

Women Entrepreneurship in India

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Abstract

This conceptual paper indicates and emphasizes the women entrepreneurs as the potentially emerging human resource in the 21st century. The primary objective of this paper is to find out the status of women entrepreneurs in India and also studies the success story of Hina Shah the most successful women entrepreneurs of India in plastic packaging and Founder of ICECD. Women of 21st century is no more a traditional resource confined to homes only rather an educated, knowledgeable and innovative part of the overall population possessing the capacity to transform economies into thriving enterprises. On the basis of this analysis some recommendations are given to promote spirit of women entrepreneurship and helping the women to become a successful entrepreneur.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship refers to the act of setting up a new business or reviving an existing business so as to take advantages from new opportunities. An entrepreneur is a person who starts an enterprise. He searches for change and responds to it. A number of definitions have been given of an entrepreneur- The economists view him as a fourth factor of production along with land labour and capital. The sociologists feel that certain communities and cultures promote entrepreneurship like for example in India we say that Gujaratis and Sindhis are very enterprising. Still others feel that entrepreneurs are innovators who come up with new ideas for products, markets or techniques. Thus, entrepreneurs shape the economy by creating new wealth and new jobs and by inventing new products and services. However, an insight study reveals that it is not about making money, having the greatest ideas, knowing the best sales pitch, applying the best marketing strategy. It is in reality an attitude to create something new and an activity which creates value in the entire social eco-system. It is

the psyche makeup of a person. It is a state of mind, which develops naturally, based on his/ her surrounding and experiences, which makes him/ her think about life and career in a given way. Entrepreneurship has been a male-dominated phenomenon from the very early age, but time has changed the situation and brought women as today's most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs. It is estimated that women entrepreneurs presently comprise about 10% of the total number of entrepreneurs in India, with the percentage growing every year. If the prevailing trends continue, it is likely that in another five years, women will comprise 20% of the entrepreneurial force (Saidapur et.al, 2012). The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07) aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action and ensuring Survival, Protection and Development of women and children through rights based approach.

2. Status of women entrepreneurs in India

Entrepreneurship is considered as one of the most important factors contributing to the development of society. India has been ranked among the worst performing countries in the area of women entrepreneurship in gender-focused global entrepreneurship survey, released in July 2013 by PC maker Dell and Washington based consulting firm Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (GEDI). Of the 17 countries surveyed India ranks 16th, just above Uganda. Countries like Turkey, Morocco and Egypt have outperformed India. Status of higher education in women in India came out to be lower than most countries in the world. At present, women's entrepreneurial role is limited in the large scale industries and technology based businesses. But even in small scale industries, the women's participation is very low. As per the third all-India census of Small Scale Industries, only 10.11% of the micro and small enterprises were owned by women, and only 9.46% of them were managed by women. While the number of women operating their own business is increasing globally, women continue to face huge obstacles that stunt the growth of their businesses, such as lack of capital, strict social constraints, and limited time and skill.

2.1 Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs

- **Conflicts between Work and Domestic Commitments-** Women's family obligations also bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations. "Having primary responsibility for children, home and older dependent family members, few women can devote all their time and energies to their business" (Starcher, 1996)
- **Gender gaps in education-** While women are making major strides in educational attainment at primary and secondary levels, they often lack the combination of education, vocational and technical skills, and work experience needed to support the development of highly productive businesses.
- **Lack of finance -** Access to finance is one of the most common challenges that entrepreneurs face and this is especially true for women who are further

impeded by lack of personal identification, lack of property in their own name and the need for their husband's countersignature on many documents.

- **Legal constraints in family law-** The institutional and legal environment is critical to the growth of female-owned enterprises. Laws regulating the private sphere specifically those regarding marriage, inheritance and land can hinder women's access to assets that can be used as collateral when securing a loan.
- **Heavy household responsibilities** leave a demand on women especially those in rural areas who have more children. They are required to perform their traditional role as housewives and therefore, they have fewer hours of free time than men, both during the weekend and on weekdays..

An ILO report on women entrepreneurship identifies the following problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

- **Lack of family support-** Sometimes the family may make the women feel guilty of neglecting household duties in her pursuit of business obligations. Cultural traditions may hold back a woman from venturing into her own business.
- **Lack of capital-**traditional sources of finance like banks are reluctant to lend to women entrepreneurs especially if they do not have any male or family backing. This is especially true of lower income females. Women do not have adequate finance or legal knowledge to start an enterprise.
- **Lack of confidence and faith-**lack of role models undermines the self confidence of women entrepreneurs. The activity of selling is considered abhorrent to the female gender.
- **Lack of right public/ private institutions-** Most public and private incentives are misused and do not reach the woman unless she is backed by a man. Also many trade associations like ministries, chambers of commerce do not cater to women expecting women's organizations to do the necessary thing.

3. Life of an Entrepreneur - Hina Shah Bhuptani

Hina Shah is a home maker, a classical dancer, an entrepreneur, a painter, an academician and the director of ICECD. In a man's world, she has created a niche for herself with path breaking innovative ideas. She began her career in 1976 in the plastic packaging industry and with a belief that economic empowerment is the tool for overall empowerment of women, she piloted a development strategy in 1980 that viewed women as an active participant in economic development. In 1986, she transformed her vision into an initiative "International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (ICECD)" which today is recognized as "Centre for excellence" by United Nations. She has thus facilitated thousands of deprived women to become entrepreneurs all over India and the developing world. Hina Shah started her first programme, termed Entrepreneurship Development Programme for women with 25 women from Gujarat, out of which 16 women established non-traditional businesses. Shah became instrumental in initiating and institutionalizing Women Economic

Empowerment strategy in countries such as Zambia, Bangladesh, Lesotho, Botswana, Cameroon, Malaysia, Philippines, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Guyana, Ivory Coast and St. Kitts. Her efforts have created a consolidated wealth of Rs. 195 crores in India and Rs. 620 crores in other countries till date. Her mission has always been to create successful and persistent women entrepreneurs, who will emerge as job creators and not job seekers. Mrs. Hina Shah Bhuptani's vision is to turn women from job seekers to job provider. The core idea of "she can you can" initiative by Hina Shah was Tupperware's basic ideology of empowering women and giving them wings to fly. **She Can You Can**, in essence, is an initiative to capture stories of women going beyond the ordinary. Focusing on empowering the women of today, the campaign endeavors to bring out the hidden achievers while helping the womenfolk lead a self reliant lifestyle. The campaign seeks to inspire many more women, to come forward to start dreaming and start achieving. Hina Shah's relentless efforts to change the face of the deprived, dependent women of rural India created a noteworthy impact. These are the women who hardly involved themselves in income generation and always despaired. Their status improved as they began their little businesses, earned, started spending profits on improving their lives; family diet; health and other essentials, and started sending their children to school. Their self-esteem and confidence blossomed. They have savings in place, and are confident, healthier, better fed and housed, better informed and respected in the community. There has been an irrevocable change in the role of women in the deeply backward areas. Ms. Hina Shah has been chosen as a social entrepreneur, who in the past 3 years has led over 13,000 widows of Gujarat to become successful entrepreneurs, and is currently reaching out to over 2500 Primitive Tribal Youth of the State to become self sufficient. Her contribution to the development of Gujarat over the last 22 years has been significant, for which she has received various national laurels. Having spread her wings to over 52 Asian, African and Pacific countries world over, she is a huge source of inspiration to many who have changed the course of their lives to follow her leadership.

4. Recommendations

The elimination of obstacles for women entrepreneurship requires a major change in traditional attitudes and mindsets of people in society rather than being limited to only creation of opportunities for women. Hence, it is imperative to design programmes that will address to attitudinal changes, training, supportive services. The basic requirement in development of women entrepreneurship is to make aware the women regarding her existence, her unique identity and her contribution towards the economic growth and development of country. The basic instinct of entrepreneurship should be tried to be reaped into the minds of the women from their childhood. This could be achieved by carefully designing the curriculum that will impart the basic knowledge along with its practical implication regarding management (financial, legal etc.) of an enterprise.

Here are some suggestions to increase the role of women entrepreneurs:-

- **Infrastructure** – Infrastructure set up plays a vital role for any enterprise. Government can set some priorities for women entrepreneurs for allocation of industrial plots, sheds and other amenities. However, precautionary measures should be undertaken to avoid the misuse of such facility by the men in the name of the women.
- **Personality Development**-Attempts should be there to enhance the standards of education of women in general as well making effective provisions for their training, practical experience and personality development programmes, to improve their over-all personality standards.
- **Self help groups of women entrepreneurs**- Self help groups of women entrepreneurs can mobilize resources and pool capital funds to help the women in the field of industry, trade and commerce.
- **Business Development Training Programs** – It includes basic day-to-day management training like how to keep track of accounts, handle taxes and understand compliance rules and regulations. They can also focus on strategy and the long-range success of a business from writing a business plan to targeting specific markets, along with product innovation within business clusters and incubators.
- **Access to Finance Programs**- Efforts to facilitate access to finance for women entrepreneurs typically encompass initiatives that reform restrictive bank and regulatory policies. Such reforms accept less traditional forms of collateral, look at a lender's willingness to repay and simplify business registry. They also help financial institutions develop innovative loan and savings products for female entrepreneurs.
- To establish all India forums to discuss the problems, grievances, issues, and filing complaints against constraints or shortcomings towards the economic progress path of women entrepreneurs and giving suitable decisions .

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