

The Study of Women Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship in Rural India

Paper Submission: 10/11/2021, Date of Acceptance: 23/11/2021, Date of Publication: 24/11/2021

Abstract

In the present scenario, where India is growing rapidly in the industrial sector, there are calls for the country to pay more attention on women empowerment in rural areas to flourish rural entrepreneurship. Rural women entrepreneurs are not only participating in the rural economy but also generating great employment for rural people. They are trying to break the glass ceiling of the conservative societal rules but still remain a side character in this male dominated society. India has 8.05 million about 14 percent women entrepreneurs out of 58.5 million entrepreneurs, which has been rising gradually after getting government attention. The main purpose of the research paper is to study the factors which encourage women to become entrepreneurs, problems that rural women entrepreneurs tackle and discuss various government initiatives for rural women entrepreneurs with some suggestions.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneur, Rural Women, Motivating Factors, Financial Problems.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a creative and dynamic process for creating a new enterprise. An entrepreneur is a catalyst for change, which creates new job opportunities for others. The economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors that exist in the society play a vital role in the emergence of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship among females is a relatively new phenomenon. When a woman starts and runs a business, she is not only helping in the growth of the economy, but she also has a lot of other benefits. "When a woman moves forward, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves" said India's 1st Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In India, women entrepreneurs and their contribution in the economy is quite visible nowadays. The percentage of female entrepreneurs has been rising over time, especially in the 1990s. Women entrepreneurs must be praised and applauded for their increased use of new technology, increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, generating a sizable job for others and pave the way for other women entrepreneurs in the organized sector.

It is evaluated, women entrepreneurs make up about 10% of all entrepreneurs of India and this percentage is increasing year after year. If current trends continue, women will account for roughly 20% of India's entrepreneurial force in another five years, because educated women do not want to confine their lives within four walls of the houses. They expect their partners to treat them with the same respect. However, Indian women would have to go a long way to get equal rights and status because customs and traditions are deeply ingrained in Indian society, which has male-dominated sociological structure. Throughout their life, women are treated as the weaker gender and are forced to depend on men in families and communities. These female leaders are confident, hard workers, articulate and risk takers, that's why they are able to survive and excel in this cutthroat competition environment. Indian women entrepreneurs' strengths and potential are they are able to learn quickly, their persuasive behaviour, problem solving style, willingly take risks and chances, their capability to motivate and inspire other people.

Concept and feature of Women Entrepreneur

Women entrepreneurs are characterised as the woman or women's group who start, organise and control an enterprise. Women entrepreneurs are described by the Indian government as business owners, operated and controlled by women that have at least fifty one percent financial interest of capital and provide at least fifty one percent employment in the enterprise. Women indulge in business because of push and pull factors that allow women to have an

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autonomous occupation and empower them to stand on their own feet. The driving force behind this is to wish to make independent decisions about their lives and careers. Women who are burdened with household chores and family responsibilities want to get independence and explore other domains for their career. Female entrepreneurs adopt her career as a challenge and have a desire to try something new as an outcome of these factors. These are pull factors but in push factors, women are compelled to be associated in business activities by their families and the burden of duty is thrust upon them. According to Joseph A. Schumpeter, "Women who innovate, initiate or adopt business actively are called women entrepreneurs." Thus, women entrepreneurs are those who organise, manage and operate the enterprises or industry and generate employment for others. Rural women entrepreneurship is the activity done by women who establish their own enterprise or business in rural areas and use the agriculture sources to generate employment for rural people.

Following are the basic elements of rural entrepreneur that are used in rural development:

1. In the rural community, local resources are used by rural people in an entrepreneurial project to improve distributions of farm produce yield.
2. Entrepreneurial occupations combat rural migration by reducing discrimination and creating alternative job opportunities in rural areas.
3. To activate the 6M's of production- Money, Material, Manpower, Machinery, Management and Market in the rural region.

Objective of the Study

1. To study the factors that encourage and motivate women to become entrepreneurs.
2. To examine the problems that rural women entrepreneurs tackled.
3. To study the programmes and policies of the agencies and the government in promoting women entrepreneurs.
4. To suggest some appropriate measures for growth and upliftment of women entrepreneurs.

Review of Literature

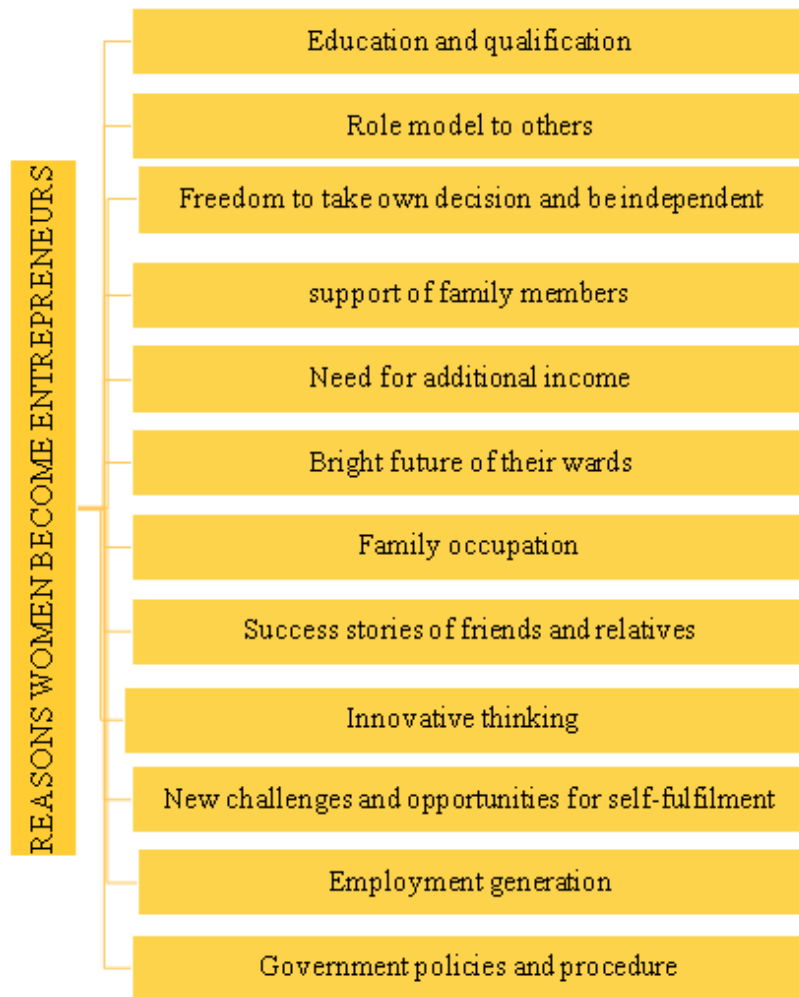
Masood (2011) stated that over the last 2 decades, a growing number of Indian women have entered in the field of entrepreneurship. They are contributing to the economy and society through the emergence and heightening of their enterprises. These female entrepreneurs have explored many industries and domains. The several earlier roadblocks in their progress have been eliminated but some others still remain. Furthermore, public policy and research initiatives have made significant strides in the training and development of female entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs can play a drastic role in boosting other women's morale and raising awareness about the necessity of self-reliance.

Raju and Bhuvanewari (2014) The Study on rural entrepreneurship was conducted in Siva ganga District and it looks at challenges, roles, needs and how to develop and improve rural entrepreneurship methods. In this case, researchers focus on defining rural entrepreneurship needs, forms of rural entrepreneurship, issues and challenges that rural entrepreneurs face and those factors which encourage rural entrepreneurship. The author's limitations are that it is very difficult to encourage and motivate rural entrepreneurs and with reduced motivation level, rural entrepreneurs face a lot of problems. Thus, our government must provide entrepreneurial training to rural and urban women. In terms of rural development, rural women's entrepreneurship can serve as a tool for improving rural people's quality of life, long term development with economic growth.

Sidhu and Kaur (2006) revealed the prime method to address the increasing unemployment among rural youth is to encourage them to become entrepreneurs. It helps to create jobs for a large group of people within the rural periphery. This is especially beneficial for females in rural areas, as it allows them to contribute to the family income by taking care of their family, farms and livestock. Rural women have plenty of resources to start an enterprise. Hence, she can successfully run both manufacturing and processing-oriented enterprises. However, to be a successful entrepreneur, women must possess some essential attributes beside family and government organizations.

Factors Motivate To Women Become Entrepreneurs In India

There are several factors which can influence women to be an entrepreneur. Some basic entrepreneurial influencers are: self-motivations, socio-cultural factors, business environment, ease of financial availability and supportive government schemes. A researcher found in her study, the most common factor for success of women entrepreneurs is personal qualities such as hard work and perseverance(Das, 2000). Some independent factors are market opportunity, family background, idea, challenge, and dream desire of status and economic independence. These factors vary according to parameters such as region, gender, age, family background, and work experience. Several surveys on women entrepreneurship management conducted in various parts of the world which show that women have proven to be successful entrepreneurs for the following reasons:-



Problems of Rural Women Entrepreneur in India

There are many challenges and problems that rural women entrepreneur’s face in their enterprises. The major problems are family restrictions, lack of technical know-how and skills, time balancing between family and work, education and working experience, Problems of raising start-up capital, suppliers and clients are some issues. Some problems faced by rural women entrepreneurs are as follow;

Illiteracy and Unawareness among Rural Women

The literacy rate of women is very poor as compared to the male population in India. The rural female is unaware of modern technologies and lack of the necessary skills. They are unable to do research & get necessary training. The uneducated female does not have the knowledge of measurement and basic accounting.

Difficulties in arrange finance	Rural women entrepreneurs have to face a lot of problems in raising funds and completing the financial needs of the enterprises. Women and small entrepreneurs suffer this type of financial problem because they are ignored by financiers, creditors and financial institutes for less credit worth and more chance of business failure. They lack access to outside funds due to absence of solid security and credit in the market. They also face financial problems due to no property on their own names.
Domination by Male in Society	Male supremacy is still persisting in many parts of the country. The constitution of India guarantees gender equality for both women and men. But in reality, women are regarded as able or weak in all respects. As a result, women suffer lots of problems in a male dominated society and family. Females are not treated equally to male. Therefore, these problems create an obstacle for women to get into business.
Balance between Family and business	Indian women are emotionally attached with their family. They are very less practical. They are supposed to do all the household work, to look after the children and other family members. They have more family responsibilities for husbands, care of children, others of family members and in regulations which take away a lot of their time and energy. In such situations, it will be a very challenging task for women to focus and run the business successfully. A married woman entrepreneur has struck a reasonable balance between her personal and professional lives.
Finding's difficulties and Shortage of Raw Materials	Women entrepreneurs have faced more struggles to find and buy raw materials and other required materials. Women are facing problems in searching raw materials from many sources. They use limited or convenient sources of raw materials and may close up with low quality of raw materials which lead to failure of business like- many women cooperatives were failed in 1971 such as those involved in basket making due to the insufficient availability of forest- raw materials. The prices of many raw materials are also quite high from women's affordable range.
Low level of motivation and self-confidence	Today all women are anguished from lack of self-confidence, motivation, will-power, strong mental outlook, optimism etc. They are afraid of making mistakes when doing their job. Moreover, they have no willingness to face risks and deal with uncertainty. Hence, all these psychological factors often hinder their path to achieving business success.
Socio Cultural Barriers	The civilizations and customs prevalent in Indian cultures regards women sometimes create problems before them to empower and flourish. Caste and religious rules create hindrance for women entrepreneurs too. The female entrepreneurs face more socio- cultural barriers or restrictions as they are continuously seen with suspicious eyes in rural society.
Old school methods of Training and Development	In business schools, where most of the professional advisers were trained, the male model of business is still being taught by a vast majority of male professors. Examples of women entrepreneurs are not included in textbooks, very few business women used as example or case study. Neither the women nor the men students are learning about the natural abilities and talents women are using to succeed as business owners today. Unfortunately, without some very strong initiatives on the part of educators, the process will be slow to change.
Programmes and Policies of Government Institutions for Promoting Women Entrepreneurs	After independence, women empowerment has been a priority of the Indian government. Women were given preference in all the industries including SSIs. Government and NGOs are paying increasing attention to the economic participation of women through entrepreneurship. Therefore, the government introduced plenty of schemes over a period of time for the sake of women development especially in rural areas. Furthermore, in every Five-Year Plan (FYP) the Indian government started many programmes which paved the way for the resurgence and women development like- in 1st FYP (1951-56) government established the central social welfare board in 1953 for women and child, Mahila Mandal organisations, the community development programmes in 1952 for rural

development direction. In 2nd FYP (1956-61) women empowerment was tied closely with the intensive agricultural development projects. During 3rd & 4th FYP (1961-66 & 1969-74) female education was recognised as an important welfare measure. In 5th FYP (1974-79) government emphasized on training and skill development of women. 8th FYP (1992-97) focused on resurgence and empowering rural women through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) which include; gram panchayats at village level, panchayat samiti at block level and zila parishad at district level. 9th FYP (1997-2002) adopted the Women's Component Plan (WCP) in which a minimum 30% of funds or benefits were reserved for the female related sector. 10th FYP (2002-07) aims at empowering women through real execution of national policy for empowerment of women (2001) into action and tries to reduce gender gaps in education and wage rate at least fifty percent at the end of this five-year plan. Government emphasized on education, training and skill development of women empowerment in 11th FYP (2007-12).

At present there are many programmes and policies run by the central government and non- government organisations (NGOs) for women entrepreneurship development and to encourage young women entrepreneurs in India. Some major schemes are:

1. Integrated rural development programme (IRDP)
2. Training rural youth for self employment (TRYSEM)
3. Deen dayal upadhyaya antyodaya yojana
4. Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana
5. Micro Credit Scheme
6. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
7. Mahila samridhi yojana
8. Innovation centers in national institutes under Startup initiative
9. Mahila coir yojana
10. Support to training and employment programme for women (STEP)
11. Stand up India scheme
12. SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi
13. Mudra Yojana Scheme for women
14. The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

Some Schemes launch by commercial banks;

1. Annapurna scheme
2. Stree shakti
3. Bharatiya mahila bank business loan
4. Dena shakti scheme
5. Udyogini scheme
6. Cent Kalyani scheme
7. Mahila udyam nidhi scheme
8. Orient mahila vikas yojana

Suggestions

Women entrepreneurs are participating a lot in rural development and growth of the economy but their potential is still untapped. In order to develop female entrepreneurs, the right efforts from multiple directions are required. For effective establishment and enlargement of women entrepreneurs, the following initiatives should be considered;

1. There are several government programs to support women entrepreneurs but their implementation is weak on ground level as a result, many benefits could not reach at grassroots level. These policies should be closely monitored at various levels of implementation.
2. An Awareness campaign should be carried out on a mass level to create awareness among women about the different areas in which they can start an enterprise.
3. Educational institutes and industrial training institutes should be used to improve and develop skills and in training-cum-production workshops, skills to be used.
4. There are calls for the formal financial sector to build up an effective and efficient financial strategy to improve access of rural women entrepreneurs to banks and financial institutions. Banks should take effort to reach out to potential rural women entrepreneurs and encourage them to use their services, including credit and credit plus.
5. Women entrepreneurs should be offered soft loans & subsidies for encouraging them into industrial activities. The financial institutions should

provide more working capital assistance both for small scale ventures and large-scale ventures.

6. To set up a district level grievance redressal forum and facilitate them to file complaints against shortcomings in the path of economic growth of women entrepreneurs and suggest solutions to overcome these shortcomings.
7. Making arrangements of marketing and sales support from the Government part.

Conclusion

It may be stated that we are in a better position today where women's indulgence in entrepreneurship is rising at a faster pace, and efforts are being made at both national and global levels to increase women's contribution in the enterprise sector. This is mostly on account of change in attitude, a shift in society's conservative mindset to one of modernity, women's risk-taking abilities, support and collaboration from society members, relaxations in government rules and regulations, and the provision of various upliftment schemes for female entrepreneurs. But after all these endeavours it is observed on the basis of above discussion that women enterprises continue to face numerous challenges particularly in rural areas despite several projects introduced by the Indian government. Rural women entrepreneurs confront socio-cultural, technological, economical, managerial problems and many more. In today's global economy, the country's trade and economic policy must be supportive for organisations to attain efficiencies. They should enable entrepreneurs to achieve organization growth, competitiveness and self-determination whether in the public, private, or joint sector. Government should be focused on educating females, spreading awareness and consciousness among women in order for them to shine in the global business, making them recognise their strengths, capabilities, key position in the society and the significant contribution which they can make for their industry as well as the overall economy by creating new jobs. It is high time to provide awareness about entrepreneurship in a professional way, orientation and simulation and skill development programs, provide interest free or reduced rate loans and seed capital without collateral securities. The society and government should come forward to recognise and appreciate the contribution of women in the economy. They should be ready 24*7 to help them in every possible way for every kind of assistance whether economical, psychological, social, technical, entrepreneurial etc.

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