

# Socio-Economic Background of the Women Entrepreneurs – An Empirical Study

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper author intend to present the Socio Economic background of women entrepreneurs in the present day. “Women entrepreneurship must be molded 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. 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. Women entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others and by being different also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems as well as the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. A distinguishing feature of a woman entrepreneur is the willingness to work hard. Achievement orientation is derive to overcome challenges, to advance and to grow. A woman entrepreneur must be optimistic. She should approach her venture with a hope of success and attitude for success rather than with a fear of failure. The success of an enterprise largely depends upon the ability of woman entrepreneur to cope with latest technology. Technical competency refers to the ability to devise and use the better ways of producing and marketing goods and services. One more very important quality that women entrepreneur should have is the leadership quality. It is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically towards achieving objectives.

**KEYWORDS:** Entrepreneurs, Self-Employment, Policies, Challenges, Planning Commission, Strategy.

## 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 entre-preneur searches for change and responds to it. The sociologists feel that certain communities and cultures promote entrepreneurship like for example in India we say that Gujarati's and Sindhi's 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. It is a general belief in many cultures that the role of women is to build and maintain the homely affairs like task of fetching water, cooking and rearing children. Since the turn of the century, the status of women in India has been changing due to growing industrialization, globalization, and social legislation. Women who innovate initiate or adopt business actively are called women entrepreneurs.” J. Schumpeter. According to a new National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) study published in a recent Forbes article, over half of all new small business jobs created in the next five years will come from businesses started by women. Self-employment is regarded as a cure to generate income. The Planning commission as well as the Indian government recognizes the need for women to be part of the mainstream of economic development. Women entrepreneurship is seen as an effective strategy to solve the problems of rural and urban poverty. Entrepreneurship development for women is an important factor in economic development of India. It is estimated that women entrepreneurs presently comprise about 10% of the total number of entrepreneurs in India, with the percentage growing every year. This conceptual paper give emphasis on the problems, issues, challenges faced by women entrepreneurs especially in India and the remedies to overcome them in the light of Indian government policies for women entrepreneurs. The primary objective of this paper is to find out the status of women entrepreneurs in India.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the socio-economic background of the women entrepreneurs.
2. To analyze the motivational factors and other factors that influence women to become entrepreneurs.
3. To analyze the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs to promote the entrepreneurship.
4. To analyze the role of Government to develop Women Entrepreneurs in India.
5. To give recommendations to improve the satisfaction of women entrepreneurs.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This conceptual paper give emphasis on the problems, issues, challenges faced by women entrepreneurs especially in India and the remedies to overcome them in the light of Indian government policies for women entrepreneurs. The paper is based on secondary data. The material is collected from various distinguished journals magazines, books, etc.

### **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Women entrepreneur may be defined as a woman or group of women who initiate, organize, and run a business enterprise. In terms of Schumpeterian concept of innovative entrepreneurs, women who innovate, imitate or adopt a business activity are called “women entrepreneurs”.

Accordingly, the Government of India has defined women entrepreneur as “an enterprise owned and controlled by a 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.” In nutshell, women entrepreneurs are those women who think of a business enterprise, initiate it, organize and combine the factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risks and handle economic uncertainty involved in running a business enterprise.

**Gender Disparity:** 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.

They are treated as subordinate to husbands and men, physically weak and lesser confident to be able to shoulder the responsibility of entrepreneur. There is discrimination against women in India despite constitutional equality. Women do not get equal treatment in male-dominated Indian society and male ego puts barriers in their progress.

**Lack of education:** Due to lack of proper education, women entrepreneurs remain in dark about the development of new technology, new methods of production, marketing and other governmental support which will encourage them to flourish.

**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. The complicated procedure of bank loans also creates lot of problems in getting the required finance. Women entrepreneurs even face problems in getting requisite working capital financing day-to-day business activities. Obtaining the support of bankers, managing the working capital, lack of credit resources are the problems, which still remain in the males domain. Women are yet to make significant mark in quantitative terms.

**Low risk-bearing capacity:** Women in India are by nature weak, shy and mild. They cannot bear the amount of risk, which is essential for running an enterprise. Lack of education, training and financial support from outsides also reduce their ability to bear the risk involved in an enterprises.

**Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude:** They have no entrepreneurial bent of mind. Even after attending various training programs on entrepreneurship, they fail to tide over the risks and troubles that may come up in an organizational working.

**Obsolescence of technology & resulting increase in cost of production:** Several factors including inefficient management contribute to the high cost of production, which stands as a stumbling block before women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs face technology obsolescence due to non-adoption or slow adoption to changing technology, which is a major factor of high cost of production.

**Low risk taking ability:** Women in India lead a protected life. They are less educated and economically not self- dependent. All these reduce their ability to bear risk involved in running an

enterprise. Risk bearing is an essential requisite of a successful entrepreneur. In addition to above problems, inadequate infra structural facilities, shortage of power, high cost of production, social attitude, low need for achievement and socio- economic constraints also hold the women back from entering into business.

**Stiff Competition:** Women entrepreneurs do not have organization set- up to pump in a lot of money for canvassing and advertisement. Thus, they have to face a stiff competition for marketing their products with both organized sector and their male counterparts. Such a competition ultimately results in the liquidation of women enterprises.

**Family Conflicts:** In India, the major duty of woman is to look after the children and other members of the family. Man plays a secondary role only. In case of married woman, she has to strike a fine balance between her business and family. Her total involvement in family leaves little or no energy and time to devote for business. Support and approval of husbands seem necessary condition or women's entry in to business.

**Marketing Problems:** The middlemen exploit the women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs also find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular. Women entrepreneurs also lack energy and extra efforts needed to be investing and to win the confidence of customers and popularize the products. Women entrepreneurs continuously face the problems in marketing their products. During the process of marketing of products women entrepreneurs faced certain problems viz. poor location of shop, lack of transport facility and tough competition from larger and established units.

**Production Problems:** Non-availability of raw material is one of the reasons to the slow growth of women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs find it difficult to procure the required raw materials and other necessary inputs for production in sufficient quantity and quality. Other production problems are non-availability of machine or equipment, lack of training facility and non-availability of labor, high cost of required machine or equipment. High cost of production undermines the efficiency and stands in the way of development and expansion of women's enterprises, government assistance in the form of grant and subsidies to some extent enables them to tide over the difficult situations. However, in the long run, it would be necessary to increase efficiency and expand productive capacity and thereby reduce cost to make their ultimate survival possible.

**Legal Formalities:** Women entrepreneurs find it extremely difficult in complying with various legal formalities in obtaining licenses etc.

**Team Building:** Many female entrepreneurs try to handle every aspect of the business alone, and that's a recipe for failure. It's important that female entrepreneurs surround themselves with team members that have different strengths and expertise that can help run a successful business. Women think they can do it all themselves, and aren't thinking about team building and tapping resources the way that men are. Men in the business world tend to realize that, whereas women are used to multitasking.

## **ROLE OF GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA**

A congenial environment is needed to be created to enable women to participate actively in the entrepreneurial activities. The Government of India has also formulated various training and development cum employment generations programs for the women to start their ventures. These programmes are as follows: In the seventh five-year plan, a special chapter on the “Integration of women in development” was introduced by the Government, with following suggestion:

## **ASSOCIATIONS PROMOTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR**

In India, the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises development organizations, various State Small Industries Development Corporations, the nationalized banks and even NGOs are conducting various programmes including Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) to cater to the needs of potential women entrepreneurs, who may not have adequate educational background and skills. The Office of DC (MSME) has also opened a Women Cell to provide coordination and assistance to women entrepreneurs facing specific problems. Various government schemes for MSMEs also provide certain special incentives and concessions for women entrepreneurs. A woman entrepreneur likes to take realistic risks because she wants to be a successful entrepreneur. The most critical skill required for industrial development is the ability of building a sound organization. A woman entrepreneur assembles, co-ordinates, organizes and manages the other factors namely land, labor and capital. The most critical skill required for industrial development is the ability of building a sound organization. Human capital variables are likely to influence the development of a business and the organization of resources. Human capital variables include knowledge, education, skills and previous experience (Deakins and Whittam, 2000). Storey (1994) suggests the entrepreneurial factors such as previous management, experience, family history, functional skills and relevant business sector knowledge as the important entrepreneurial factors. The effect of education has been widely studied. Education is presumably related to knowledge, skills, motivation, and self-confidence, problem solving ability, commitment and discipline. Higher education is expected to enhance the ability of the entrepreneur to cope with problems and seize opportunities that are important to the growth of the firm. Helms, 1997 explains that women often start their own business for ‘three reasons of personal gains: personal freedom, security and/or satisfaction’. Studies highlight independence, need to achieve, need for job satisfaction, economic necessity, and personal environment as the factors that motivate women entrepreneurs in starting the enterprise.

**1. SIDBI**

State Industrial and Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is an institution established at the national level to provide facilities to small scale industries. As a part of development SIDBI has introduced following schemes to assist the women entrepreneurs. These schemes are:

- i. Mahila Udyam Nidhi
- ii. Mahila Vikas Nidhi
- iii. Women Entrepreneurial Development Programmes
- iv. Marketing Development Fund for Women

**2. SIDO**

Small industries Development Organization (SIDO) are conducting various Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (DEP's) for women to provide various skills to women like T.V repairing, printed circuit boards, screen printing etc.

**3. Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs in India (CWEI)**

The CWEI is a voluntary organization consisting of NGOs, SHGs and individual business units. This came into being in 2001. The objective is to provide technology up gradation facilities, and other facilities like marketing, finance HRD and production to women entrepreneurs.

**4. NABARD**

National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is an autonomous financial institution provides liberal credit to rural women entrepreneurs.

**5. CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT SCHEMES**

State Government has come out with several schemes to develop women entrepreneurs. Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) a scheme designed for state governments were implemented in 1982-83. Uncountable women throughout the country have availed the facilities to develop themselves as entrepreneurs.

**6. SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (SEWA)**

SEWA is a trade union of women, which was registered in 1972 under Trade Union Act. The members of SEWA has extended its operations to the global level and has the opportunity of receiving grants from various international organizations such as UNICEF, ILO, and Government of India etc.

**The First Five-Year Plan (1951-56)** envisaged a number of welfare measures for women. Establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board, organization of Mahila Mandals and the Community Development Programmes were a few steps in this direction.

**In the second Five-Year Plan (1956-61)**, the empowerment of women was closely linked with the overall approach of intensive agricultural development programmes.

**The Third and Fourth Five-Year Plans (1961-66 and 1969-74)** supported female education as a major welfare measure.

**The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79)** emphasized training of women, who were in need of income and protection. This plan coincided with International Women's Decade and the submission of Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. In 1976, Women's welfare and Development Bureau was set up under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

**The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85)** saw a definite shift from welfare to development. It recognized women's lack of access to resources as a critical factor impeding their growth.

**The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90)** emphasized the need for gender equality and empowerment. For the first time, emphasis was placed upon qualitative aspects such as inculcation of confidence, generation of awareness with regards, to rights and training in skills for better employment.

**The Eight Five-Year Plan (1992-97)** focused on empowering women, especially at the grass roots level, through Panchayat Raj Institutions.

**The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002)** adopted a strategy of women's component plan, under which not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits were earmarked for women-specific programmes.

**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.

**The Eleventh Five-Year Plan** lays down six monitorable targets (1) raise the sex ratio for age group 0-6 from 927 in 2001 to 935 by 2011-12 and to 950 by 2016-17; (2) Ensure that at least 33% of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children; (3) Reduce IMR from 57 to 28 and MMR from 3.01 to one per 1000 live births; (4) Reduce malnutrition among children of age group 0-3 to half its present level; (5) Reduce anemia among women and girls by 50% by the end of the Eleventh Plan; and (6) Reduce dropout rate for primary and secondary schooling by 10% for both girls as well as boys."

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**1. PUSH FACTORS-** Push factors are elements of necessity such as insufficient family income, dissatisfaction with salaries job, difficulty in finding work and a need for flexible work schedule because of family responsibilities. These factors may have more importance for women than for men.

**2. PULL FACTORS-** Factors that work as entrepreneurial drive factors relate to independence, self-fulfillment, entrepreneurial drive and desire for wealth, power and social status, co-operation and support of family members and a strong network of contacts. The most prominent factor is self-achievement expressed in terms of challenge, which helps women to start, run their own business and turn it into a profitable venture. When a strong need for achievement could not be fulfilled through a salaried position or when there was a desire to transform a perceived opportunity into a marketable idea, then these factors work for a person to state their own venture.

## POLICIES AND SCHEMES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

Various government schemes for MSMEs also provide certain special incentives and concessions for women entrepreneurs. For instance, under Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY), preference is given to women beneficiaries. The government has also made several relaxations for women to facilitate the participation of women beneficiaries in this scheme.

1. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
2. Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM)
3. Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)
4. Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS)
5. Working Women's Forum
6. Indira Mahila Yojana
7. Indira Mahila Kendra
8. Mahila Samiti Yojana
9. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
10. Khadi and Village Industries Commission

The Government programmes for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, the Government of India has over 34 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries. Some of these are as follows; In India, the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises development organizations, various State Small Industries Development Corporations, the nationalized banks and even NGOs are conducting various programmes including Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) to cater to the needs of potential women entrepreneurs, who may not have adequate educational background and skills. The Office of DC (MSME) has also opened a Women Cell to provide coordination and assistance to women entrepreneurs facing specific problems.

1. Rastria Mahila Kosh (RMK) 1992-1993
2. Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) October, 1993.
3. Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) 1995.
4. Women Entrepreneur Development programme given top priority in 1997-98.
5. Mahila Samakhya being implemented in about 9000 villages.
6. Swayasjdha.
7. Swa Shakti Group.
8. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP).
9. Swalamban.
10. Crèches/ Day care Centre for the children of working and ailing mother.
11. Hostels for working women.



12. Swadhar.
13. National Mission for Empowerment of Women.
14. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975),
15. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG) (2010).
16. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
17. Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010).
18. Dhanalakahmi (2008).
19. Short Stay Homes.
20. Ujjawala (2007).
21. Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan).
22. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
23. Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM).
24. Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY).
25. Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS).
26. Working Women's Forum.
27. Indira Mahila Kendra.
28. Mahila Samiti Yojana.
29. Khadi and Village Industries Commission.
30. Indira Priyadarahini Yojana.
31. SBI's Sree Shaki Scheme.
32. SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi Mahila Vikas Nidhi.
33. NGO's Credit Schemes.
34. National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes

1. Most of the women entrepreneurs are of the opinion that because of lack of training, they are not able to survive in the market. Hence, the government should conduct frequent training programmes with regard to new production techniques, sales techniques, etc. This training should be made 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 is very low, awareness is to be created those women, by providing special attention.
4. Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to start their entrepreneurs as joint stock companies rather than as a sole trade and partnership concerns to avail the advantages of large scale operation.

5. Parents of unmarried potential women entrepreneurs should be encouraged in spending money on setting up business rather than giving preference to their marriage.
6. Marketing product is one of the main problems for women entrepreneurs. Here, women co-operative societies can be started to procure the products from women entrepreneurs. They will help them in selling their products at a reasonable price.
7. Improper location and inadequate infrastructure facilities are the hurdles in the way of development of women entrepreneurship. Hence, separate industrial estates may be set up exclusively for women entrepreneurs to reduce the initial investment and to create a special environment.
8. The family members of women entrepreneurs should extend all possible support in managing units set up by women entrepreneurs.
9. 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.
10. 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.

## CONCLUSION

Women being the vital gender of the overall population have great capacity and potential to be the contributor in the overall economic development of any nation. Therefore, programs and policies need to be customized to not just encourage entrepreneurship as well as implement strategies, which can help support entrepreneurial culture among youth.

Women entrepreneurs must be molded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet changing trends and challenging global markets, and also be competent enough to sustain and strive in the local economic arena.

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