

# A STUDY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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## **ABSTRACT**

*An attempt is made in the present paper to understand the problems faced by women entrepreneurs and prospects to them based on secondary data source collected from India Today magazine where so India's women entrepreneurs interview was conducted by India Today. Economic problem is the main problem faced by women entrepreneurs, while empowering and highest prospects was found as compared to own business to women in service. The paper talks about the status of women entrepreneurs and the problems faced by them when they ventured out to carve their own niche in the competitive world of business environment.*

**Keywords:** Women entrepreneurs

## **INTRODUCTION**

Women entrepreneurship development is an essential part of human resource development. The development of women entrepreneurship is very low in India. In the present era, the women owned businesses in the form of women entrepreneurs are one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial populations in India. Entrepreneurship amongst women has been a recent concern. Women have become aware of their existence their rights and their work situation. However, women of middle class are not too eager to alter their role in fear of social problems. The progress is more visible among upper class families in urban cities. It is seen that many entrepreneurs are motivated on their own to start their own enterprises. Many of these entrepreneurs actually do not receive any structured entrepreneurial input. They learn the same through trial and error, and then highlights the prospects and the future challenges. Any understanding of Indian women, of their identity, and especially of their role taking and breaking new paths, will be incomplete without knowing Indian history of women with various role models.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To know and understand the issues/problems faced by women entrepreneurs.
2. To know the prospects of women entrepreneurs & provide solutions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. According to Kamala Singh (1992), "A women entrepreneur is a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving economic independence individually or in collaboration generates employment opportunities for others through initiating establishing and running an enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life".
2. In the words of Former 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."
3. Meanwhile, Dilip Kumar (2006) has elaborated on some of the issues faced by entrepreneurial women, such as a shortage of finances, male dominance, limited mobility, a lack of education, required motherly duties and a lack of achievement motivation. According to Rizvi and Gupta (2009), government-sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women, namely the urban middle class. This may be primarily due to their level of education, access to information and family support.
4. Previously, the female workforce in India was mainly employed in non-managerial, subordinate or low-profile positions. Now, they occupy almost all categories of positions in the workplace. These changes in work culture have added to women's duties and responsibilities to their family as well as to society (Mathew & Panchanatham 2009a; 2009b). Despite this new found work culture, and even though more and more women are joining the workforce, women in entrepreneurial roles are limited. The probable reason for this phenomenon is the conflicts between competing work demands and personal and family needs. According to Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005), pressures from the job and family domains are often incompatible, giving rise to imbalance. Therefore, the concept of WLB along with its implications is a core issue that must be investigated as more women become entrepreneurs in Indian society.

## Discussion and data analysis

### 1. Profile of Respondents.

**Table 1.** Age of Women Entrepreneurs

Sr No	Age	%
1	25 to 30	5%
2	31 to 40	12.6%
3	41 to 50	48.7%
4	51 to 60	31%
5	60>	3.7%
Total	80	100

Women entrepreneurs involved in business at different age group is shown in table.1, showing the different age groups of women entrepreneurs. The highest percentage is 48.7

percent at the age group of 41 to 50, where as the lowest is from 60 greater, where it is 3.7 percent, the age group between 51 to 60 is 31 percent. It shows that more active and experience is between the age group of 40 to 60.

Thus majority (48.7) respondents are below from 41 to 50 years age group followed by 51 to 60 years age group.

## **2. Issues/problems faced by women entrepreneurs**

While empowering women entrepreneurs faced the following problems.

**2.1 Problem of Finances arrangement:** - Finance is said to be the “life blood” of every business undertaking, be it large or medium or small scale enterprise. Usually women entrepreneurs face the problems of shortage of finance on two important grounds. Firstly, women do not generally have property on their own names to use that as collateral securities for obtaining loans/funds from banks and other financial institutions. Thus their access to external sources is very limited .Secondly, the banks also consider women less credit worthy and discourage women borrowers on the belief that they cannot repay back the amount of loans taken by them.

**2.2. Scarcity of raw materials required for productive capacities:** - They have to even face the problems of scarcity of raw-materials and necessary inputs. On the top of this, is the high prices of raw materials, on one hand and getting raw materials at minimum discount rates are the other.

**2.3. Cut-throat competition with other group of men and established self-sufficient entrepreneurs:** - Women entrepreneurs do not have a proper organizational set-up to pump in a lot of money for canvassing and advertisements. Thus they have to face a stiff competition with the men entrepreneurs who easily involve in the promotion and development area and carry out easy marketing of their products with both the organized sector and their male counterparts. Such a competition ultimately results in the liquidation of women entrepreneurs.

**2.4. Limited mobility factor in case of women entrepreneurs:** - Unlike men, women mobility in India is highly limited due to many factors/reasons. A single women asking for room is still looked with suspicion. Cumbersome exercise involved in starting with an enterprise coupled with officials humiliating attitude towards women compels them to give up their spirit of surviving in enterprise altogether.

**2.5. Family responsibilities, ties as well as commitments:** - In India, mainly a woman’s duty is to look after her children and manage the other members of the family. Man plays a secondary role only. Incase of married women she has to strike a fine balance between her business and family. Her total involvement in family leaves little or almost no time or energy to be diverted for the business activities. Support and approval of husbands seems to be necessary condition

for women entry into business. Accordingly, the educational level and family background of husbands also influences women participation in the field of enterprise.

**2.6. Lack of education and prevalent levels of illiteracy amongst women:** - In India, around 3/5th (60%) of women are still illiterate. Illiteracy is the root cause of socio-

economic barriers or hurdles. Due to lack of education and that to qualitative education, women are not aware of business, technology and market knowledge. Also lack of education causes low achievement motivation amongst women. Thus lack of education creates problems before women to set up competitive enterprises.

**2.7. Domination by male and ideology of male dominated society:-** Male chauvinism is still prevalent in many parts of the country yet. The constitution of India speaks about the equality between both the sexes, i.e. men and women. But in practice, women are looked upon as “abla” i.e. weak in all respects. Thus women suffer from a number of problems, in a nutshell in a male dominated society; women are not treated equal to men. This in turn, serves as a barrier to woman’s entry into business.

**2.8. Lesser risk and uncertainty bearing attitude: -** Women in India lead a protected life. They are even less educated and economically not stable neither self-depended. All these factors reduce their ability to bear risks and uncertainties involved in a business unit, which is the most important criteria of every business activity.

**2.9. Lack of self-confidence and optimistic attitude amongst women: -** Today all the women are suffering from one major problem of lack of self-confidence, will-power, strong mental outlook, optimism etc. They always fear from committing mistakes while doing their piece of work, more over there is limited initiative of taking risk and bearing uncertainty in them. Thus all these psychological factors often obstruct their path of achieving success in the area of enterprise.

**2.10. Old and outdated social outlook to stop women from entering in the field of entrepreneurship: -** Also one of the dominant reasons for their failure is the attitude of society people towards their modern business prospects and developing attitude. Women nowadays have low risk taking ability because of the number of questions put forward by the conservative society people. Thus they are under a social pressure which restrains them to prosper and achieve success in the field of entrepreneurship.

**2.11. Absence of proper support and back-up for women by their own family members and the outside world people:-** Many a times their own family members are not supporting and cooperating as well as having encouraging attitude to dare to enter into the entrepreneurship field. They are always making many pessimistic feelings to be aroused in their minds and making them feel that family and not business is a place meant for them. Due to such limited scope of help and cooperation from family and other people, they drop the idea of excelling in the enterprise field. Apart from the above discussed problems there may occur other series of serious problems faced by women entrepreneurs are improper infrastructural facilities, high cost of production, attitude of people of society towards the women modern business outlook, low needs of achievement and socio-economic constraints often puts women behind in the field of enterprise.

Among the above eleven problems what are the most key problems faced by women entrepreneurs are presented in table.2

**Table 2.** Problems faced by Women Entrepreneurs

Sr No	Particulars	%
1	Economic (loan, debt)	60%
2	Social Problem	40%
Total		100

Problems faced by women entrepreneurs in different fields are shown in table 2. This table indicates that 60 percent of the women entrepreneurs face economic problems regarding loans, debts etc. whereas 40 percent women entrepreneurs face social problems. Thus majority (61%) respondent's states economic problem is the main key problem.

### **3. Solutions for solving the above discussed problems:-**

On the basis of the above mentioned problems faced by women entrepreneurs and various other problems too, there is a provision of a number of solution measures to overcome the aforesaid problems. Such solutions or remedies can be well understood as under:-

- There should be a continuous attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate women entrepreneurs.
- Attempts should be there to enhance the standards of education of women in general as well making effective provisions for their training, practical experience and personality development programmes, to improvise their over-all personality standards.
- Attempts to establish for them proper training institutes for enhancing their level of work-knowledge, skills, risk-taking abilities, enhancing their capabilities.
- Attempts to bring about a society attitude change, generation of awareness and consciousness on the policy of self-development of women entrepreneurs.
- Attempts by various NGO's and government organizations to spread information about policies, plans and strategies on the development of women in the field of industry, trade and commerce.
- Establishing various policies to offer easy finance schemes for economically strengthening the position of women.
- Forming a cooperative association of women entrepreneurs to mobilize resources and pooling capital funds, in order to help the women in the field of industry, trade and commerce.
- Offering seed capital, up-liftment schemes, women entrepreneurs fund etc. to encourage them economically.
- To extend concessional rates facilities and schemes for women entrepreneurs to prosper in the field of enterprise.
- To establish all India forums to discuss the problems, grievances, issues, and filing complaints against constraints or shortcomings towards the economic progress path of women entrepreneurs and giving suitable decisions in the favour of women

entrepreneurs and taking strict stand against the policies or strategies that obstruct the path of economic development of such group of women entrepreneurs.

#### 4. Prospects of women entrepreneurs:

Magazine survey shows that there is highest feature to women entrepreneurs in India

**4.1 Prospecting sectors:** Most of the respondents state that prospect in service sector is higher. Table.3 clearly shows this women entrepreneurs tendency

**Table 3.** Prospecting Sector for women entrepreneurs

Sr No.	Particulars	%
1	Own Business	21%
2	Service (Employment)	79%
Total		100

Table 3 shows that 21 percent of women entrepreneurs are involved in their own business, where as 79 percent of women entrepreneurs are involved in service. It means that majority (79 %) women entrepreneurs respondents indicating there is high prospects to women in service sector.

**1.2 Prospects in service sector:** Within the service sector, in which service sector women have the more prospects. The responses are presented in table.4

**Table 4.** Prospects for Women Entrepreneurs in Service Sector

Sr No	Particulars	%
1	IT	20%
2	Banks	20%
3	Media/Film	17%
4	Corporate/Industries	43%
Total		100

Table.4 shows that majority (43 %) women entrepreneurs agreed that there is prospects in corporate/Industries. Equal respondents (i.e. 20 %) states that IT and bank has also prospects. Only 17% women entrepreneurs indicate prospects in media/film industries. Thus majority women entrepreneurs agreed prospects in corporate/industries.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that women entrepreneurs faced multiple problems among the problems economic problem is main. Higher prospects are indicated by women entrepreneurs and within the service sector corporate/industries have the shows higher prospects to women.

It can be said that today we are in a better position wherein women participation in the field of entrepreneurship is increasing at considerable rate, efforts are being taken at the economy as well as global level to enhance woman's involvement in the enterprise sector. This is mainly because of attitude change, diverted conservative mindset of society to modern one, daring and risk-taking abilities of women, support and cooperation by society members, changes and relaxations in government policies, granting various up-liftment schemes to women entrepreneurs etc.

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