

A study of Challenges and Problems before Women Entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract: Women in present day world play a numerous economic roles in our society. Women today are potential customers, bankers, teachers, inventors, the prospective farmers, scientists, etc. Entrepreneurship development provides them the economically most powerful, dominant and influential empowering avenue to the women of our society, to the community and the country at a whole. But still it is estimated that only around 9.34 million women globally own formal small and medium enterprises (SME's) in more than 140 countries due to a numerous problems and challenges that entrepreneur women face. This research paper particularly focuses on the various problems and challenges faced by the women to be a successful entrepreneur's, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. The data used for this research paper is purely secondary in nature and which is collected from various published and unpublished research papers, journals, research papers, books, newspapers etc.

Key Words: Entrepreneur, empowering, women entrepreneur, problems, challenges etc.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Entrepreneurship is the individual's ability to translate ideas into action. It encompasses creativity, innovativeness and risk-taking, as well as ability to plan and direct action towards the achievement of goals. These qualities support everyday life in education, at work, in leisure and in other societal activities. These qualities are needed in entrepreneurship, but they also enhance workers awareness of their work and help them seize opportunities¹. Entrepreneurship was first established in the 1700's and the meaning has evolved ever since and many simply mean it as starting one's own business while most of the economists believe that entrepreneurship is more than that. For many economists entrepreneur is one who is willing to bear risk of a new venture if there is a significant chance for profit. Others put emphasis on entrepreneur's role as an innovator who markets his innovation. Still most of the economists believe that entrepreneurs develop new goods or processes that the market demands and are not currently being supplied². An entrepreneur is a person who operates a new venture and also inherits some risks and is able to look at the environment. The great ones are ready to be laughed at and criticized in the beginning because they can see their path ahead and are too busy working towards their dream, true entrepreneurs are resourceful, passionate and driven to succeed and improve.

Entrepreneurs are the driving forces behind any economy. They create large corporations out of backyard enterprises. Entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon and it is not inherent within a person, rather it exists in the interaction between people. To be a successful entrepreneur it requires practicing as a manager by acquiring various skills and efforts in learning to understand a business.

A large number of women are entering into entrepreneurship in some form or other. Entrepreneurship plays an important and essential role in the economic development of a country. Women's skill, knowledge, talent, abilities and desire to do something for themselves and their children or family are so of the reasons for the women to become entrepreneurs. As per the World Bank, investing more in women enterprises rather than in men reduces inequalities and poverty and thereafter ensures the economic development of a nation. The variety of programmes to uplift the women entrepreneurs were undertaken by the government in recent past. But, the challenges and problems faced by the women entrepreneurs are rapidly growing. In, Jammu and Kashmir, there is a good number of women with dynamic entrepreneurship skill, talent and capabilities but the entrepreneur world in Jammu and Kashmir seems to be male dominant which shows and exposes the women entrepreneurs problems and the challenges before them to run their business enterprises successfully in Jammu and Kashmir. 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.

¹ Guidelines for entrepreneurship education (2009), Ministry of Education, Department of Education and Science Policy, Government of Finland

² Principles of entrepreneurship. U.S. Department of State/Bureau of International Information Programs

Most of the women in India and Jammu and Kashmir who own business enterprises were either housewives or fresh graduates with no previous experience of running a business. These women business enterprises were traditionally women oriented like garments, beauty care, and fashion designing which either do not require any formalized training or are developed from a hobby or an interest into business.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The research paper work aims at achieving the following objectives:

- To study and understand the women entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir,
- To study and understand various problems and challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir, and
- To suggest the suggestions to overcome such problems and challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research paper is a review work and is purely based on secondary data. The data will be collected from various secondary data sources of published and unpublished research papers, journals, books, magazines, newspaper's, research articles, etc.

4. WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR:

Entrepreneurship activity although represents the oldest, largest and principal economic factor in the economic development from centuries, however a less endeavor has been done in this field. Entrepreneurship is a purposeful activity of an individual or group of individuals undertaken to initiate, maintain or aggrandize profit by production or distribution of economic goods and services. *Richard Barnson, The founder of Virgin Enterprises, rightly said, "Business opportunities are like buses, there's always another one coming"*. Entrepreneurship has two meanings:

- Entrepreneurship refers to owning and managing a business. This is the occupational notion of entrepreneurship i.e., establishing a new business enterprise.
- Entrepreneurship refers to entrepreneurial behavior in the sense of seizing an economic opportunity. This is the behavior notion of entrepreneurship.

The Indian employment market is uncertain and the number of unemployed population is ever increasing. The unemployment is among the major problems faced by the majority of the countries and India is no exception to that, so is the case with industrially backward state Jammu and Kashmir. In this context both the state and central Government are working on to develop entrepreneurship as a resource to cope up with the problem of unemployment. Entrepreneurship has been a male-dominated from the early age, but time has changed the situation and brought women as today's most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs. Women became involved in the business world only when the idea of women in business became palatable to the general public. As per the World Bank, investing more in women enterprises rather than in men reduces inequalities and poverty and thereafter ensures the economic development of a nation. The variety of programmes to uplift the women entrepreneurs were undertaken by the government in recent past. Government of India has defined women entrepreneur is "an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women".

A British Council study on the social enterprise landscape in India revealed that in comparison to male-led social enterprises, female led social enterprises tend to focus on improving the lives of women and on educational literacy. Women entrepreneurs can not only contribute to the GDP, but can also play a key role in addressing societal challenges. However, the number of women entrepreneurs in India remains relatively low. In India, a large number of women enterprises are micro enterprises that women undertake as a forced economic activity. These micro enterprises can be classified into farm and off-farm, enterprises. They rarely achieve scale and serve only to barely sustain the women entrepreneurs and their families.

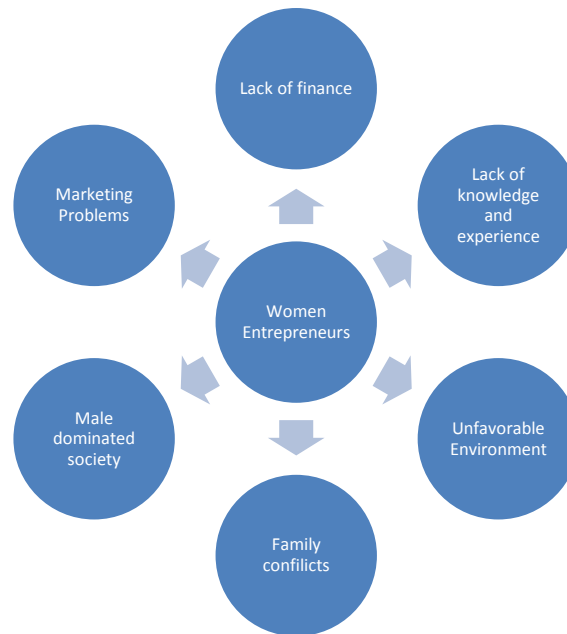
In rural India, traditionally a lot of women primary producers can be classified as entrepreneurs. For instance, a dairy farmer who supplies milk to a nearby dairy or household is an entrepreneur. But family responsibilities, traditional social norms and the established patriarchal structure mean that these women entrepreneurs have limited exposure to the outside world. This restricts their mobility and makes them dependent on intermediaries to reach the market or achieve scale.

5. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES BEFORE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR:

Women entrepreneurs being a major player in economic development of any economy is coming through various challenges and problems while establishing and running their business enterprises all-over world and in India the case

is even worst. Some of the major problems and challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in India in general and in Jammu and Kashmir in particular include the following ones:

- **Male-controlled Society:** Entrepreneurship has been traditionally seen as a male dominated, preserved and the idea of women entrepreneur activities considered as a distant and unsociable dream. Any deviation from such norms is frowned and if possible immediately curbed; women also have to face role conflict as soon as they initiate any entrepreneurial activity. It is a difficult task for women to face such conflict and deal with the twin roles.



• **Figure 1: Problems and challenges before women entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir**

- **Family Conflicts:** Women entrepreneurs of India in general and Jammu and Kashmir in particular have to face the conflict of performing of home role as they were not able to spend enough time with their families due to their engagements in managing their business. They spend lot of time with business and as a result they find it difficult to meet the demands of their family members and society. Their inability to attend domestic work, time for education of children, personal hobbies and entertainment due to being busy with business work adds to their family conflicts and disturb their business work.
- **Problem of Finance:** Finance is regarded as “life blood” of any business enterprise, irrespective the size and area of operation, whether big or small. However, one the biggest problem faced by the women entrepreneurs in India and in Jammu and Kashmir is the shortage of finance to startup or to run their business venture. There are possibly two reasons behind the problem, first women generally do not have properties on their names to use them as collateral for obtaining funds from financial institutions and other external sources. Thus their access to the external sources of funds utilization is limited. Secondly, the banks also consider women less creditworthy and discourage women entrepreneur browsers on the belief that they can at any time leave their business. Given such situations, women entrepreneurs are bound to rely on their own savings, if any and loans from friends and relatives who are expectedly meager and negligible. Therefore, women enterprises fail due to the shortage of finance.
- **Unfavorable Environment:** the society is dominated by males. Many businessmen are not interested to have business relationship with women entrepreneurs. Male generally do not encourage women entrepreneurs.
- **Marketing Problems:** Women entrepreneurs continuously face the problems in marketing their products. It is one of the core problems as this area is mainly male dominated and even women with adequate experience fail to make a dent. For marketing products women entrepreneurs have to be at the mercy of middlemen who pocket the chunk of profit. Although the middlemen exploit the women entrepreneurs, the elimination of middlemen is difficult, because it involves a lot of running about. Women entrepreneurs also find it difficult to capture the market and make their product popular.
- **Lake of Education and Experience:** In India and Jammu and Kashmir around 62% women are still illiterate or very low educated. Illiteracy is the root cause of socio-economic problems. Due to the lack of education and that too qualitative education, women are not aware of business, technology, and market knowledge. Also lack of education causes low achievement motivation among women. Thus. Lack of education creates one type or other problems for women in the setting up and running of business enterprises.

- **Low Risk Bearing Ability:** women in Jammu and Kashmir lead a protected life. They are less educated compared to men and economically not self-dependent i.e., they are financially dependent on males. All these reduce their ability to bear risk involved in running or starting up a business venture. Risk bearing is an essential prerequisite for running or starting a successful business enterprises and being a successful entrepreneur.
- **Lack of information:** women entrepreneurs are generally aware of the subsidies and incentives available for them from different government sponsored schemes and other related information necessary for establishing or running their business ventures. Thus, lack of knowledge and timely information may prevent them from availing these special schemes, which is one of the major challenge and problems faced by women entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

Women entrepreneurs are essential and significant players in the economic development of any economy. A British Council study on the social enterprise landscape in India revealed that in comparison to male-led social enterprises, female led social enterprises tend to focus on improving the lives of women and on educational literacy. Even though getting a global recognition and a number of efforts and schemes were introduced at the central and state government levels in order to uplift the women enterprises and attract more and more women towards corporate sector, but still women entrepreneurs in India and especially in Jammu and Kashmir facing a numerous challenges and problems to run or start up their business venture and become a successful entrepreneur. During the study a good number of problems and challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir were identified some of which include the family conflicts, male-dominance in business sector, lack of finance and credit generation, lack of knowledge and timely availability and access to information necessary to run the business venture, low risk bearing ability, social and religious reforms etc. which limit the capability of a women entrepreneur to be a successful entrepreneur.

During the study it was found that it is very much essential that central and state governments along with women grievance tribunal and other NGO's come forward and launch a nation-wide campaign for awareness of women entrepreneurs. The women entrepreneurs should be encouraged and supported for their effort and attempt to a successful entrepreneur. Government both at central and state level should support and encourage the financial institutions and banks to provide financial assistance and credit facility to women entrepreneurs at minimum interest and collateral requirements. Further it is found necessary that government should make and provide proper information at minimum accesses regarding the different schemes and subsidies available to women entrepreneurs for the success of their businesses. Training and skill enhancement programmes for newly established women business owners should be provided so that they can get necessary education and training apart from skill development required to run a successful business venture.

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