

Opportunities and Challenges for Rural women Entrepreneurship in India

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Abstract:

Women entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in India, However, it is potentially empowering and liberating only if it provides women an opportunity to improve their well-being and enhance their capabilities. On the other hand, if it is driven by distress and is low public support than it may only increase a women's drudgery. The small and medium enterprises led by women experiencing some major challenges and constraints.

This paper intends to highlight some issues with reference to the strategic challenges and opportunities from a gender focus to analyze the prospects of rural small and medium entrepreneurship for women.

Keywords: entrepreneur, resource, venture, poor, progress, employment.

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship of women is of paramount importance to political thinkers, social scientists and reformers. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) have paved the way for economic independence of rural women. The members of SHGs are involved in Micro – Entrepreneurships. Through that, they are becoming economically independent and providing employment opportunities to others.

With the increasing number of rural women joining the entrepreneurial bandwagon their conventional role in the society has also been changing with the growing economic leverage they are mastering now. The quintessential home-maker with her born managerial skill, knowledge and adaptability in the difficult social milieu made them eager to take up even otherwise apparently 'non-viable' business ventures and often turned them into success stories. 'Women Entrepreneur', in a larger sense, therefore is a woman who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically self-sufficient. They are moved by a strong desire to do something economically gainful that will bring 'value addition' to their both family and social life.

Women Entrepreneurship in India:

Women Entrepreneurs have grown in large number over the last decade and increasingly the entrepreneurial potentials of women have changed the rural economies in many parts of India. Women entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in India,

The informal sector enterprises survey (NSSO 2001) provides a profile of female and male proprietary enterprises. The survey found that about 5.4% of proprietary enterprises in rural areas were operated by women and these were mainly own account enterprises (OAES). Approximately 12% of the workers in proprietary enterprises were engaged in the female proprietary enterprises.

In general, urban enterprises are larger in size, and for the same category, female proprietary enterprises are smaller than male proprietary enterprises. In rural areas, female proprietary OAES are very small in size, with an average fixed investment of less than Rs. 8000, or a little more than one-third that of male proprietary OAES. Female establishments (informal enterprises hiring one or more workers) in rural areas had a total fixed asset base of Rs. 1,23,786, more or less similar to rural male proprietary establishments. The gross value added per worker in female proprietary OAES was less than Rs 7,000 per annum, while in male proprietary OAES, it was more than twice as high. NCEUS (2007) shows that among rural female OAES, about 34% have a value of fixed assets of less than Rs. 1,000, while only 7% had value of assets greater than Rs. 25,000. Not only are few women involved in running non-agricultural enterprises of any kind, the scale of operation of women operated units is distinctly very tiny, particularly in rural areas. Compared to the national minimum wage, 89% of female OAES and 42% of male OAES gave lower imputed daily returns, using unit –level data from NSSO (2001).

Opportunities for Rural Entrepreneurs:

- Crashed Scheme for Rural Development
- Food for Work Programme
- National Rural Employment Programme
- Regional Rural Development Centres
- Entrepreneurship Development institute of India
- Bank of Technology
- Rural Innovation Funding
- Social Rural Entrepreneurship.

Challenges for Rural Entrepreneurs:

The main challenges that women face in business are educational and work background, Balancing their time share between work and family, Problems of raising start-up capital, Difficulty in borrowing fund, Thought-cut completions endangered existence of small companies, Problems of availing raw-materials access to export market without intermediaries, as well as an overall psychological barrier on the part of banks, suppliers, and clients alike, are a few of these challenges. In addition to this some of the challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs are as follows-

- Growth of Mall Culture
- Poor Assistance
- Power Failure
- Lack of Technical know how
- Capacity Utilization
- Infrastructure Sickness

Rural women lack training and advisory services on managerial and technical skills to solve production problems. Here more than 70 percent of enterprises are micro- and small enterprises but their growth and the competitiveness is greatly challenged by a lack of business management, marketing and technical skills besides the overall weak infrastructure and complicated legal frameworks for business processes, especially in global online transaction context.

Suggestions:

Promoting entrepreneurship for women will require an even greater reversal of traditional attitudes than the mere creation of jobs for women would. This does not mean that we

should wait for societal change to take place first. But it does imply that the program should go beyond subsidies and credit allocation to attitudinal changes, group formation, training and other support services.

Combined effect of motivational drive, preparation of information material, conducting training, creation of women industrial estates, and training of promoters and use of mass media all together is bound to accelerate the process of women entrepreneurship development.

- Govt. should provide separate financial fund of women's entrepreneur.
- We should provide her special infrastructure facilities what ever she needs.
- Govt. should arrange special training programmes of women entrepreneurship
- Govt. should felicitate top ranker women's entrepreneur.
- Women entrepreneur should more competitive and efficient in the local & international market.

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Conclusion:

Women entrepreneurs faced many obstacles specifically in market their product (including family responsibilities) that have to be overcome in order to give them access to the same opportunities as men. Indian rural market, if properly explored through the women entrepreneurs, offers unique opportunities to develop a strong network of rural enterprises. There are several trades which can be started at village levels and their initiation into production of good quality and high value products – from flowers to handicrafts, as a step in their economic emancipation. With increased educational opportunities; the women in India need to get more organized into small groups through sustained efforts.

Government should draw up a plan the Indian Women Entrepreneurs to work more on empowering women entrepreneurs through training and capacity building programs. If our universities and institutions join this resolve with increasing focus on women's business education, the future will see more women entrepreneurs.

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