

EMPOWERMENT AND IMPEDIMENTS OF RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Women have successfully broken their confinement within the limits of their homes by entering various kinds of professionals and services. Women entrepreneurs have proved to be on par with their male counterparts in business acumen and are emerging as intelligent and dynamic entrepreneurs. Educated Indian women have to go a long way to achieve equal rights and positions because traditions are deep-rooted in Indian society, where the sociological setup has been male-dominated. Despite all the social hurdles, Indian women stand taller than the rest of the crowd and are praised for their achievements in their respective fields. This has mainly benefited from the growth of various women's empowerment programs, NGOs, and other banking and non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs). The present paper endeavors to study the concept of women. Reasons women become entrepreneurs; Reasons for the slow progress of Women entrepreneurs in India: Suggestions for the Growth of Women Entrepreneurs -Schemes for the promotion and development of women's entrepreneurship in India-Case study of a female entrepreneur in Erode District.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Women empowerment, Business, Indian women, Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP)

1. INTRODUCTION:

Women entrepreneurs have been designated as the new engines for growth and the rising stars of the economies in developing countries to bring prosperity and welfare. Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. Entrepreneurship among women is an important avenue through which women can overcome their subordination within the family and society as a whole. Therefore, the development of entrepreneurship among women has received special attention from

policymakers. In this direction, a unique character in the seventh plan has converted into the integration of women in economic development. The new industrial policy has stressed the need for conducting unique Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDPs) for women. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as—an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. The growth of the proportion of women entrepreneurs in developing countries has drawn the attention of both the academic and the development sectors. The Entrepreneurship Development Process for Women in India is increasingly recognized as a significant untapped source of economic growth since women entrepreneurs create new employment opportunities and avenues for women's financial independence. These women leaders are assertive, persuasive, and willing to take risks. They survived and succeeded in this cut-throat competition with their hard work, diligence, and perseverance. Her ability to learn quickly from her abilities, persuasiveness, open problem-solving style, willingness to take risks and chances, ability to motivate people, and knowing how to win and lose gracefully are the strengths of the Indian women entrepreneurs.

Women as Entrepreneurs in India.

Women-owned businesses are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries. The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to their role and economic status in society. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors encouraging women to have independent occupations and stand on their legs. A sense of independent decision-making in their life and career is the motivation behind this urge. With the advent of media, women are aware of their traits, rights, and work situations. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of the digital era are overgrowing, that job seekers are becoming job creators. Under the influence of these factors, women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and an urge to do something new. Such a situation is described as a pull factor. While in push factors, women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility thrust upon them. Women in advanced nations are recognized and more prominent in business. But then, Indian women entrepreneurs are facing significant constraints like a Lack of confidence in their strength and competence.

Socio-cultural barriers

Market-oriented risks

Motivational factors

Knowledge of Business Administration

Awareness about financial assistance

Exposed to the training programs

Identifying the available resources

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sarfaraz, Faghih, and Majd [2] have shown a statistical relationship between women's entrepreneurship and gender equality. They have used a correlation analysis to investigate how gender-related economic development and women's entrepreneurial activities are related. Raghuvanshi, Agrawal & Ghosh [3] deal with analyzing barriers to women's entrepreneurship through a DEMATEL approach. This paper includes

identifying barriers from earlier studies and explores possible casualties among them. Sharma Y [4] has shown a general survey of women entrepreneurs in India. They have highlighted the social norms prevailing even to this date that need prioritization and awareness. Goyal M & Parkash [5] highlight the Indian problems and prospects falling upon the lower section, affecting women's entrepreneurship.

Their paper endeavors to study the concept of women entrepreneurs, reasons why women become entrepreneurs, reasons for their slow progress, suggestions for the growth of women, schemes for the promotion & development of women entrepreneurship in India, and they have also done a small case study of women entrepreneurs in Ludhiana. Tambunan T [7] has done case studies on Asian women entrepreneurs in developing countries. It has focused on their development and main constraints. The author's study is based on data analysis and a review of recent key literature. This paper focuses only on women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises. Through the findings of this study, the author has also come up with three main essential facts as shared respectively. Akehurst, Simarro & Mas-Tur [11] have researched women's entrepreneurship in small service firms, making a report on motivations, barriers, and performance. Their research was undertaken using a relatively small sample of firms in one region of Spain. The paper contributes to a better understanding of women's business creation and the factors instrumental in their success.

Brush, De Bruin & Welter [10] have done a gender awareness framework for women's entrepreneurship. Their work builds on an existing framework articulating the "3Ms" (markets, money, and management) required for entrepreneurs to launch and grow ventures. Through their paper, they have also considered constructing a "5M" framework to enable the study of women's entrepreneurship in its own right. Petridou & Glaveli [19] have studied rural women within the co-operatives and put forward suggestions for their training support. Evaluation research was conducted in which 104 rural women members of co-operatives who had participated in a specific training program contributed. Anonymous questionnaires were used to collect data on participants' perceptions of the effects of the training intervention. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and intercorrelations were employed in analyzing the data.

Sharma, Dua & Hatwal [20] studied micro-enterprise development and rural women entrepreneurship as a path to economic empowerment. This paper concisely reviews the literature in this field and addresses particular opportunities and challenges women entrepreneurs face in rural areas. It examined the impact on women's empowerment through micro-entrepreneurship development and SHGs. Singh & Raghuvanshi [21] deals with the issues and challenges and gives a few works for appointment through self-help groups. Their work mainly focuses on the area in and around Himachal Pradesh. Overview of the working of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Himachal Pradesh primarily focuses on various issues about women entrepreneurs, challenges, and future perspectives in India. Bahl [22] concentrates on the status of women entrepreneurs in rural India. Based on this study, some suggestions are given to encourage the spirit of women entrepreneurship to become successful entrepreneurs. One of the primary purposes of this paper is to analyze the policies of the Indian government for women.

2.1 Objectives of the study.

The study is based on secondary data collected from the published reports of RBI, NABARD, Census Surveys, SSI Reports, newspapers, journals, websites, etc.

1. To study the socio-economic background of the women entrepreneurs in Erode District.
2. To analyze the motivational and other factors that influence women to become entrepreneurs.
3. To analyze the significant strength and weaknesses of women entrepreneurs and the environmental opportunities and threats which promote entrepreneurship.
4. To offer suggestions to improve women entrepreneurs' satisfaction and create a framework for promoting women entrepreneurship in selected districts in Tamil Nadu.
5. To critically examine the problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

2.2 REASONS FOR WOMEN BECOMING ENTREPRENEURS.

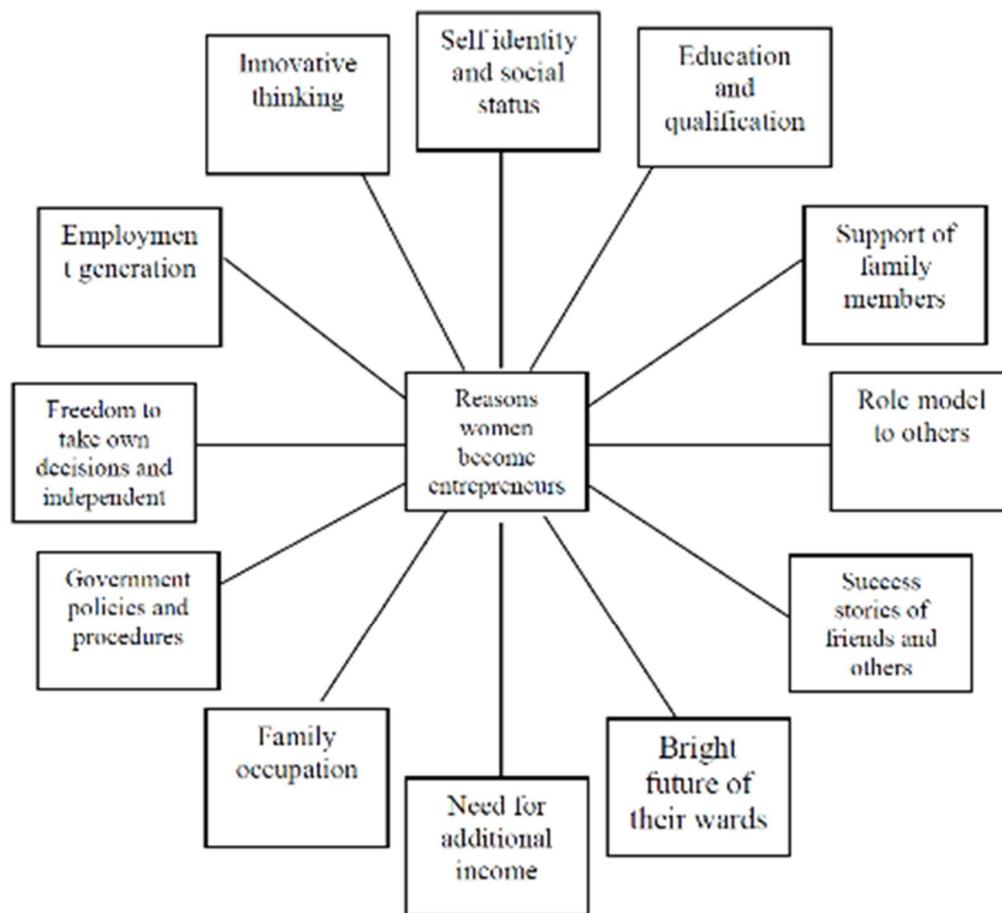
The glass ceilings are shattered, and women are found indulged in every line of business.

The entry of women into business in India is traced as an extension of their kitchen activities, mainly 3P's, Pickle, Powder, and Pappad. But with the spread of Education and the passage of time, women started shifting from 3P's to modern 3E 's, i.e., Energy, Electronics, and Engineering.

Skill, knowledge, and adaptability are why women emerge into

business ventures. Women Entrepreneur is a person who accepts challenging roles to meet personal needs and become economically independent. But a new talent pool of women entrepreneurs is forming today, as more women opt to leave the corporate world to chart their destinies. They are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, and garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation. The following flow chart shows the reasons for women becoming entrepreneurs.

Figure 1



2.3 Sampling Design.

Women entrepreneurs who are the main source of primary data are collected from the women entrepreneurs through a well-structured questionnaire. The area of study is limited to Erode district of Tamil Nadu. As the total population of women is numerable, the researcher has proposed sampling techniques for selecting respondents. To identify the right respondents, which are essential for collecting primary data, the following process has been adopted scientifically. Finally, 90 respondents from various Taluks of Erode districts were selected and included in the study who have engaged to start an enterprise and run successfully.

3. TOOLS OF ANALYSIS:

A personal interview is an essential tool for data collection. The interview technique is to be made at women entrepreneurs. The secondary data are also proposed to collect from various departments. All these data are to be arranged in multiple tables and submitted for critical analysis with the help of several statistical tools. Percentage Analysis and Chi-Square Test are the various statistical tools applied. The personnel characteristics of the selected respondents, like age, educational status, marital status, family income, business type, size of the business, financial sources, and spending expenses, are discussed in this section.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

Factors	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	Below - 30	20	22.22
	30 - 40	32	35.56
	40 -50	26	28.89
	50 and above	12	13.33
Marital Status	Unmarried	31	31
	Married	69	69
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	5	5.56
	Primary	9	10
	Secondary	16	17.78
	Higher Secondary	42	46.67
	Graduate Level	18	20
Annual Income	Below 10,000	15	16.67
	10,000 - 20,000	32	35.56
	20,000 - 30,000	21	23.33
	30,000 - 40,000	14	15.56
	40,000 and above	8	8.89

3.2 Analysis and Interpretation:

This study is aiming the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs in Erode districts. For this purpose, the study was conducted on 100 respondents of women entrepreneurs. An attempt has been made in this section to analyze the collected data concerning the activities of women entrepreneurs. A detailed analysis is given below. Table 1 shows the problems faced by women entrepreneurs and the weighted ranking method applied. It inferred that the most significant number of the respondents had given the First rank for Lack of strong leadership; the respondents have given the Second rank for the financial deficit. The third rank was Lack of systematic planning and working, followed by health problems, Non-awareness of Government schemes, non-repayment of loans by the members, Leaders misusing the group's money, and Lack of Education.

Table 2:

The Summary of Opinion of the Women Entrepreneurs					
S.N	Factors	Chi-Square Value	Degree of Freedom	Table Value	Result
1	Age	17.26	6	16.81	Significant**
2	Educational Qualification	14.97	4	13.28	Significant**
3	Marital Status	12.56	2	5.99	Significant*
4	Family Income	3.65	6	12.59	Not Significant
5	Business Type	11.54	4	9.49	Significant*
6	Size of the Business	7.23	4	9.49	Not Significant
7	Sources of Finance	13.68	6	12.59	Significant*
8	Amount Spend	7.26	4	13.28	Not Significant

Note: * - Significant at 5% Level, ** - Significant at 1% Level

3.3 Chi-Square Analysis.

The respondents' opinions and socio-economic characters' relationships are applied to the chi-square test. The selected variables are only to be involved in this model. Table 1.3 reveals the summary of the respondents. The chi-square analysis shows that the factors are Age and Education are significant at a 1% level. Marital status, business type, and sources of finance are significant at 5%. The remaining factors are not influential at the 5% level. Open training.

4. FINDINGS:

[1] 35.56% of the respondents belong to the 30 – 40 age group of entrepreneurs. 28.89% of the respondents are between the ages of 40 and 50. 22.22% of the respondents are below the 30 age group, and the rest are above 50 years old.

[2] 46.67% of the respondents belong to the higher secondary level of entrepreneurs. 20% of the respondents are graduates, and 17.78% are secondary level education. 10% of the respondents are primary level, and the rests of the respondent are illiterates.

[3] 35.56% of the respondents belong to 10,000 to 20,000 incomes of families. 23.33% of the respondents are Rs. 20,000 to 30,000 income group, and only 8% of the respondents have family income above 40,000.

[4] 42.22% of the respondents deal with manufacturing types of business. 26.67% of the respondents are engaged in the trading type of business. Only 16% of the respondents are doing our business for service sectors. 10% of the respondents are combined with all kinds of companies.

[5] 69% of the respondents are married, and the rest are unmarried. Therefore, marital status is important to factor in determining the women entrepreneurs.

[6] 46.67% of the respondents invested below 1 Lakhs in their business. 24.44% of the respondents are 1 lakh to 5 lakhs category.

[7] 35% of the finance sources are from spouse income, 30% of the respondents financed from personal savings, 25.56% are loans from banks, and 8% of respondents' financial sources are other sources.

5. SUGGESTIONS:

[1] Most women entrepreneurs believe they cannot survive in the market because of a Lack of training. Hence, the government should conduct frequent training programs concerning new production techniques, sales techniques, etc.; this training should be compulsory for women entrepreneurs.

[2] Finance is the first major problem for women entrepreneurs. Hence, the government can provide interest-free loans to encourage women entrepreneurs. To attract more women entrepreneurs, the subsidy for loans should be increased.

[3] Since the number of entrepreneurs from scheduled caste and most backward communities are shallow, awareness should be created for those women by providing special attention.

[4] Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to start their entrepreneurs as joint stock companies rather than as sole trade and partnership concerns to avail the advantages of large-scale operation.

[5] Parents of unmarried potential women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to spend money on setting up businesses rather than giving preference to their marriage.

[6] Marketing product is one of the main problems for women entrepreneurs. Here, women's co-operative societies can be started to procure products from women entrepreneurs. They will help them in selling their products at a reasonable price.

[7] Wrong locations and inadequate infrastructure facilities are hurdles in the way of the development of women's entrepreneurship. Hence, separate industrial estates may be set up exclusively for women entrepreneurs to reduce the initial investment and create a unique environment.

6. CONCLUSIONS:

It can be said that today we are in a better position wherein women's participation in entrepreneurship is increasing considerably. Efforts are being taken at the economy as promised equality of opportunity in all spheres for Indian women. Laws guaranteed equal rights of participation in the political process, and equal opportunities and privileges 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. The women's sector occupies nearly 45% of the Indian population. Practical steps are needed to provide entrepreneurial awareness, orientation, and skill development programs to women at this juncture. It is evident from the study that women are ready to face the challenges associated with setting up of business. Society is very much receptive to the concept of women entrepreneurs, and so is the family. Women are not into business for survival but to satisfy their inner urge for creativity and to prove their capabilities. Despite a few limitations, this study has conveyed to women of different sections of society how they should change their mindset from being confined to walls to taking up entrepreneurship. These methods have motivated existing entrepreneurs to take their entrepreneurship skills to greater heights than they are capable of. Discussions will surely increase the women workforce as they will be good enough to take up responsibilities as well as men. Personal opinions would help women get inspired to take up entrepreneurship for a living. Case studies will stir their minds and lead them to the most incredible unimaginable heights. Women's Education is contributing to a great extent to social transformation. The future will see more women venturing into areas traditionally dominated by men. The socio background, including factors, type, mode of business, and training programs, are the fundamental problems of women entrepreneurs in Erode District.[1]

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