ABSTRACT
Entrepreneurship amongst women is a relatively recent Phenomenon, which is gradually changing with the growing sensitivity of the roles, responsibilities and Economic status of women in the society in general and family in particular. For women entrepreneurs, starting and operating a business involves considerable risks and difficulties, because in the Indian social Environment women has always lived as subordinate to men. Increase in the education levels of women and increased social awareness in respect of the role Women plays a vital role in the society. This study discuss about the prospects and challenges of Woman entrepreneurs in Erode district of Tamil Nadu. The Objectives of the study is to study the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in running their business with the financial, marketing and production constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in their business. It has another objective to assess the health status and work place facilities of women entrepreneurs and to ascertain the work-family conflicts faced by women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; Awareness; Work-Family Conflicts

INTRODUCTION
Women are faced with specific obstacles that have to be overcome in order to give them access to the same opportunities as men. They want to control the balance between their families and responsibility and their business levels. The woman entrepreneurship is defined as “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 a woman.”(Government of India) They should explore the prospects of starting new enterprise; undertake risks, introduction of new innovations, coordination administration and control of business and providing effective leadership in all aspects of business. In terms of Schumpeterian concept of innovative entrepreneurs, women who innovate, initiate or adopt a business activity are called business entrepreneur.

Women Entrepreneurship has been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. Women Entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others and by being different also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems as well as to the exploitation of Women Entrepreneurial opportunities. However, they still represent a minority of all Women Entrepreneurs.

Indian Women Entrepreneurs
Women Entrepreneurship has been largely neglected both in society in general and in the social sciences in India. Not only have women lower participation rates in Women Entrepreneurship than men but they also generally choose to start and manage firms in different industries than men tend to do. The industries (primarily retail, education and other service industries) chosen by women are often
perceived as being less important to economic development and growth than high-technology and manufacturing.

A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic responsibilities women want to get independence. Under the influence of these factors the women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and as an urge to do something new. Such situation is described as pull factors. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is a thrust upon them.

It is also a fact that more and more women are getting into the domain of entrepreneurial activities. The efforts of Government of India through various welfare organizations, non-Governmental agencies, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and hosts of other agencies have started looking after and helping the efforts of women entrepreneurs. Industries being labour intensive have high potential in employment generation. Thus they serve as an antidote to the widespread problems of disguised unemployment or underemployment stalking the urban and rural territory. It helps for the growth of cities, reduces growth of slums, social tensions and atmospheric population.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The greatest deterrent to women entrepreneurs is that they are women. A kind of patriarchal male dominant social order is the building block to them in their way towards business success. The financial institutions are skeptical about the entrepreneurial abilities of women. According to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "despite evidence that woman’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).

Entrepreneurship amongst women is a relatively recent Phenomenon, which is gradually changing with the growing sensitivity of the roles, responsibilities and Economic status of women in the society in general and family in particular. For women entrepreneurs, starting and operating a business involves considerable risks and difficulties, because Indian social environment which leads to women always lived as subordinate to men. The felt need approach for present situation is increased social awareness in respect of the role play by women in the society. Whether they are (women entrepreneurs) capable with Risk-Taking factor for entrepreneurial activities? How the social and economical perspectives are supported to women entrepreneurial activities? Is that feasible for Government programmes and schemes and supportive performance which are related to enrich their business background? Hence, this present study makes an attempt to find solutions for challenges and opportunities of Woman entrepreneurs in Erode district of Tamil Nadu

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To study the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in running their business.
2. To ascertain the financial, marketing and production constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in their business.
3. To assess the health status and work place facilities of women entrepreneurs.
4. To ascertain the work-family conflicts faced by women entrepreneurs;
5. To suggest different remedial measures to help and accelerate women entrepreneurs to run their business successfully.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has adopted Descriptive research design. A sample of 100 respondents was taken for the study in Erode District by using the non-probability convenient sampling technique. Both primary and secondary data source were used. The study used a structured interview schedule to collect the primary data from the women entrepreneurs, who constituted the respondents of the study. Ranking Techniques, mean, average and simple percentage methods were adopted to analyze the data.

Prospects of Woman Entrepreneurs in Erode District of Tamil Nadu

In order to identify the prospects of women entrepreneurship in the study area, care was taken in selecting the sample. The sample for the study area was a composition of women entrepreneurs from different walks of life, belonging to different businesses. In order to mention a few are 1) Masala Industry 2) Garment Industry 3) yarns 4) women running computer centers and browsing centers 5) Type writing centers 6) Photocopying centers 7) Retail stores and Departmental stores and Medical shops 8) Book selling 9) Tailoring Units 10) Fashion jewelers 11) Tuition centers etc., these are the areas in which women entrepreneurship opportunity exists in Erode. Even though these types of business are already existing and done by women, there is still a gap between the demand and supply. Therefore, it is a very prospective area for the women entrepreneurs to venture.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Socio Economic Status of Women Entrepreneurs of Erode District- The primary data collected for the study revealed the following socio economic status of women entrepreneurs:

- It is observed that 57% of the respondents have completed their UG degree
- It is noted that 67% of the respondents are married.
- Majority of the respondents (78%) have started their business between the years 2001-2008. This is a period where there was a business uptrend all over Tamilnadu and the business progressed well.
- It is observed that 88% of the respondents belonged to Hindu religion.
- It is noted that 70% of the women informed that they have a single dependent at home, less than 18 years of age. It is inferred that more time spent by the women for doing the business.
- It is observed that women entrepreneurs having their family income between Rs 25000-35000 per month.

Challenges faced by Woman entrepreneurs in Erode district- Type of the business and Financial Problems and Causative Factors Faced By Women Entrepreneurs Table no.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Problems And Factors</th>
<th>Garment sector</th>
<th>Beauty parlor</th>
<th>Departmental stores</th>
<th>Fashion Designing</th>
<th>Computer center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non availability of Long Term Finance</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular And Frequent Need of Working Capital</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Procedure to Avail Financial Help</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Cost Of Living</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Many Dependents</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data
Above table depicts that irrespective of the type of business, the women entrepreneurs faced financial problem based on the dependents in their family (score above 4.2 points) and long procedure to avail financial help (score above 3.7 points). Non availability of long term finance was the other problem faced by entrepreneurs of departmental store and Fashion designing (score above 4 points). The average mean score of Beauty Bar lour is found to be less, since it involves a less investment.

**Level of Satisfaction**

The level of satisfaction that women experienced from their business are determined on the basis of mean score of all the statements of respondents, which came out to be 3.7125 for garment sector, 3.6 for beauty parlor, 3.7813 for departmental stores, 3.669 for Fashion Designing and 3.725 for computer center.

**Marketing Problems and Causative Factors Faced By Women Entrepreneurs**

Irrespective of the type of business the women entrepreneurs faced common problem based on the tough competition from the larger and established units (score above 4.35 points) and poor location of shop (score above 4.1 points) and difficulty in affording own vehicle (score above 3.2 points). Inadequate bus facility was the other problem faced by entrepreneurs of beauty parlor and computer center (score above 2.75 points). The following Table portrays the same.

**Table 2. Marketing Problems and Causative Factors Faced By Women Entrepreneurs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Problems And Factors</th>
<th>Garment Sector</th>
<th>Beauty Parlor</th>
<th>Departmental Stores</th>
<th>Fashion Designing</th>
<th>Computer Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack Of Demand In Local Market</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough Competition From Larger And Established Units</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Location Of Shop</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack Of Transport Facility</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack Of Marketing Center</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Bus Facility</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty In Affording Own Vehicle</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Being Popular</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>3.7125</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7813</td>
<td>3.669</td>
<td>3.725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Primary Data

**Production, Health And Other Problems And Causative Factors Faced By Women Entrepreneurs**

Irrespective of the type of business the women entrepreneur faced production related problem on the non availability of labour (score above 4.75 points). Irrespective of the type of business the women entrepreneurs face Health problem due to the heavy work schedule (Score above 4.95 points). Irrespective of the type of business the women entrepreneur faced common problems on the lack of sufficient area for business(score above 4.55 points)Irrespective of the type of business the women entrepreneurs faced common problem based on the dual responsibility of the women entrepreneurs (score above 4.65 points) and time for education of children (score above 4.4 points). To spend more time for the family was the other problem faced by entrepreneurs of garment sector and departmental store (score above 4.4 points).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

(1) The women entrepreneurs have felt necessity of, proper sheds and plots for carrying out the production oriented activities financial subsidies and availability of raw materials and...
adequate and proper transport facilities etc. It is assumed that these factors are needed to be considered mostly by the government and funding agencies for various purposes.

(2) Attention of the government as well as the voluntary organizations should be drawn in rectifying these problems by making liberal assistance and gearing up the various facilities for enhancement of the status of enterprises.

(3) Finally on the basis of the study, several problems were faced by the women entrepreneurs regarding government assistance, which involves proper policy to help small entrepreneurs, red-tapism, non availability of guidance and advisory service in time, etc.

CONCLUSION

For effective and sustainable development and technology transfer for women entrepreneurs, proper training based on scientific inputs, suitable product ideas, product identification, market survey, project formulation and necessary approvals from the government at the right time with less legal formalities, soft recovery rules are of utmost importance. At the district level, a separate women’s organization can be formed so as to help women entrepreneurs in fulfilling their requirements of financial assistance, marketing aid, obtaining subsides, concessions, technical know-how, raw material assistance, conduct of market surveys to assess the feasibility counseling, follow up guidance etc. If these are taken care, there is a vast scope for women entrepreneurs in Erode District.

REFERENCES