

A STUDY ON THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY

Dr.L.Devi Priya,
Asst Professor,

Department of Commerce, Chevalier T Thomas Elizabeth College for Women

Abstract:

In the current scenario, women are successfully playing/contributing their part in all the sectors. They have turned their challenges into roaring opportunities. Women as entrepreneurs face many challenges like work life balance, educational background, family support, arranging finance, difficulty in technological upgradation, lack of communication and marketing skills, lack of industry knowledge and experience, stiff competition, male dominated society and discrimination. This study focuses more on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. The solution to overcome these challenges are also discussed in the study.

Index Terms: Women entrepreneurs, challenges, finance, lack of communication, family support and marketing skills.

Introduction

In the current scenario of global business environment, the term “Entrepreneur” is playing a vital role in converting their opportunities into ideas. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s startup program has proved to be a boon as well as stands as a pillar for the women to come out of the stereotyped business. Even then, the women entrepreneurs face much more challenges to become a successful entrepreneur. The success of women entrepreneurs not only depend on financial assistance, apart from that it even depends on proper education, training, family and community support. The research focuses on the issues and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

Need for the study

In the modern era where we speak and give importance to women empowerment, but still a hesitation lies among women community to successfully step into the challenging business world. In India there are many successful entrepreneurs like Kiran Mazumdar Shaw (Biocon Limited), Indu Jain (Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.), Indra Nooyi is the CEO and President of PepsiCo, Vandana Luthra (VLCC), Ekta Kapoor (Balaji Tele films) and many more prove that they are in no way less than the men entrepreneurs. **Dr. Radha (2008)** specifies that indeed they face many challenges like problem of finance, conflict between work and family, shortage of raw material, stiff competition, limited mobility, lack of motivation, low literacy, male dominated society, low risk bearing capability and discrimination. Here the need arises like in what ways the women can overcome the tough situation and can accomplish the entrepreneurial skills. There are many banks, financial Institutions and Mahila self-help groups extend their support to women entrepreneurs. But what makes them reluctant to avail the help is the question for the hour.

Statement of the Problem

- ❖ In the present technological phase, being (even though many) more women are educated, only less percentage take the option of entrepreneurship. What could be the reason for the same?
- ❖ Are women lacking their family support, work life balance, technological and financial support?
- ❖ Do women entrepreneurs fear for risk – bearing, organizational challenges and innovations in the business?

Review of Literature

Chavan, Meena (2011) pointed out that it was difficult to get a good mix of all the resources available for women entrepreneurs as the resource requirement in each case were heterogeneous at the varied stages of their business. **Evelyn Omayemi Aneke, Evelyn Derera, Mapeto Bomani (2017)** here the researchers identified the sample through snowball (non-probability) sampling method. In the construction industry the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs are lack of startup and working capital, lack of industry knowledge and experience, difficulty in time management, sourcing of clients and exhaustion. Other difficulties are like procurement of loans from banks and financial institutions due to lack of collateral security. In general the society offers limited scope and exposure for the women. More over they suggest that women should follow some strategies like forming union, forming

partnership with the male members or women entrepreneurs in groups that help them to overcome the difficulties. Above all the government should focus in eliminating gender discrimination, supporting with training, technical and managerial skills.

Hemantkumar P. Bulsara, Jyoti Chandwani, Shailesh Gandhi (2014) stresses that Women entrepreneurship is synonymous with women empowerment and more over they contribute to the GNP of the country. Indian Women, inspite of facing many social hurdles tend to stand tall from the rest of the crowd and strives to achieve their target. **Jadhawrao Madhavi Sugaraj , Dr. Salve P.S (2014), Sanjay Kaushik (2013)** highlights certain personal constraints for women to become entrepreneurs are Poor Self Image, Lack of finance and security, lack of family support, lack of technical and mangement training, lack of motivation and confidence, orthodox family background, lack of leadership qualities, physical constraints, fear for failure and criticism. **Mirza F. Halim, Duarte B. Morais, Carla Barbieri, Susan Jakes, Kelly Zering (2016)** Points out that here also the women face certain challenges like lacking reliable staff, managing growth, lacking institutional support, ensuring farm perpetuation, having limited access to resources, dealing with gender norms, having inconvenient location and balancing their roles.

Dr. Ravinder and Jit Anju Bharti (2016) has classified the problems of women into the following categories as

- ❖ Impediments relating to psycho- social factors – there the issues faced by women are traditional gender roles, faulty socialization, discriminatory treatment from the society, lack of social encouragement, lack of self-confidence their role conflict and cultural values etc.,
- ❖ Impediments relating to legal and policy framework – like getting of loan from higher officials, performing official task.
- ❖ In case of support services – regarding procurement of finance, lacking technical knowhow, another major problem is that they lack in seeking information at both national and international market, procurement of raw materials and marketing.

P.M.SirumalarRajam, and Dr. K. V. Soundararaja (2016) the study is carried out in the Kanyakumari District among the self-help groups. Here the respondents belong to manufacturing, trading and service sectors. The major problems faced by women entrepreneurs towards personal problem are poor risk taking ability, inadequate predicting efforts, excessive tensions and challenges, lack of communication skill, Lack of managerial skill, lack of awareness, inadequate market training, high credit rate transaction. Few suggestions are the training programs enhanced by the government should be readily opted by the women in order to bridge themselves to the current scenario of entrepreneurship. **Ms. Sweety Gupta, Ms. Aanchal Aggarwal (2015)** stresses that the economic development of the today's woman is crucial for the economic development of any country especially for a country like India. Programs should be designed in order to change the attitudes and mindset of the people; this could be made possible only through a powerful tool known as education.

Sulekha Munshi, Anupama Munshi, Ved Pal Singh (2011) states that the term “Women Entrepreneurship” means, an act of business activity creation that empowers women economically, increases their economic strength as well as position in society. In India, less than 5% of the women community enters the business, even when the current generation of women possesses literacy.

Research Gap

From the reviews it is evident that women enter business and even strive hard to achieve success in entrepreneurship, but they lack with certain constraints. This situation was applicable in the past years where there were less guidance and social stigma. But in the current phase of technologically driven environment, they can possess least minimum literacy and to some extent freedom in the society. But still the challenges and threats continue to be the same.

Objectives of the study

- ❖ The primary objective is to know the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.
- ❖ The secondary objective is to know about the threats in the current scenario of entrepreneurship.

Research Methodology

The study is empirical and exploratory. The primary data for the study is collected through survey method with proper questionnaires. The secondary data for the survey is collected from internet, printed booklets etc,

Sampling

Sampling is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. **Stratified random sampling** is adopted to select the sample. The sample size is 213 women entrepreneurs. The 15 zones in Chennai city is taken as the area for the study. The samples are collected from the women entrepreneurs from the respective zones.

Analysis and Discussion

In the analysis of discussion section, the researcher intended to present the profile of women entrepreneurship in the study area of Chennai city. Therefore, a simple percentage a simple percentage analysis is applied and the following results are obtained.

Consolidated Percentage Table showing the profile of the Women Entrepreneurs

Educational Qualification	%	Age	%	Business Tenure	%	Investment	%	Turnover	%
School level	26.8	19 -25 Yrs	4.2	> 1 year	23	> Rs. 1 Lakhs	23	> Rs.3 Lakhs	62
Diploma	20.2	26 -35 Yrs	56.8	1 - 5 Years	56.8	Rs. 1 - 5 Lakhs	69.5	Rs. 3 - 5 Lakhs	24.9
Under Graduate	20.7	36 - 45 Yrs	39	6 - 10 Years	20.2	Rs. 6 - 10 Lakhs	7.5	Rs. 6 - 8 Lakhs	13.1
Post Graduate	32.4	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
Total	100								

Loan	%	Loan Institution	%	Challenges	%	Survival	%	Utilisation of Opp.	%	Subsidies	%
Yes	34	Private	33.8	Yes	77	Yes	53.5	Yes	53.5	Yes	20.2
No	66	Others	66.2	No	24	No	46.5	No	46.5	No	79.8
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

From the above table it is found that a maximum of 32.4% of women entrepreneurs are Post Graduates, a maximum of 56.8% women entrepreneurs belong to the age group of 26 – 35 years, a maximum of 56.8% of them have 1- 5 years business tenure, a maximum of 69.5% of women entrepreneurs have invested Rs.1 – 5 lakhs, a maximum of 62% of the respondents obtained a turnover of less than Rs. 3 Lakhs, a maximum of 66% of the women entrepreneurs have not obtained loan and those respondents who obtained loan got from other sources. A maximum of 77% of women entrepreneurs are aware of the challenges, 53.5% of women entrepreneurs admit that tier II city is better for doing business, a maximum of 53.5% of them are aware of the opportunities and a maximum of 79.8% of women entrepreneurs are not availing any subsidies.

Challenges faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Chennai City

The entrepreneurship is a combination of challenges and issues as well as problems and prospects. The challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs are listed in the questionnaire and they are requested to express their transparent opinion as stated in the following T – test.

T – test for the Entrepreneurship Challenges

Challenges	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig.
CWE1	213	4.54	0.84371	0.05781	26.637	.000
CWE2	213	3.394	0.93383	0.06399	6.163	.000
CWE3	213	4.601	0.6409	0.04391	36.456	.000
CWE4	213	3.413	0.92564	0.06342	6.514	.000
CWE5	213	4.601	0.6409	0.04391	36.456	.000
CWE6	213	3.822	0.87205	0.05975	13.75	.000
CWE7	213	4.305	1.07975	0.07398	17.641	.000

CWE8	213	3.024	1.16328	0.07971	0.295	0.769
CWE9	213	5	.00000 ^a	0	60.642	.000
CWE10	213	4.765	0.42484	0.02911	42.417	.000
CWE11	213	4.235	0.42484	0.02911	60.642	.000
CWE12	213	4.765	0.42484	0.02911		

From the above table it is ascertained that the 12 challenges of women entrepreneurs have their mean ranging from 3.0235 to 4.7653, std. deviation ranges from 0 to 1.16, std. error of the mean lies within the limit 0 to 0.07, t values have their range from 0.295 to 60.642. since the mean values are above 3 and below 5 the researcher segment them into two categories namely mean values between 3 & 4 which denotes moderate agreeability for the challenges and above 4 are considered as strong agreeability for the challenges. The t values are statistically significant at 5% level and they all are greater than test value 3. This shows that women entrepreneurs strongly agree for the problem of finance, shortage of raw materials, limited mobility, low literacy, male dominated society, low risk bearing capabilities, discrimination and lack of marketing skills. They have moderate challenges from conflict between work and family, stiff competition, lack of motivation and lack of communication skills.

After identifying their challenges the researcher intended to relate their demographic background and their challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in the business arena. Therefore, the total average score of challenges is considered as dependent variable and personal profile and entrepreneurial profile of women entrepreneurs are considered as independent variables. The relationship between multiple independent variables on unique dependent factor is estimated through the multivariate statistical analysis, linear multiple regression. The results of linear multiple regression is clearly presented below:

Model summary for Entrepreneurship challenges

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.998 ^a	0.996	0.996	0.01623

From the above table, it is ascertained that R square =.996, adjusted R square =0.996 this shows that the personal and entrepreneurial details are able to explain the challenges of women entrepreneurs at 99.6% level. This also shows that the abilities to face the challenges of women entrepreneurs is emanated from their demographic background as well as their entrepreneurship profile. The fit of regression is verified in the following analysis of variance table.

Anova for Entrepreneurship challenges

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.759	9	1.418	5383.26	.000 ^b
	Residual	0.053	203	0	Nil	Nil
	Total	12.812	212	Nil	Nil	Nil

From the above table it is identified that f value =5383.26, p=.000 are statistically significant at 5% level. It shows that the relationship between personal, entrepreneurship profile of women entrepreneurs and their challenges. These further demands that the individual influences of personal and entrepreneurial details are essential to determine the explanatory power of independent variables through the following co-efficient table.

Coefficients for Entrepreneurial Challenges

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.325	0.034		39.1	.000
	Educational Qualification	0.006	0.001	0.029	4.016	.000
	Age	0.014	0.004	0.032	3.248	0.001
	Business Tenure	0.118	0.005	0.315	22.815	.000
	Investment	0.003	0.005	0.007	0.641	0.522
	Turnover	0.003	0.002	0.008	1.209	0.228
	Loan Instituion	0.124	0.003	0.48	41.807	.000
	Survival	0.171	0.008	0.348	20.828	.000
	Utilization of Oppurtunity	-0.466	0.004	-0.948	-128.94	.000
	Subsidies	0.103	0.007	0.168	15.532	.000

From the above table it is clear that educational qualification (Beta = 0.029, t=4.016,p=.000), age (Beta = 0.032, t=3.248,p=.001), business tenure (Beta = 0.315, t=22.815,p=.000), investment (Beta = 0.007, t=0.641,p=0.522), turnover (Beta = 0.008, t=1.209,p=0.228), loan institution (Beta = 0.48, t=41.807,p=.000), survival (Beta = 0.348, t=20.828,p=.000), utilization of opportunity (Beta = -0.948, t=-128.94,p=.000), subsidies (Beta = 0.168, t=15.532,p=.000), are statistically significant at 5% level.

This shows that educational background of women entrepreneurs are essential for them to overcome the challenges. The more qualified women entrepreneurs are well aware of various sources and support from Government and non- Government organisations. This awareness continuously motivate them and build confidence among them to face the challenges of finance, raw materials and marketing. Age is also another strong factor to face the challenges in the entrepreneurship. The young entrepreneurs enthusiastically like stiff competition, male dominated society and lack of communication skills. Business tenure also significantly influence the challenges of women entrepreneurs like shortage of raw materials, risk taking, marketing skills and discrimination. Investment has impact on raw materials procurement, facing stiff competition, risk bearing and low mobility.

The factor turnover influences the challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in such a way that if the turnover is not satisfactory they may need to quit the business. This may lead to conflict in the family and lack of motivation. Availing loan also based on the challenges literacy level, motivation and communication skills. Survival in tier II city rather than tier I city also depends on the challenges like discrimination, marketing skills, communication skills and male dominated society. **Dr. Vijayakumar, A. and Jayachitra, S. (2013), Kumbhar, Vijay M., (2013)** points out the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs are shortage of finance, marketing problems, family conflicts, shortage of raw materials, stiff competition, limited managerial ability, high cost of production, absence of entrepreneurial aptitude, low risk taking ability, lack of entrepreneurial training and legal formalities.

In the case of utilization of opportunity it creates influence on challenges of women entrepreneurs. It predicts that the exploitation and utilization capabilities of women entrepreneurs, especially for opportunities make them unhurt and unscathed against the challenges from the domains of finance, marketing and raw materials. The more utilization of opportunities diminishes the domination of challenges and pave the smooth way for success of women entrepreneurs. Subsidies influences the challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs like stiff competition and discrimination. The more they hesitate and the more they face difficulty in availing the subsidies. This burdens the women entrepreneurs and they face tough time in arranging the finance and procurement of materials on time.

Findings

- The t- test reveals that women entrepreneurs face tough/strongly agree with the challenges like problem of finance, shortage of raw materials, limited mobility, low literacy, male dominated society, low risk bearing capabilities, discrimination and

lack of marketing skills. They also moderately agree for the challenges like conflict between work and family, stiff competition, lack of motivation and lack of communication skills.

- The educational background of women entrepreneurs play an important role in facing the challenges. These entrepreneurs lack in management skills, resource mobilization, communication, arranging finance and difficulty in time management.
- Age is also another personal factor that helps them to carry challenges like male dominated society, discrimination, and risk bearing capacity. Low turnover may lead to quit the business and creates lack of confidence among them.
- The less utilization of opportunities results from lack of education that on the other hand increases the challenges from the domains of finance, marketing and raw materials.
- The study also points out that women entrepreneurs hesitate to avail the subsidies or not aware of the same. This increases the burden of the entrepreneurs.

Suggestions

- The highly qualified women can overcome challenges lack of communication skills, marketing skills, stiff competition and male dominated society. These entrepreneurs can easily adopt the latest technology, can avail Government and non – Government subsidies etc.,
- They should adapt the challenges on their way by developing more skills like tech based, marketing oriented, innovativeness that influences them achieve the target and to stay abridged in their entrepreneurship.
- Leadership qualities should be developed in order to face the tough time in the business. Proper time management may reduce time conflict in the family and may successfully devote for the business.
- The women entrepreneurs should inculcate the boldness and face the social hurdles and should strive to stand a head of others in the society.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to the Chennai City. If the same study is conducted in other parts of the state (Tamil Nadu), then the results may differ.
- The perception of women in tier I cities differ to the women in tier II cities.
- The exposure to the women in the cities differs to the women in the villages and tier II cities.

Conclusion

At an outset, the study completely reveals the challenges and the threats faced by women. However, the women should come out of their own nutshell. This is a competitive environment, where the women should face the men, community/ societal challenges with at most courage in order to stand independent. Finally, the women to become as successful entrepreneurs they need support from the society, family and even the government in the form of training. The study also emphasizes that there are many constraints that stands as hurdles in the path way of women entrepreneurs. The possibilities to overcome the hurdles are utilizing the government subsidies and undertaking training programmes sponsored by the Government.

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