

Imagination and Visualisation Two Essentials for Women Entrepreneurship and Empowerment

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Abstract

The Indian business dynamics has seen a progressive changes decade after decade since Indian independence. Though education has been on top priority, the results of the education have not been applied in practicality by many women of the yester year generation. The reason could be the fight to achieve equal rights from the deep rooted traditions in the Indian society. Facing many challenges Indian women are standing tall in many facets, contributing to the development of family status in first place, society and business economics. Today there is a lot in stance for Indian women entrepreneurs applauded by the business circles. Yet there is a huge gap in terms of their thinking to initialize a thought and its implementation. Today's environment is throwing a huge challenge to potential and able women to raise their social status, education status, better living and changing lifestyles. Every challenging action begins with a simple thought and its varied aspirations in implementation will determine its success. This paper inspires to study the concept of Indian women entrepreneur – what motivates them – challenges they face in promoting themselves as entrepreneurs from a traditional family status, contributing to the Indian economy with their multifaceted courageous decisions.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Women, Business, Economy.

1. Introduction

1.1 Visualised Imagination

The objective of the Indian Society as has been laid down in the constitution is to achieve a democratic, socialistic and egalitarian society. In such a society, women are supposed to perform their roles at par and their structural status needs to be equal in all aspects. Knowledge that is acquired through higher education can act as stepping stones for women they can raise their status in the society at large. Our belief is that, by acquiring the requisite knowledge, women can participate as equals in the Global Village that we presently exist in. One of the objectives of this study is to understand statistically, if women are equal partners in the field of entrepreneurial leadership. The results of this study portray a grim picture and emphasize an immediate need for remedial actions to be initiated. In the present Indian society – since the Indian independence women are left a long way behind in achieving equal rights and to position themselves challenging the deep rooted traditions. The Indian sociological setup has never paved ways to let the educated Indian women to come out of the male dominated societal nutshells. There are many hurdles for Indian women in the societal system to challenge and reach the entrepreneurial stage. Rich Indian traditions, family rituals, mean thinking of family heads and societal leaders, lack of parent's motivation, higher education and scholarship facilities, job opportunities, safe transport system, economic dependence, student violence, sexual harassment, gender bias and marriages, family financial constraints to name a few.. Penetrating through these challenges has never let the Indian women to think beyond their own thoughtful constraints. Despite all the social hurdles, India is brimming with the success stories of women. There are women standing tall and answering every question of life, courageously taking up the entrepreneurial roles and leading the tasks with upfront attitude. These women leaders are assertive, persuasive and willing to take risks. They managed to survive and succeed in the societal challenges with their hard work, diligence and perseverance. Today women are known for their abilities, her persuasiveness, and open style of problem solving, willingness to take risks and chances, ability to motivate people, knowing how to win and lose gracefully are the strengths of the Indian women entrepreneurs.

2. Women Entrepreneurs – A Thought and Vision

Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a 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 women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women||. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stance on their own. A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic responsibilities women want to

get independence. Under the influence of these factors the women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and as an urge to do something new. Such a situation is described as pull factors. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is thrust upon them.

3. Objectives and Research Methodology of the Study

The study is based on secondary data which is collected from the published reports of RBI, NABARD, Census Surveys, SSI Reports, newspapers, journals, websites, etc. The study was planned with the following objectives:

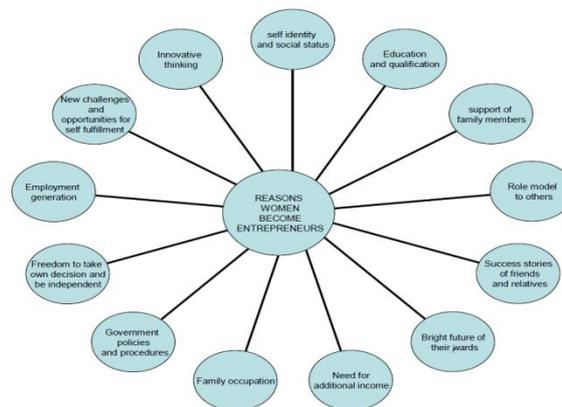
- To identify and analyse the factors that will encourage women to transform as entrepreneurs
- To study the impact of the government's role/plans on women's entrepreneurship.
- To study the role of policies, programmes, institutional networks and the involvement of prop up agencies in promoting women's entrepreneurship.
- To examine the tribulations faced by women entrepreneurs.

4. Yardsticks: Reasons for Women Becoming Entrepreneurs

The glass ceilings are shattered and women are found indulged in every line of business. The entry of women into business in India is traced out as an extension of their kitchen activities, mainly 3P's, Pickle, Powder and Pappad. But with the spread of education and passage of time women started shifting from 3P's to modern 3E's i.e., Energy, Electronics and Engineering. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge into business ventures. 'Women Entrepreneur' is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women, who is capable of contributing values in both family and social life. With the advent of media, women are aware of their own traits, rights and also the work situations. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of digital era are growing rapidly that the job seekers are turning into job creators. Many women start a business due to some traumatic event, such as divorce, discrimination due to pregnancy or the corporate glass ceiling, the health of a family member, or economic reasons such as a layoff. But a new talent pool of women entrepreneurs is forming today, as more women opt to leave corporate world to chart their own destinies. They are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation. The following flow chart shows the reasons for women becoming Innovative entrepreneurs

5. Women Entrepreneurship – A Sluggish Growth in India

Growth of the women entrepreneurship is still a slow process. Independent women are still a rare species in Indian society. The pull and push factors in a male dominated society are still working against the wishes of women. Imagination and visualization is a blurred vision. For all the successful action a simple thought is the root cause of actions. This THOUGHT is still a mirage in every Indian women's vision. The problems and constraints experienced by women entrepreneurs have resulted against the opening out of women entrepreneurship. The major barriers encountered by women entrepreneurs are:



6. Challenges: yet to Explode

- The inhibition that is disincentive to women entrepreneurs is that they are women in a male dominant society. A kind of patriarchal- male dominant social order is the building block to them in their way towards business success.
- Male prejudice is still prevalent in many parts of the country - particularly rural India.
- Accessibility and momentum restrict women entrepreneurs leaving them have to face a stiff competition with the men entrepreneurs who easily involve in the promotion and development area.
- Self-confidence, will-power, strong mental outlook and optimistic attitude amongst women creates a fear from committing mistakes while doing their piece of work.
- Women in India, lead a protected life, with less education, economically not stable nor self-dependent which reduce their ability to bear risks and uncertainties involved in a business transactions, and business negotiations.
- Women in India are under a social pressure which restrains them to prosper and achieve success in the field of entrepreneurship

7. Opportunities on a Learning Curve

1. Low no. of women in Administrative Positions
 - When women teachers are in Academic Administrative Positions, by virtue of this position, they will act as members of these committee other-wise their representation is marginal.
2. Lack of Education & Mistreatment
 - a) Post independence scenario, the average life span of Indian women was 47 years and only 2% women were educated this shows what a Herculean task it was to bring the women of India up the curve in terms of Higher Education.
 - 1) There are many laws such as The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, The Hindu Succession Act of 1956, The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, The Hindu Women Right to Property Act of 1937, The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, to protect women and punishment is severe but the conviction rate of crime against women is very low in India. Hopefully the latest Nirbhaya act might fulfil the need of the hour.
3. Marriage, Dowry & Divorce – Relationship concerns for women entrepreneurship.
 - a) The family members – elderly people and representatives will mainly fixes the marriages in India.
 - b) During marriages husband always has the upper hand. The groom and his parents show as if they are obliging the girl by marrying her and in return they demand hefty dowry.
 - c) Opportunities/Thought starters
 - 1) There are numerous NGO's who work in this area for the upliftment of the victims.
 - 2) Every educational institution to reach-out and tie-up with such groups and organize a periodic informal interaction to ascertain the areas where students can help / support. - - Need-based development

System Enhancements: Indian societies and its stake holders have a role to play here

This might give needed inputs to Society's leaders which can result in increased monitoring and more qualitative time from leaders

- a) For an entrepreneur either women or men – support from a family relationship is gigantic motivation. Understanding and supporting the thought of an entrepreneur is of a huge advantage for the entrepreneur to have determined and desired directional destination.
4. Women to occupy academic Administration roles at root level:
 - a) Overall information regarding career destinations of students need to be collated and checked if any of them prefer to work for NGO's and overall development of Women

- b) To work and ensure that at-least 60% of the classroom is trained to be capable of identifying potential projects or are related to rural development activities.
 - c) Academic college principals to reach out and understand existing needs in identified villages around colleges and segregate students into teams from a graduation stage.
5. Lack of Education & Mistreatment
- a) Scholars to work on new education delivery models tailor-made to women in urban & rural areas, related to career options and creation of awareness about general hygiene.
 - b) Integrate a subject related to non-academic activities as part of curriculum.
 - c) Have a specific training plan (time & aspect complexity based) to facilitate learning.
 - d) To help, organize Charity / Social Welfare events at Identified Villages, giving visibility to problems of Rural Women.
 - e) Promote Extracurricular Activities
6. Overworked & Exploited – Specific parameters as improvisation.
- a) To be able to tabulate specific diagnostics with the help of self-help groups.
 - b) To grade problems and attempt to identify common solutions to homogeneous problems.
 - c) Create entrepreneurial women orientation - Seek help from people with relevant academic & industry knowledge.
 - d) Non-Academic activities needs to work on a specific & detailed education plan encompassing the end-to-end impact of activities executed from an academic & Industry perspective.
 - e) Scheduled Calendar to work and meet periodically to discuss results Vs Objectives with Academic HOD's / Principal / Social Activists/Gazettes.
 - f) Rationalize classroom hours with Self Development & learning hours.
7. Action plans for a better future:
- a) Teams to be formed for specific small activities.
 - b) 5-6 members to have a leader/manager and objectives coordinated.
 - c) Keeping record of open items/suggestions and take appropriate action
 - d) Ensure that the students first win the affection and trust of the village visited.
 - e) Taking active participation promoting entrepreneurship in local festivals and through NGO camps and the same to be updated to the central office on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

8. Conclusion

It can be said that today we are in a better position wherein women participation in the field of entrepreneurship is increasing at a considerable rate. Efforts are being taken at

the economy as brought promise of equality of opportunity in all spheres to the Indian women and laws guaranteed equal rights of participation in political process and equal opportunities and rights in education and employment were enacted. But unfortunately, the government sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women i.e. the urban middle class women. Women sector occupies nearly 45% of the Indian population. At this juncture, effective steps are needed to provide entrepreneurial awareness, orientation and skill development programs to women. The role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is also being recognized and steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. Resurgence of entrepreneurship is the need of the hour emphasizing on educating women strata of population, spreading awareness and consciousness amongst women to outshine in the enterprise field, making them realize their strengths, and important position in the society and the great contribution they can make for their industry as well as the entire economy. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges global markets and also be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena. If every citizen works with such an attitude towards respecting the important position occupied by women in society and understanding their vital role in the modern business field too, then very soon we can pre-estimate our chances of out beating our own conservative and rigid thought process which is the biggest barrier in our country's development process. We always viewed that a smart woman can pick up a job any day, but if she becomes an entrepreneur she can provide a livelihood to 10 more women at least..!! Highly educated, technically sound and professionally qualified women should be encouraged for managing their own business, rather than dependent on wage employment outlets. The unexplored talents of young women can be identified, trained and used for various types of industries to increase the productivity in the industrial sector.

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