



## Women Entrepreneurship: Let Better Halfs be the Best

Shalini Gupta <sup>a\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Associate Professor, M.P.G. College, Mussoorie, U.K., India

Email Id: drshalinigupta@gmail.com

### Abstract

Entrepreneurship is marked by one's ability to engage in business ventures. With growth of industry and globalization many new businesses are coming up. Since ancient days women have been prejudiced to restrict themselves to household. Though some entrepreneurs among women have been there in old days also but in general business was supposed men's domain. This paper tries to analyse role of women as successful entrepreneurs. It puts forth the present global and Indian scenario of participation of women in business. An analysis of global and Indian scenario reveals that recent years have shown tremendous rise in percentage of women entrepreneurs but still a lot more is yet to be done so as to encourage women to be successful entrepreneurs. It is seen that even with all responsibilities of family, women are still able to manage well as entrepreneurs. Some possible methods have also been suggested which might help in improving the present condition and hopefully coming years will witness a greater proportion of women as entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, economics, business, management, GDP, female entrepreneur.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

'Women' and 'Entrepreneur' are two distinct words with totally different meanings which have been well explained in literature. 'Women' have always been characterized by restrictions. Ever since their birth they are expected to follow certain code of conduct which has been defined in multiple ways through multiple texts. These restrictions are euphemistically called 'responsibilities'. Some responsibilities ought to be followed but majority have them are there just to remind a lady that she is a 'lady'! On the contrary, 'Entrepreneur' can be aptly said to possess free will, imagination, creativity, management skill, determination, assiduousness, patience, perseverance, risk taking ability, self-confidence, decision-making ability, motivation and most importantly co-ordination. In general, entrepreneurship refers to the act of setting up a new business or reviving an existing business so as to take advantages from new opportunities. But majorly it is not just about making money, it rather relates to having the greatest ideas, knowing the best sales pitch, and applying the best marketing strategy. It is in reality an attitude to create something new and an activity which creates value in the entire social eco-system. It is the psyche make-up of a person. It is a state of mind, which develops naturally, based on his/ her surrounding and experiences, which makes him/ her think about life and career in a given way. Surprisingly, all the qualities required to be quite essential for being an entrepreneur are naturally present in women. If women can bring a life on earth, be its lifetime guide and help it in becoming an individual of value then no one can deny the fact that they are first and most brilliant human resource manager. They manage family finances so well that each person gets his share satisfactorily, they work so hard on stuffs which help others to be totally dedicated to their work and most importantly they just never seem to get tired. It is their one smile which rejuvenates the spirit of family. They are adept in whatever they do. Why are women the one who have to struggle so much to establish themselves as an entrepreneur?

Our first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru has rightly pointed out that "To awake the people it is the women who should be awakened first. Once she is on the move the family moves ...the nation moves".

In the words of president APJ Abdul Kalam "empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation."

Hence, there is an ardent need that woman entrepreneurship be boosted and well supported. India, particularly, needs to intelligently utilize this potential force which can help to play a significant role in increasing the nation's income. We need to understand and appreciate the power of these two words put together side by side which make 'Women Entrepreneur'.

## **2. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE CONCEPT:**

If we look at global scale, women entrepreneurship has gained momentum in the last three decades with the increase in the number of women enterprises and their substantive contribution to economic growth. Women produce more than 80 percent of the food for Sub-Saharan Africa, 50-60 percent for Asia, 26 percent for the Caribbean, 34 percent for North Africa and the Middle East, and more than 30 percent for Latin America.

The United Nations Report has also concluded that economic development is closely related to the advancement of women. In nations where women have advanced, economic growth has usually been rising steadily. On the contrary, in countries where women have been restricted, the economy has been stagnant.

**Table-1: Gender Related Development Index and Its Component**

| Rank       | Country      | Gender related development index | As a per % of HDI | GDP per Capital (US\$) |
|------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1          | Australia    | 0.966                            | 98.9              | 34923                  |
| 2          | Norway       | 0.961                            | 99.6              | 53433                  |
| 3          | Iceland      | 0.959                            | 99.0              | 44613                  |
| 4          | Canada       | 0.959                            | 99.2              | 35812                  |
| 5          | Sweden       | 0.956                            | 99.3              | 36712                  |
| 6          | France       | 0.956                            | 99.4              | 33674                  |
| 7          | Netherland   | 0.954                            | 98.9              | 38694                  |
| 8          | Finland      | 0.954                            | 99.5              | 34526                  |
| 9          | Spain        | 0.949                            | 99.4              | 31560                  |
| 10         | Ireland      | 0.948                            | 98.2              | 44613                  |
| <b>114</b> | <b>India</b> | <b>0.594</b>                     | <b>97.1</b>       | <b>4102</b>            |

Sources: Human Development Report 20

It is quite evident from above table that gender related development index is significantly correlated with GDP per capita. So we can aptly remark that women development is also a parameter to access nation's development. An example can be of Rita Singh, founder of the M'escos (Mid-east Shipping Company) group, who is one of the first woman entrepreneurs in the business world. Starting from scratch about 30 years ago, she now exports trendy M'escos shoes, owns a fleet of state-of-the-art- helicopters and ships, and Rs.450 crore steel plant. The M'escos group with an annual turnover of over Rs.1500 crore, employs more than 7,000 people.

In Mexico, 30 percent of all female-run businesses operate from the home, compared with only 11 percent of male-operated businesses.

In Bangladesh, 70 percent of female entrepreneurs reported being self-taught in skills needed to run a business compared to 44 percent of male business owners.

In Africa, the Middle East and South Asia women are 23 percent, 24 percent and 37 percent, respectively, less likely to own a mobile phone.

In 2012, an estimated 126 million women were starting or running new businesses in 67 economies around the world. In addition, an estimated 98 million were running established businesses. These women are not only creating jobs for themselves and their co-founders, but they also employ others. A projected 48 million female entrepreneurs and 64 million female business owners currently employ one or more people in their businesses.

In addition, these women plan to grow their businesses. A predicted seven million female entrepreneurs and five million female established business owners plan to grow their businesses by at least six employees over the next five years.

### **3. INDIAN OUTLOOK TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PROBLEMS FACED:**

In India, women entrepreneurship is a recent topic which started only after the 1970s with the introduction of the Women's Decade (1975 to 1985) and which mostly picked up in the late 70s. This phenomenon was particularly visible only in the metropolitan and state capitals in India. It took a much longer time to percolate to the other cities and municipalities. The cultural heritage of our nation has been a major factor affecting the role of a woman as an entrepreneur. Traditionally, women, be it mother, wife or sister, used to be the in charge of the household management. Even though, over the last few decades' women have come forward to establish their own enterprises, their numbers remain small in male dominated world. Women's work, however, innovative they are, has gone unrecognized. Thus, the shift of entrepreneurial concept is due to some adjustment either social or economical, considering women's work within the purview of entrepreneurship.

India has one of the largest working female populations, rising from 13% in 1987 to 25% in 2001, yet only 3% of senior management position is occupied by women. In a recent article in Times of India, the alarmingly low ratio of female applicants to Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore (IIMB) cited social pressure on women to focus on marriage and family as the primary reason. Although Indian women have long since achieved legal equality enabling equal access to education and voting rights, Indian women's voice remains overwhelmingly unheard. With a female population of approximately 500 million, it is larger than the U.S., Canada, and USSR combined population.

Women entrepreneurs face a series of problems right from the beginning till the enterprise functions. Being a woman itself poses various problems to a woman entrepreneur, the problems of Indian women pertain to her responsibility towards family, society and farming work.

The tradition, customs, socio-cultural values, ethics, motherhood subordinates to link husband and men, physically weak, hard work areas, feeling of insecurity, cannot be tough etc are some peculiar problems that the Indian women are coming across while they jump into entrepreneurship.

Women in rural areas have to suffer still further. They face tough resistance from men. They are considered as helpers. The attitude of society towards her and constraints in which she has to live and work are not very conducive. The financial institutions are skeptical about the entrepreneurial abilities of women. The bankers consider women loanies as at higher risk than men loanies. The bankers put unrealistic and unreasonable securities to get loan to women entrepreneurs. According to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "despite evidence that women's loan repayment rates are higher than men's, women still face more difficulties in obtaining credit," often due to discriminatory attitudes of banks and informal lending groups (UNIDO, 1995b).

Another argument is that women entrepreneurs have low-level management skills. They have to depend on office staffs and intermediaries, to get things done, especially, the marketing and sales side of business. Here there is more probability for business fallacies like the intermediaries take major part of the surplus or profit. Marketing means mobility and confidence in dealing with the external world, both of which women have been discouraged from developing by social conditioning. Even when they are otherwise in control of an enterprise, they often depend on

males of the family in this area. Low-level risk taking attitude is another factor affecting and avoiding to women make decision to get into business. Low-level education provides low-level self-confidence and self-reliance which stop the women to engage in business, which is continuous risk taking and strategic decision making profession. Investing money, maintaining the operations and ploughing back money for surplus generation requires high risk taking attitude, courage and confidence. Though, the risk tolerance ability of the women folk in day-to-day life is high compared to male members while in business it is found opposite to that. But still women are doing their best to pave their way into this field of entrepreneurship.

**Table-2:** Women entrepreneur statistics in India.

| States             | No of Units Registered | No. of Women Entrepreneurs | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Tamil Nadu         | 9618                   | 2930                       | 30.36      |
| Uttar Pradesh      | 7980                   | 3180                       | 39.84      |
| Kerala             | 5487                   | 2135                       | 38.91      |
| Punjab             | 4791                   | 1618                       | 33.77      |
| Maharashtra        | 4339                   | 1394                       | 32.12      |
| Gujrat             | 3872                   | 1538                       | 39.72      |
| Karnatka           | 3822                   | 1026                       | 26.84      |
| Madhya Pradesh     | 2967                   | 842                        | 28.38      |
| Other States & UTS | 14576                  | 4185                       | 28.71      |
| Total              | 57,452                 | 18,848                     | 32.82      |

Source: Economic Survey, 2013

Above table is a clear indicator of hope. Women have all the potential and now all they need is to utilize it to accomplish their goals. The numbers are promising but we still need to work upon boosting morale and giving incentives to women who try to excel in field of management.

**4. SUGGESTIONS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS DEVELOPMENT:**

- We should provide her special infrastructure facilities whatever she needs.
- Govt. should provide separate financial fund of women as entrepreneur.
- Govt. should arrange special training programmes of women entrepreneurship
- Govt. should felicitated top ranker women as entrepreneur.
- Women entrepreneur should more competitive and efficient in the local & international market.
- We should invite successful women entrepreneurs from foreign countries
- Better educational facilities and schemes should be extended to women folk from government part.
- Adequate training programme on management skills to be provided to women community.
- Encourage women's participation in decision-making.
- Vocational training to be extended to women community that enables them to understand the production process and production management.



## **5. CONCLUSION:**

Women entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in India, Canada, The Great Britain, Germany, Australia and the United States. The areas chosen by women are retail trade, restaurants, hotels, education, cultural, cleaning, insurance and manufacturing. The New Thrust suggests following two factors pulling or pushing women in an entrepreneurship Factors leading women to be an entrepreneur: Women entrepreneurs choose a Women takes up business enterprises to Profession as a challenge and an get over financial difficulties and respond- adventure with an urge to do something new. Visibility is thrust on them due to family, liking for business and circumstances to have an independent occupation. With the spread of education and new approaches/awareness, women entrepreneurs are achieving higher level of 3Es, namely: (i) Engineering (ii) Electronics (iii) Energy. Though, we should not forget certain Psycho-Social Barriers which hinders the growth of women entrepreneurs.

Women have the potential and the determination to set up, uphold and supervise their own enterprises in a very systematic manner. Appropriate support and encouragement from the Society in general and family members in particular is required to help them scale new heights in their business ventures. The right kind of assistance from family, society and Government can make these Women Entrepreneurs a part of the mainstream of national economy and they can contribute to the economic progress of India in this era of globalization. Right efforts from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the entrepreneurial activities is the need of today.

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