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WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA – AN OUTLAY

Dr. G. CHINNADURAI, Assistant Professor of Corporate Secretaryship, Sourashtra College,
Madurai, Tamilnadu – 625004.

Dr. V. SURESH BABU, Assistant Professor of Commerce, Mannar Thirumalai Naicker College,
Madurai, Tamilnadu – 625004.

Abstract

For developing countries like India, women entrepreneurship is of vital necessity to achieve rapid, all-round and regionally and socially balanced economic growth. Women in India constitute 48 per cent of the total population. But their participation in economic activities is only 38 per cent. It is now widely accepted that if national development has to be purposeful and relevant, women have to be full-fledged participants in economic activities. The development of women as entrepreneurs will generate multifaceted social-economic benefit to the country. Participation of women in economic activities is now emerging as universal phenomenon.

Introduction

Women entrepreneurs may be defined as, “the women or group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise.” The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as “an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women”.

Objectives

1. To study the basic components of Women Entrepreneur in India.
2. To analyses the Problems faced by Women Entrepreneur in India.
3. And to give valid suggestions to eradicate Problems of Women Entrepreneur.

Methodology

The research study only to uses secondary sources such as journals, websites, Ministry of Statistics Programme Implementation Annual Report and text books. The study does not consider primary sources.

Women Entrepreneurs in India

Women entrepreneurship is relatively a recent phenomenon which came into prominence in the late 1970s. Due to the spread of education, favorable government policies towards development of women, entrepreneurship awareness and new kind of avenues, more and more women are venturing as entrepreneurs in all kinds of business, economic and other useful activities.

Women entrepreneurship in India has come a long way from papads and pickles to engineering and electronics. Nowadays, elite women in cities are making a mark in non-conventional fields such as consultancy, garment exporting, interior designing, textile printing, food processing, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, etc.

Problems of Women Entrepreneurs

The problems of women entrepreneurs in India are immense and complex. They face more serious problems than men entrepreneurs. Some important problems faced by women entrepreneurs are explained below:

No Independence: The primary problem of a woman entrepreneur is that of her being a woman. She is considered subordinate to male in all walks of life. The basic ingredients such as independence and authority required for a successful entrepreneur are not adequate for women in India.

Lack of Confidence: Women generally lack confidence in their own capabilities. Even at home, the members of their families do not seem to have total confidence in their abilities. Society in general also lacks confidence in women's strength, traits and competence. This is quite apparent in the family's reluctance to finance a women's venture, bankers are not prepared to take risk on projects set by women and individuals are not willing to stand guarantee for loans to women.

Social Attitude: Social attitude are equally responsible for keeping women away from training and skill in rural areas, overbearing presence of elders restricts the young girls from venturing out and very strict boundaries are drawn around their mobility.

Low Literacy: Low literacy level hinders women in carrying out their activities as entrepreneurs. Female literacy percentage is 18.5% for India as a whole. Lack of education handicaps their grasps of technological and marketing knowledge.

Low Risk Bearing Capacity: Risk bearing capacity which is a crucial factor in running an enterprise is low among women. Moreover, the impact of losses are more severe on women since they lack sufficient social support.

Dual Responsibility: A woman has to perform responsibilities towards family, society and work simultaneously. Consequently, a serious conflict emerges between home and work resulting in high stress level inhibiting her success, independence and progress.

Financial Constraints: The problem of finance for women entrepreneurs still remains a challenge. They lack access to external funds due to their inability to provide tangible security. Very few women have property in their name. Banks also take a negative attitude while providing finance to women entrepreneurs. As a result, they rely on their own funds and loans from family friends, which is inadequate to run the business.

Marketing Problem: Marketing is a serious problem encountered by women entrepreneurs due to the following reasons: Due to lack of storage facilities; the fast mushrooming of the small units creates inter unit competition within the small-scale industries themselves; and the competition from multinational companies.

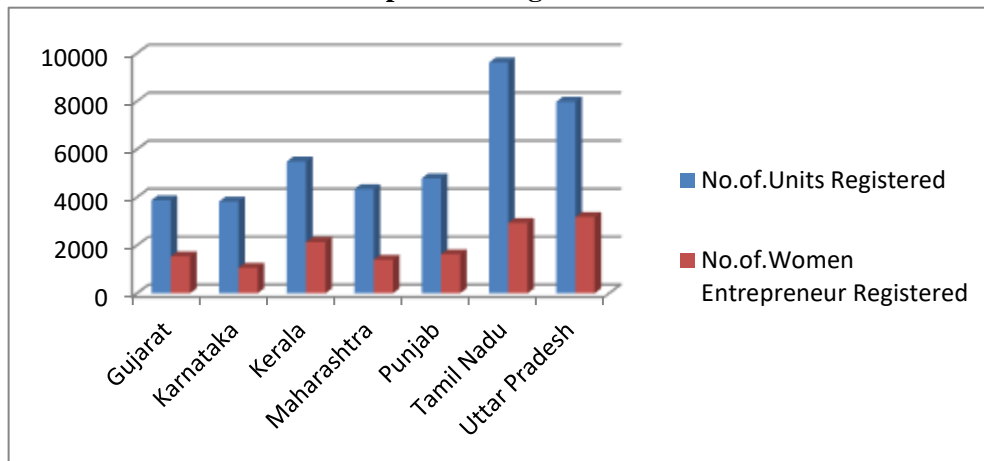
Limited Mobility: Women entrepreneurs are handicapped by their inability to travel from one place to another for business reasons. Further, the humiliating attitude of government officials, i.e., licensing authorities, labour officers, sales-tax officials, etc. make life miserable for women and force them to get out of the business in certain cases.

Table 1: No. of. Women Entrepreneur Registered in the selected States of India

State	No .of. Units Registered	No. of. Women Entrepreneur Registered	Percentage
Gujarat	3872	1538	39.72
Karnataka	3822	1062	26.84
Kerala	5487	2135	38.91
Maharashtra	4339	1394	32.12
Punjab	4791	1618	33.77
Tamil Nadu	9618	2930	30.36
Uttar Pradesh	7980	3180	39.84
Other States and Union Territories	57452	18842	32.79

Source: Ministry of Statistics Programme Implementation Annual Report

Chart 1: No. of. Women Entrepreneur Registered in the selected States of India



Suggestions

In order to promote women entrepreneurship, the following measures have to be made at different levels of the economy.

- 1. Vocational Education:** The first measure would be to provide education, particularly vocational and technical education to girls. The curriculum should be restructured to include accountancy, management, computer science, small-scale industry, entrepreneurial development, etc.
- 2. Entrepreneurship Motivation at School Level:** The girls at the school level should be inspired to adopt entrepreneurship. Generally, women dream to become job-seekers rather than job makers. To motivate the women, a coordinated effort should be made among the educational institutions, government departments and the business world.
- 3. Accessibility to Information:** All possible access to information should be provided for women entrepreneurs. Government agencies, Association of women entrepreneurs, NGOs and Universities should assume responsibilities in this regard.
- 4. Separate Publication:** Separate publication should be brought out and distributed to women entrepreneurs on subsidized rate in order to create awareness and encourage them to avail of the

benefits offered to them. Media should be used to give maximum information for promoting the cause of women entrepreneurs.

5. **100% Finance:** Banks and financial institutions should offer 100 per cent loans without collateral security to qualified technocrats. Similarly, term-loans and working capital loans should be sanctioned liberally on differential terms. It is also suggested that a certain percentage be reserved for women in the various self-employment schemes launched by the Government.
6. **Access to Technology:** Access to technology is low for women entrepreneurs. Due to lack of finance and information, they cannot have proper tools and equipment to improve the product. Setting up of Special Institutions at the State level would help to upgrade their skill and acquire new techno-managerial knowledge so that they could go in for innovative technologies of production.
7. **Simple Formalities:** Efforts should be made to simplify the procedures, formalities, rules and regulations, etc., in matters regarding registration and getting assistance from different departments and Government agencies.
8. **Women Cooperatives:** To meet the severe competition held out by big and small business, women cooperatives may be formed to market the products. Rural-market that cater to nearly three-fourths of the total consumers in India offer a vast scope for women entrepreneurs. Rural tourism is another area which can be marketed by rural women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The recent trend indicates that women entrepreneurs are sensitive to changing socio-economic conditions in the country. They are keen to take advantage of such positive changes. They also want to prove their mettle in dual role of work at home and participation in entrepreneurial activities. It is expected that negative attitude towards women entrepreneurs by the family and society will fade off in future. The development of women entrepreneurship in India depends largely on the exploration of rural market. Rural India comprising nearly six lakh odd villages offers a vast scope for women entrepreneurial activities. Several Asian economies have made great strides towards the development of rural enterprises. For instance, the convergence and development of rural township and village enterprise in China has been most spectacular event in her economic reform. India should emulate China in the matter of accelerating entrepreneurial effort in the country.

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