

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA: PRESENT STATUS, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

“No war can be fought without the help of the better half of our society”. Social and economic development of women is necessary for overall economic development of any society or a country. The term “Women Entrepreneurship” refers to an act of business ownership and business creation that empowers women economically increases their economic strength & position in society. Despite all the social hurdles, Indian women stand tall from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their contributions to their respective field and the economy as a whole. The hidden entrepreneurial potential of women has gradually been changing their role and economic status in the society. Women are increasingly being conscious of their existence & their rights. However, New Industrial policy of 2009-14 and other schemes are helping the women entrepreneurs in the form of generation of employment, income and to improve their social status. Women leaders are Risk takers, opportunist, innovator, flexible, ambitious, enthusiastic, and hard-working. They need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology, increased investment, finding a niche in the expect market, creating a sizable employment for others and setting the trend for other woman entrepreneurs in the organized sector. The study analyses their present status, reasons that have prompted them to unleash their entrepreneurial energies into start-ups and the different challenges faced by them. The study finally concludes to what extents the various support systems in India can further foster a conducive ecosystem for them.

KEYWORDS: Challenges, Entrepreneurship, Support system, Women entrepreneur.

I. 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. Thus, entrepreneurs shape the economy by creating new wealth and new jobs, invent new products and services. Social and economic development of women is necessary for overall economic development of any society or a country. The term “Women Entrepreneurship” refers to an act of business ownership and business creation that empowers women economically increases their economic strength & position in society. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as “an enterprise owned and controlled by 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. Women Entrepreneur is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent.”

Indian traditions are deep rooted & it is a male dominated one where women are supposed to and often compelled to depend on the male members in their family, society or work place. Indian women possess tremendous will power & unlimited energy. But perhaps this is the world’s most unutilized resources. Fortunately, the time has come and women are becoming more conscious about their rights, social position, work, career etc. The social transformation in terms of increased educational status of women, their struggle to achieve a better position in the life and society has introduced a drastic change in the life style of Indian women. Their struggle for existence enables them to be recognized for the achievements they have got in their respective field. They have problem solving and

motivational ability, persuasiveness. They know how to win and lose gracefully. These are some of the qualities which helped them to survive and succeed in the cut throat competition. So, it is the right time to analyze the present status & challenges faced by them which are responsible for their slow progress

II. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based on secondary data collected from the published reports of RBI, Census Surveys, SSI Reports, newspapers, journals, websites, Report of MSME etc. The study intended to throw light on the following issues:

- To analyze present status of Indian Women Entrepreneurs.
- To evaluate the factors responsible for encouraging women to become entrepreneurs.
- To critically examine the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.
- To study the impact of the government policies & programmes to encourage women entrepreneurs.
- To access the role of institutional networks and the involvement of support agencies in promoting women entrepreneurship.

III. STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

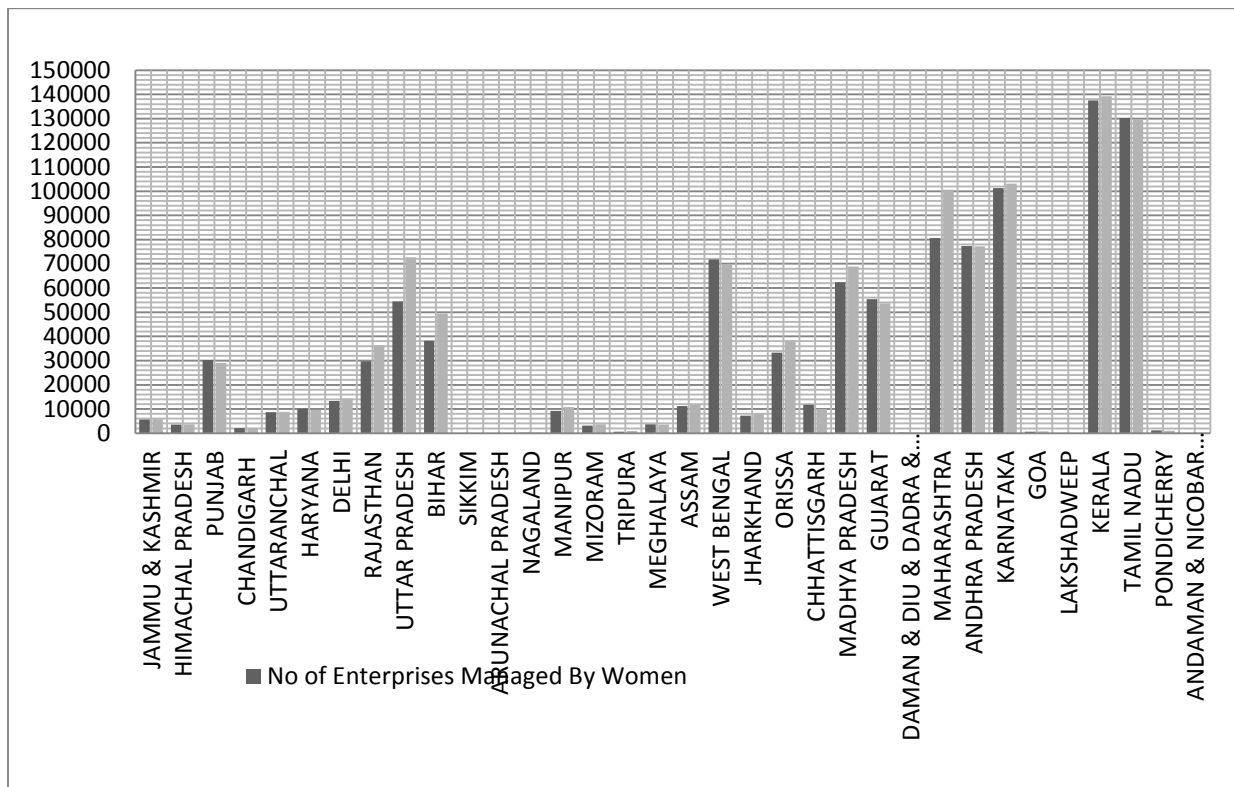
Women work participation is low in India in comparison to selected countries of the world. Women work participation in India is 31.6 % whereas in USA it is 45 %, UK 43 %, Canada 42 %, France 32 %, Indonesia 40 %, Sri Lanka and Brazil both 35 % .In India, men generally take the lead in the entrepreneurial world. With the changing cultural norms and increase in literacy rate more and more Indian women are accepting entrepreneurship as their career. With the advent of media, women are being aware of their own traits, rights and also the work situation. They are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation.

The success story of Indian women is never ending. The discussion remains incomplete without the names of great Indian women entrepreneur---

- **Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw** (Chairman & Managing Director of Biocon Limited a biotechnology company).
- **Jyoti Naik** (President of Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad).
- **Shahnaz Husain** (CEO of Shahnaz Herbals Inc.).
- **Priyapaul** (Chair person of Apeejay park hotels).
- **Indu Jain** (Chair person of The Times Group).
- **Manasi Mahanta**(The secretary of Dibyajyoti Griha Udyog , Jajpur, Orissa)
- **Smt. Kusum Agarwal** (Owner of Fly Ash Brick factory, Bhubaneswar, Orissa)
- **Nalini Mohanty** (Owner of incense sticks manufacturing unit in Jaganathpur hamlet in Kendrapada , Orissa).
- **Sarojini Das** (Best woman entrepreneur of Orissa in the year 2006, the recipient of a state government award for being the best designer of intricate designs on bamboo jewellery).
- **Mrs. Tamilselvi Eraniyappan** (The manager of Periyar Mud Crab Hatchery, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu).

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP IN SSI SECTOR, STATE-WISE

Figure 1 Participation of women in management/ownership in SSI sector, state-wise

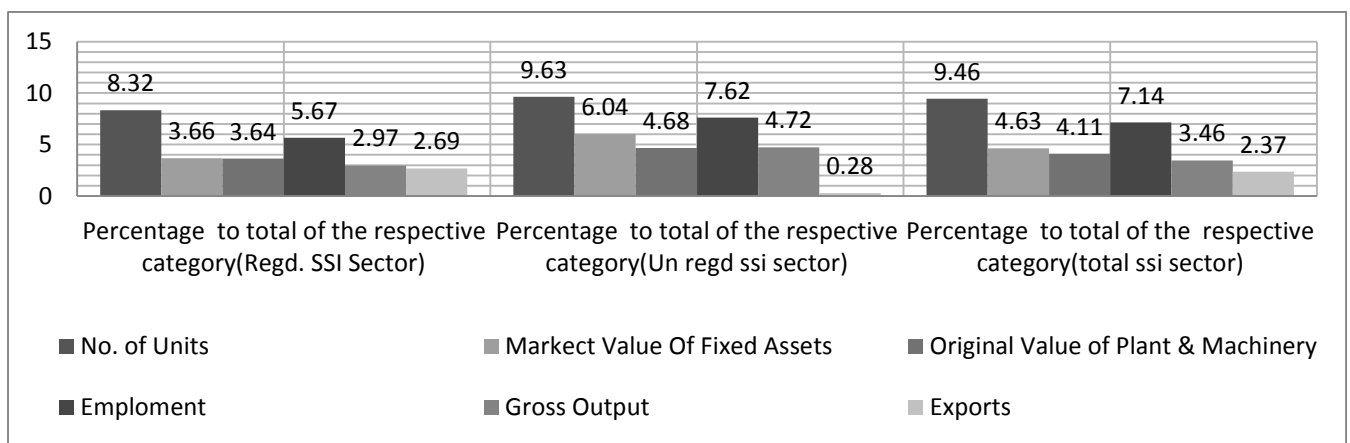


Source: Report of MSME

From the above table, it is clear that Kerala is the state with highest women managed & women owned SSI. Similarly, Sikkim is the state with lowest women managed (30) & women owned SSI (98).

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SSI UNITS MANAGED BY WOMEN

Figure 2 Principal Characteristics of SSI Units Managed By Women

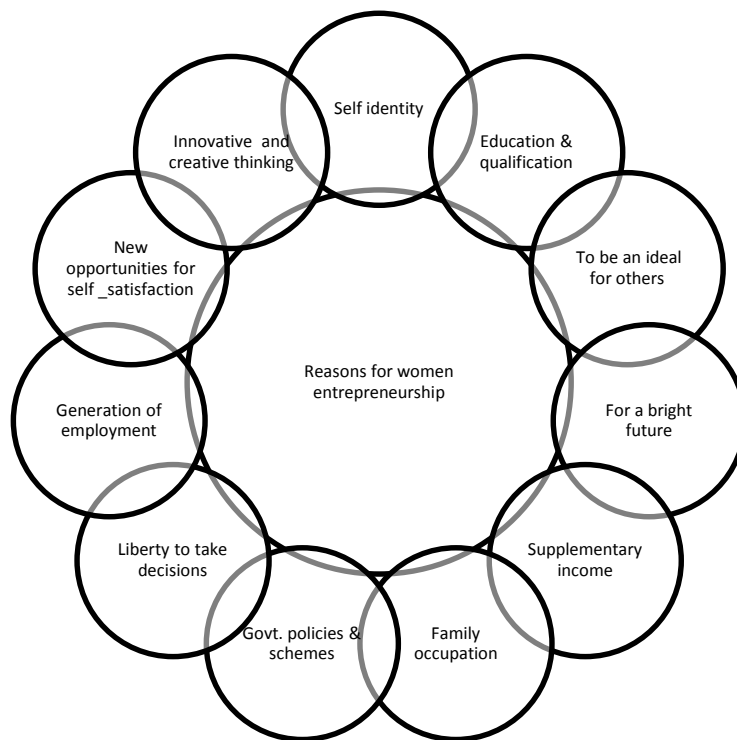


Source: Report of MSME

IV. CAUSES OF STARTING NEW INDUSTRIES

Increasing consciousness among women about their existence & rights is gradually changing their role and economic status in the society. The hidden entrepreneurial potential of women has extended their kitchen activities, mainly 3P's, Pickle, Powder and Pappad and they started entering into fields related to modern 3E's i.e., Energy, Electronics and Engineering. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons that encouraged women to emerge into business ventures.

Figure 3 Causes of Starting New Industries



V. CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIAN WOMEN

The problems and constraints experienced by women entrepreneurs have resulted in restricting the expansion of women entrepreneurship. Women in India face many problems to get ahead their life in business.

Figure 4 Challenges Faced By Indian Women



VI. STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT

Development of women has been a policy objective of the government since independence. In 80s three core areas of health, education and employment achieved utmost attention. Women are given priorities in all the sectors including SSI sector. Government and non government bodies have tried to increase women's economic contribution through self employment and industrial ventures.

- The First Five-Year Plan (1951-56) envisaged a number of welfare measures for women. Establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board, organization of MahilaMandals 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 restricting 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 Panchayati 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 related sectors.
- 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.
- During (2007-12) Govt. ensured that at least 33 percent of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children. A CSS training programme, STEP provides training for skill up gradation to poor and asset-less women in traditional sectors of agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries ,handlooms, handicraft, Khadi and village industries, sericulture, social forestry, and wasteland development.
- In framing policies/schemes for the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17) the special needs of women must be taken due care of. The MahilaKisanSashaktikaranPariyojana (MKSP) which is a sub-component of NRLM was recently launched to meet the specific needs of women farmers, and help them achieve social, economic and technical empowerment.

VII. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The followings are some of associations or institutions which have played pivotal role for growth and development of women entrepreneurs:

1. MAHILA UDYAM NIDHI , MAHILA VIKASH NIDHI , Micro Credit Scheme by **SIDBI** (Small Industries Development Bank of India), Dena Shakti scheme of **Dena Bank** , Udyogini Scheme of **Punjab & Sind Bank** are some of the important schemes introduced by various Banks.
2. SBI and NABARD are also involved in development and financing of enterprises set up by women entrepreneurs.
3. **SIDO** (Small Industries Development Organization), **CWEI** (consortium of women entrepreneurs of India), **WIT** (Women India Trust) , **SEWA** (Self Employed Women Association), **FIWE** (Federation of India Women Entrepreneurs) , Central Social Welfare Board (**CSWB**), **National alliance of young entrepreneurs** (NAYE) are some of the organizations which are engaged in providing technical, financial and marketing assistance to women entrepreneurs.

Other schemes for the development of women entrepreneur are as below.....

1. Schemes of Ministry of MSME
 - Trade related entrepreneurship assistance and development (TREAD) scheme for women
 - Mahila Coir Yojana
2. Schemes of Ministry of Women and Child Development
 - Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)
 - Swayam Siddha
4. Kerala Government's Women Industries Programme
5. Delhi Government's Stree Shakti Project
6. Schemes of Delhi Commission for Women (Related to Skill development and training)
7. PRIME MINISTER'S EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROGRAMME (**PMEGP**) contemplates to provide self employment to unemployed youths by extending financial assistance to start their units.
8. **IFCI** scheme of interest for women entrepreneurs whose main objective is to provide incentives to women having business women and entrepreneurial skills, for their industrial development.
9. **Promotional package for micro & small enterprises** ----- MSME has formulated a scheme for women entrepreneurs to encourage Small & Micro manufacturing units owned by women in their efforts to enter overseas markets.
10. MahilaVikashSamabaya Nigam (MVSN) by Orissa Govt. to give training, loans to WSHG & to market their products.

11. Misson Shakti scheme by Orissa Govt. to support bank,ngos,WSHG's Who work for women entrepreneurs .

12. Support to Training &Employment Programme (STEP) Orissa Govt. for coastal districts to train the women to prepare hygienic dry fish & prawn.

Dibyajyoti SHG group -- success story of women in rural Orissa

Manasi is the secretary of Dibyajyoti SHG group. By establishing the brand of MaaPickles and making it a renowned name in Jajpur she has set a bench mark in micro-enterprise entrepreneurship. This SHG group has started as DibyajyotiGrihaUdyog in 2008 with a loan of Rs 1, 070,00 from a nationalized bank. The present annual sales turnover of this unit is Rs 2, 306,67 and also have been able to repay the bank loan. All this has happened due to sustainable entrepreneurial skills and initiative shown by 12 members of the SHG including ManasiMahanta. ManasiMahanta and her family lived in Kalamatia village. ManasiMahanta , a rural tribal house wife was busy in house chores all day. Though she was literate she was never encouraged to earn independently nor did she ever think of it. All the members of this SHG do not belong to one village. They were provided with 10 decimal land and Rs 1.5 lakh for construction of house by Tata Steel officials. They were also paid monthly maintenance allowance of Rs 2,300. The motivation resulted in culmination of 12-member Dibyajyoti SHG. The group members showed interest to start a small business venture independently. Manasi and majority of the members tried to learn modern techniques of pickle making. Today Manasi is not only a secretary of this SHG she has also become a teacher in Sri Ganesh SikshaMandir.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs face many problems in various aspects of finance, marketing, health and family. After independence, law guaranteed equal rights and equal opportunities in education and employment for women. But unfortunately, the government sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women i.e. the urban middle class. Women sector occupies nearly 45% of the Indian population. But their number as entrepreneurs is too diminutive. At this juncture, effective steps are needed to provide entrepreneurial awareness, orientation and skill development programmes to women. Steps are to be taken to promote women entrepreneurship. Renaissance of entrepreneurship is the need of the hour and this is possible only by educating women strata of population, spreading awareness and consciousness amongst women to outshine in the enterprise field. They should be made to realize their strengths, and important position in the society and the great contribution they can make for the entire economy. Women entrepreneurs must be molded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges in global markets .They should be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena. It depends on the realization of every citizen regarding the important position occupied by women in society and their vital role in the modern business field .This consciousness can beat our own conservative and rigid thought process which is the biggest hindrance in our country's development process.

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