crucial for economic development of any country specially a country like India. The dependency on service sector has created many entrepreneurial opportunities for women that they can utilize to enhance their social standing and reputation. In this study, an attempt has been made to study the opportunities and challenges related with entrepreneurship that the woman of our country faces in the present times. Much knowledge is not found about the economic relevance of women in entrepreneurship programs and the effect of these programs on society and economy.

The purpose of the study to examine the constraints and opportunities facing female entrepreneurship in developing countries at micro- and macro-level perspectives and seeks to provide a detailed account of opportunities and constraints bought by entrepreneurship.

According to Kamala Singh, “A women entrepreneur is a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving economic independence individually or in collaboration generates employment opportunities for others through initiating establishing and running an enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life.”

According to APJ Abdul Kalam, “Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation.”

According to the recent reports and studies female entrepreneurship has attracted a lot of attention in recent years in light of concrete evidence that it supports economic growth and development.
2. Statement of Problem

The growth and development of women entrepreneurs required to be accelerated because entrepreneurial development is not possible without the participation of women. Therefore a congenital environment is needed to be created to enable women to participate actively in the entrepreneurial activities.

Though, there is important of women entrepreneur in economic development, it is estimated that presently women entrepreneur are about 10% of total entrepreneur in India. Impact of the sequence of problems faced by the women entrepreneur, the growth of women entrepreneur in India is undermining.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic factors of women entrepreneur.
2. To discuss the problems faced by women entrepreneurs in India.
3. To discuss the major factors affecting the development of women entrepreneurship.
4. To discuss the measures needed to improve the state of women entrepreneurship in India.

4. Research Methodology

The study is based on both primary and secondary data which is collected from the questionnaire, published reports of newspapers, journals, websites, etc.

5. Problems Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in India

There are some umpteen problems faced by women at various stages beginning from their initial commencement of enterprise, in running their enterprise. Their various problems are as follows:

1. Lack focus on Career Obligations

Indian women do not focus on their career obligations in the same manner as they do on their family and personal life. Despite having excellent entrepreneurial abilities, they do not focus on their career obligations. Their lack of focus towards their career creates a problem in promoting women entrepreneurship.

2. Economic Instability of women

The economic stability of Indian women is in a very poor state as they lack proper education that is crucial for becoming self-dependent. Women in rural areas can’t take any entrepreneurial.

3. Lack of Risk taking ability

Our educational system is very primitive and creating awareness about woman’s capacities and their hidden powers to handle economic activities. Most of the women are not performing entrepreneurial activities because they are not having the proper capacities and risk making ability.
4. Arrangement of Finance & Raw Material

Arrangement of finance is a major problem that is faced by women entrepreneurs. Their access to external sources of finance is very limited because of their poor economic condition in the society. As such; they find it difficult to be an entrepreneur as they lack the risk taking ability because of poor financial assistance. Another problem faced by them is shortage of raw-material and difficulty faced by the women entrepreneur in arranging good quality raw material at competitive prices.

5. Cut-throat Competition

Women entrepreneurs have to face tough competition not only from industry but also from their male counterparts. Surviving this cut-throat competition and achieving the aim of producing quality product at competitive price is not an easy task for the women entrepreneurs.

6. Low levels of literacy amongst women

Illiteracy is the root cause of socioeconomic biasedness that prevails in the society and that doesn’t let women achieve economic independency. Due to lack of Knowledge of latest technology and proper education, it becomes difficult for women to set up their own enterprises.

7. Problems in getting financial assistance by banks & Financial Institutions

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.

8. 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.

9. Less support towards family

In business women 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.

10. High cost of production:
High cost of production adversely affects the development of women entrepreneurs. The high cost of factors of production & the raw material makes it difficult for the women entrepreneur to operate in the industry. Government assistance in the form of grant and subsidies to some extent enables them to tide over the difficult situations. Other than the high cost of production, women entrepreneurs also face the problems of labor, human resources, infrastructure, legal formalities, overload of work, mistrust etc that are associate with every business enterprise.

11. 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 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.

6. Conclusion

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. It is important to promote entrepreneurship among women to improve the economic situation of the women. This can be made possible with the help of education as education is a powerful tool in bringing out the entrepreneurship qualities in a human being.

Moreover, attempts to motivate inspire and assist women entrepreneurs should be made at all possible levels. Proper training should be given to the women by establishing training institutes that can enhance their level of work-knowledge, risk-taking abilities, enhancing their capabilities. After setting up training institutes, there should be continuous monitoring, improvement of training programs so that they can improve upon the quality of the entrepreneurs being produced in the country. Undoubtedly the women participation rate in the field of entrepreneurship is increasing rapidly. However, efforts need to be taken at larger scale to give the position in the field of entrepreneurship that they deserve. The actions & steps that has been taken by the government sponsored development activities have benefited only a small strata of society and more needs to be done in this area. Effective steps need to be taken to have entrepreneurial awareness and skill development to women.

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