

STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important source of economic growth. Women entrepreneurs create new jobs and also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems. However, they still represent a minority of all entrepreneurs. They often face gender based barriers to starting and growing their businesses, like discriminatory property, matrimonial and inheritance laws and or cultural practice, lack of access to formal finance mechanisms, limited mobility and access to information and network. Women's entrepreneurship can make a strong contribution to the economic well-being of the family and communities, poverty reduction and women's empowerment. Thus, governments across the world as well as various developmental organizations are actively undertaking the promotion of women entrepreneurs through various schemes, incentives and promotional activities measures. Women entrepreneurs in the four southern states and Maharashtra account for over 50 per cent of all women-led small scale industries units in India

Key words: Women entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises, registered enterprises, entrepreneurship, etc.

1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, there has been a slow but steady change taking place with respect to development of women. The gross enrolment ratio for women has increased and women have increasingly come forward to participate in the employment sector. Not only that, women have come forward to establish their own enterprises as well and have become job providers. Even if the entrepreneurial world is still male dominated, women participation is on the rise every year. Be it micro or small or medium scale operation, women have come forward to establish them as owners and manage them. Probably what is noteworthy is that women have plunged into the field of entrepreneurship and have been found effective in emerging socio-economic role. A number of them have been engaged in home-based small scale entrepreneurial activities like selling home-prepared food items, selling home-grown vegetables, milk vending, butter and ghee making by maintaining one or few milk animals. Women also engaged in goat rearing, poultry farming, money lending, pawn brokering, selling textiles in the neighborhoods, etc. The money generated through such home-based entrepreneurship helps augment family income in a modest way.

2. Reasons for women entrepreneurs

The following are the reasons for becoming women as entrepreneurs.

- Innovative thinking
- New challenges and opportunities for self-fulfillment
- Employment generation
- Freedom to take own decision and be independent
- Family occupation
- Need for additional income
- Bright future of their wards
- Role model to others
- Support the family members
- Educations and qualification self-identity and social status
- To assume new challenges and opportunities for self-fulfillment.
- To prove personalities in an innovative, daring and competitive jobs

3. Opportunities for women entrepreneurs

Plenty of strategies and tips that will help guide women to be more successful in running or growing their businesses. Conducting free seminars or workshops is another good strategy for imparting knowledge and has the added benefits of serving as a networking forum. Develop and sustain relationships with women and cultivate a sense of community. Historically, women have not had the same opportunities to network as their male counterparts. Women can create their own networking events for their clients and prospects. Featuring a guest speaker can be excellent addition.

4. Steps taken by the government

- Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana and EDPs were introduced to develop entrepreneurial qualities among rural women.
- “Women in agriculture” scheme was introduced to train women farmers having small and marginal holding in agriculture and allied activities.

- Schemes like integrated Rural Development Programs, Training of Rural Youth for Self employment, etc. were started to alleviate poverty. 30%-40% reservation is provided to women under these schemes.
- Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development scheme was launched by the Ministry of Small Industries to develop women entrepreneurs in rural and semi-urban areas by developing entrepreneurial qualities.
- Women Component Plan, a special strategy was adopted by Government to provide assistance to women entrepreneurs.
- Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar and Swarna Jayanti Sakshari Rozgar Yojana were introduced by the government to provide reservation for women and encouraging them to start their ventures.
- Women Development Corporations were introduced by government to help women entrepreneurs in arranging credit and marketing facilities.
- State Industrial and Development Bank of India has introduced schemes to assist the women entrepreneurs. These schemes are: Mahila Udyam Nidhi, Micro Credit Scheme for Women, Mahila Vikas Nidhi, Women Entrepreneurial Development Programmes and Marketing Development Fund for Women.
- Training schemes for the self-employment of women such as Support for Training and Employment Programme of Women, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, Small Industry Service Institutes, State Financial Corporations, National Small Industries Corporations and District Industrial Centre are introduced by government.
- In 1993, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh was set up to grant micro credit at reasonable rate of interest with very low transaction cost and simple procedure.

5. Growth of women entrepreneurship in India

- Last five decades have seen phenomenal changes in the status and work place diversity of women in India. The growth of women entrepreneurs in fifties fall into two categories. One set took creating and managing an entrepreneurial activity where there was no income generating male. The second set took enormous courage to break through the social maps and coding to take. Charges of the business the husband had left or else her family would be the losers.
- In sixties women took small steps to start small one women enterprises at home and from home form home for self-occupation and engagement.

- The women in seventies opened up new frontiers and developed not only aspiration but ambitions for self employment and employment generation. These women wanted home, marriage, children as well as occupation. They accepted the share of the work and responsibilities for success and growth of their enterprise.
- Women wanted their voices to be heard as leaders to employees and as managers of the enterprises to the outside business environment. However, all of them accepted their social and occupation roles balancing between the two.
- In eighties, the number of women pursuing highly sophisticated technological professional education increased. They entered into family business.
- They made personal choices, stoop up for their convictions and had the courage to make new beginnings. For them, the society was hostile and sometimes they developed a sense of guilt for not playing appropriate traditional and social roles.
- The women of the nineties were capable, competent, confident and as service. They were clear of their goals, processes and the dynamics of goal accomplishment. Women were fearless, and have learnt to live alone, travel alone and rear children alone when failure in marriage and life partnership occurs. In most of the cases they move out shone and outperformed their male counterparts.
- 21st century is the century of telecom. Many of the industries are headed and guided by women as pioneers and mavericks. They have ventured to build enterprises, to discover their relevance and meaning of life in themselves. But still in relation to the women population. The trend has not been spectacular.
- As per 1991 census, only 185900 women accounting for 4.5 per cent of the total self-employed persons in the country. Majority of them are engaged in the unorganized sector like agriculture, agro-based industries, handicrafts, handlooms, and cottage based industries.
- The present rate of 30 per cent success of EDP training was likely to go up to 45 per cent with growing experience and improved techniques of training and follow up. The women were to be given training in self-employment and training in trade and skill areas.

6. Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs have become strong dynamic force in today's corporate world. Not only had they able to make equal their duties of both motherliness and entrepreneurship but also comprise of almost half of all businesses owned today. Many women entrepreneurs have an average age of 40-60 years old because they have had previous careers in other areas. Their primary goal is not monetary reward but rather personal satisfaction and community involvement. Many of them are educated and assemble into groups in order to pool business ideas and resources together.

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