

Learning to Take Risks, Learning to Succeed: A Study on Challenges Faced by Imminent Women Entrepreneurs of Gujarat

**Dr. Komal Mistry*
SECMOM, V.V. Nagar

Abstract

According to the Women's Financial Network, women start businesses at two times the rate of men. While women are starting more businesses than men, they find it harder at the outset to grow their businesses and access venture capital. Women entrepreneurs constitute 10 % of the number of entrepreneurs in our country (Bharthvajan R). All over the world there is a realization that the best way to tackle poverty and enable the community to improve its quality of life is through social mobilization of poor, especially women into self-help groups. Since independence many revolutionary schemes have been launched for the empowerment of women in our country. Indian government has taken lot of initiatives to strengthen the institutional rural credit system and development programs. Here, researcher has made an attempt to collect evidences of problems and prospects faced by aspiring women entrepreneurs of Gujarat.

Key Words: *Challenges, Prospects, Women Entrepreneurs*

Introduction

During the last three decades, Indian women have started entering in to the field of entrepreneurship with increasing numbers. Many women business owners have overcome or worked to avoid obstacles and challenges in creating their businesses. It creates an incredible impact on employment and business environments where there is life of women in workplace managing small business owned by her. The result of these trends is that women-owned businesses span the entire range of business life cycle and business success, whether the measuring stick is revenue, employment or longevity (Munshi, Munshi & Singh, 2011). (Shatri D., Rao U.T., 2014) Business runs in the blood of every Gujarati. Moreover, since independence, the Government of Gujarat has taken several steps to encourage the women of the state to take up their entrepreneurial careers. Gujarati women, surpassing all the hindrances on their way, have tasted the flavor of success with their hard work, devotion and co-operation. May it be Lijjat Papad, or Jasuben's Pizza or Induben Khakhrawala or the Founder of The Riverside School in Ahmedabad, have had their share of hardships and determination. Now-a-days we have many successful women entrepreneurs in our country, but due to male dominated culture, there are number of challenges which women face during their journey. These interesting facts and gender sensitive issues encourage researcher to study challenges faced by prospect women entrepreneurs of Gujarat.

Literature Review

Women are not considered themselves to be any different from men, as far entrepreneurship is considered (Agarwal 2015). Indian women of today have taken many strides towards business ownership. The broad classification of women business owners include women who establish, inherit, or acquire a business; women who start businesses with spouses or business partners but are either at the forefront or behind the scenes; and finally, women who start fast-growing or part-time or slow-growing firms (Sulekha, Arpana & Ved Pal, 2011). Self-employed women differ on most human capital variable as compared to the salary and wage earning women. The study also revealed the fact that the education attainment level is faster for self employed women than that for other working women (Darrene, Harpel & Mayer, 2008). There is an array of factors, which affects the women entrepreneurship. These essential factors which influence the balance of managing the work life balance by such entrepreneurship have been analyzed (Devpriya, Dey, 2014). Basically, all women entrepreneurs almost suffer from two main categories of problems, Specific Problems and General Problems. The first category of problems affect women specifically in their smooth operations of enterprise, while the other category of problems have a general or over-all effect on the

enterprises owned by such group of women entrepreneurs (Sulekha, Arpana & Ved Pal, 2011). As the environment is changing very fast, investors start investing on woman leadership, and their contribution in economic development is also being recognized and Increase at a considerable rate. Start-up India, a stand-up India initiative by government to promote the culture of entrepreneurship by educating women about their hidden potentials and strengths through entrepreneurial orientation programs, spreading awareness and consciousness amongst women to upstage in the field of entrepreneurship by their creative and innovative ideas, making them realize their important position in the society and how they can contribute to the entire economy of the country (Sapna & Anjna,2017).

Research Gap

Various research outputs highlight various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in India. However, most vital challenges arise before starting the journey of entrepreneurship. In Indian socio-economic conditions various obstacles arise against woman before starting an enterprise, if such issues can resolve at early stage then definitely women entrepreneurship get boost. So, there is a need to study obstacles arise in process of establishment of startup. As Entrepreneurship is a fundamentally self- motivated activity, here sample of female students who have participated in business idea contest is preferred in research, because they are aware about complex business environment as well as probable hurdles to implicate their business ideas in market.

Research Methodology

Study is exploratory in nature, for which Interview was conducted of female students who have participated in Business Idea Competitions. On the basis of interviews a structured questionnaire was designed and data were collected. Researcher selected the western state of India, Gujarat for the study. The sample was drawn from the Gujarat state of India, as it is one of the highly industrialized states among other states, where entrepreneurial culture is well established (Rajpara & Mistry, 2018)

Data Collection

Data analysis using the process of constant relative analysis (Glaser& Strauss, 2009) was conducted simultaneously throughout the data collection, which helped us to frame new questions and drop some questions, thus reconstructed descriptions from the interviewee became the fundamental basis for verifying and expanding argument for the selected phenomena of investigation. To identify why female students are not aspiring for entrepreneurship, interview technique was used and on the basis interview answers a questionnaire was developed and data were collected from 92 female students who have participated in business idea competitions.

Challenges Faced by Imminent Women Entrepreneurs of Gujarat

The biggest challenge is that most of the times you think that you don't have resources. However, Complaining is not a strategy, here are responses of interviewees.

Shivani, Activated Charcoal Drink

Making a name for ourselves in a market dominated by big players was challenging. We found that the best way to build our brand was through a grassroots approach.

Neha, Instant refund for E-Commerce Transitions

The biggest challenge was to attract and grow the customer base; it's very difficult to make people understand the new concept.

Dhruva, E-Commerce Fashion Portal

The biggest challenge is to keep momentum, and always be innovative. In the fashion industry there are people everywhere, it's very difficult to find your own place.

Disha, Algae Fuel

Market is dominated by male players, its tough task to handle situations at own risk. The odd traditions of market functions restrict females to be independent in their start-up.

Krishna, Sound Limiting Device

The biggest challenge I faced was to learn how to relax, rest and be less stressed. I learn it is not easy to get funds, and after getting funds to convince people to join your business.

Aastha, Acetylene fuel bikes

The first challenge was putting our team together. We needed people who were business-minded and who were passionate enough about what we were doing to work for peanuts for years until the money situation got more comfortable.

Aashka, Negative Calorie Food restaurant

Most difficult task in front of us was to get our product in front of our target market, and we are continuously working towards this goal. Another challenge is to manage social balance with the business passion.

Shrusti, Industrial & Logistic Park

Entering into infrastructure project as a female is just like a fish out of pond, you hardly find people who are ready to work with you. Another challenge is to getting big funds for big dreams.

Analysis of Data for Problems and Prospects of Imminent Female Entrepreneurs:

Table 1: Problems (Broad Perspective)

Problem	N	%
Financial	74	80.43
Social	87	94.57
Managerial	80	86.96

Generally to start any venture fund is needed, same way for business startup capital requirement is must, but here (Table 1) according to potential female entrepreneurs biggest hurdle is social challenges (94.57%) rather than managing finance (80.43%), even they believe managerial problems (86.96%) are also having more importance than the financial problems. In India majority of households are male dominant, so female students feel that to start something at your own will create resistance at their home only before thinking of finance.

Table 2: Social Problems

Problems	N	%
Work Life Balance	78	84.78
Lack of confidence	72	78.26
Insufficient of social contacts	55	59.78
Opinion of Society on women's ability	89	96.74
Absence of support from the family / society	82	89.13
Male Dominant environment	90	97.83

In most powerful obstacle also researcher has tried to identify significance of specific reasons (Table 2) which restricts female entrepreneurship. In male dominant society imminent entrepreneurs (97.83%) believes they can't succeed as well as society's opinion (96.74%) will also against them. As female has to start work against odds they (89.13%) feel they family would also not support them and they will feel pressure to manage work life balance (84.78%). Lack of Confidence (78.26%) and less social contacts (59.78%) also plays an important role in restricting females from business startups.

Table 3: Managerial Problems

Problems	N	%
Product designing and development	62	67.39
Problems countered during marketing research	71	77.17
Cut throat competition	59	64.13
Problems in transmission of resources	74	80.43
Getting brand name and customer base	82	89.13
Interacting with various parties in male dominating market	89	96.74
Non-availability of skilled employees	57	61.96
Building and maintaining core team	65	70.65

Managing the business is not easy task (Table 3); consequently potential female entrepreneurs presume these problems are more decisive than the financial problems. Here also respondents (96.74%) feel in male dominating market they face difficulty to interact with various parties. Interestingly Competition (64.13%) is least important factor in these criteria.

Table 4: Financial Problems

Problems	N	%
Ignorant about financial management	67	72.83
Unfamiliarity of banking measures	53	57.61
Discouragement by bank staff	59	64.13
Availability of Funds	92	100.00
Lack of Collateral Security	84	91.30

Though according to respondents financials problems (Table 4) are not having much relevance against other problems, still they unanimously agrees that availability of funds is a major financial problem, where majorly this is due to lack of collateral security (91.30%). In India still households and businesses are controlled by men respondents (72.83%) feels ignorance of financial management is a problem for them. Behavior of banking staff (64.13%) and unknowing to banking measures (57.61%) are also dominating factors for entrepreneurship.

Table 5: Social Environmental factors that have increased the prospects of Women Entrepreneurship

Social Environmental Factors	N	%
Increasing spread of education among women	60	65.22
Favorable Government schemes	64	69.57
Increasing social recognition to women	75	81.52
Increasing awareness of women about economic independence	62	67.39
Peer effect	84	91.30
More number of women role models in service sector	78	84.78
Occurrence of Conversion of ideas in to realities	87	94.57

As there is 'no gain without pain', each problem brings hope for future solution which is a ray of hope. Considering these facts here researchers has considered social environmental factors which may boost female entrepreneurship. According to respondents (Table 5), the great potential for female entrepreneurs is to convert their hobbies into business ideas (94.57%). At the one hand they feel opposition in male dominant society to start their own venture at the same time they feel peer support (91.30%) is also a major factor which may support them. Compare to earlier more women role models are there, which also provide motivation to young girls (84.78%) to have their own name in the world. Other factors like Increase in Social recognition (81.52%), Government Schemes (69.57%), Sense of Economic Independence (67.39%) and Increase in education (65.22%) are also enhancing female entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to examine problems and prospects of potential women entrepreneurs. Here researcher has found that, gender gap is most powerful fact in restricting women entrepreneurship. In two out of three criteria like Social and Managerial most powerful factors are Male Dominant environment and Interacting with various parties in male dominating market respectively. However, the brighter side also there, women role models have encouraged the young females to keep going in their business endeavor, in addition peer support and inner zeal and will-power are vital enabling factors which elevate their motivation scale to perform in the state. This study brings us to the conclusion that in Gujarat possible problems which become deterring factor for women to start their own ventures and manage their own business are noteworthy and worth studying to bring solution to so that such an environment can be created which pulls women's attention to this field of occupation and women may go hand in hand with the male counterpart to empower the economic scenario of the nation.

Limitations of the present Study

As the study has been carried out among the entrepreneurs in a limited geographical area, i.e. Gujarat the derived interpretation cannot be generalized to the whole Indian ethnicity in terms of entrepreneurial behavior; a wider study in this area in terms of quantitative research taking into consideration the above mentioned variables (Rajpara & Patel, 2014).

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