A Study on Women Entrepreneurship—Its Management and Business Problems: An Overview

Prasanta Sarma* and Bipin Borah*

Associate Professor, Mariani College, Jorhat, Assam

ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurship has been recognised as an important source of economic growth. Entrepreneurship happens to be one of the best ways towards self-sufficiency and poverty alleviation for women in a country where employment is not guaranteed. Involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities would ensure effective utilisation of labour, generation of income and hence improvement in standard of living. Initially, women have been confined to the private sphere of the household doing the daily works and tending to their families’ needs. Therefore, they have been denied access to the requisite resources for entrepreneurial entry access to capital, business and technical education, and prior management experience Though Indian women have played a key role in the society, their entrepreneurial quality has not been properly utilised due to lower status of women in society. An attempt has been made to study the necessity of women entrepreneurship in the study area and study the ways of overcoming the barriers of women entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a creative process in which specific goals are achieved using various resources in a planned and co-ordinated manner to perform activities in efficient way. Women entrepreneurship has been recognised as an important source of economic growth. Entrepreneurship happens to be one of the best ways towards self-sufficiency and poverty alleviation for women in a country where employment is not guaranteed. Involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities would ensure effective utilisation of labour, generation of income and hence improvement in standard of living. Initially, women have been confined to the private sphere of the household doing the daily works and tending to their families’ needs. Therefore, they have been denied access to the requisite resources for entrepreneurial entry access to capital, business and technical education, and prior management experience Though Indian women have played a key role in the society, their entrepreneurial quality has not been properly utilised due to lower status of women in society.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the necessity of women entrepreneurship in the study area.
2. To study the ways of overcoming the barriers of women entrepreneurship.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study was conducted on the basis of both secondary and primary data. Secondary information was collected from District Industrial Centre (DIC) of Jorhat district and journals, magazines, newspaper and web. The methods used for collecting primary data were observation, telephonic communication and interview. The primary data were collected from sample of 20 women entrepreneurs through a structured questionnaire.

MAJOR DISCUSSION

The potential for developing women entrepreneurship in Jorhat is high. The literacy rate of women in Jorhat is 60.73% (2011). With the increase of population and urbanisation, the market condition of small enterprises is gradually moving upwards. Moreover, the number of women entrepreneurs increases considerably during recent years due to the increase of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (1999).

Culturally this district is full of diversity. Due to existence of multicultural ethnic groups, there is a possibility of women entrepreneurship in different fields such as handloom, handicraft, food items, small tea gardens, internet café, restaurants, etc. Moreover, Jorhat is an important tourist destination place, therefore the possibility of expansion of lodge, restaurant or café is very high. Women entrepreneurs are engaged mainly in activities like weaving, knitting, embroidery, jam jelly and pickle making, etc.
In recent years, it is seen that women entrepreneurs of Jorhat are venturing into non-traditional field also. These are mainly establishment of beauty parlour, restaurant, garment shop, agarbatti and candle manufacturing enterprise, internet café, etc. This is partly because of expansion of entrepreneurial opportunities. DIC Jorhat have played a significant role in giving training facilities (weaving, knitting, embroidery, etc.) to both urban and rural women. As a result, a number of women enterprises have been increased considerably. But this picture is not encouraging.

THE MAIN CHALLENGES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN JORHAT DISTRICT

(a) To run any enterprise successfully, adequate infrastructure is must. During the present investigation, the researcher finds out the infrastructural problems like inadequate power supply, inadequate building and space, and also inadequate communication facilities. Forty-six per cent of total respondents are of the view that inadequate infrastructural facility is one of the most important challenges of women entrepreneurs; 32% of total respondents consider finance is another main problem. Without financial support, it is not possible to start a business. Due to paucity of fund, many women are not able to start their business in spite of their willingness. Most of the women entrepreneurs start their own venture, but they miss the way of success. Women entrepreneurs hesitate to take financial help from banks because of lengthy and complex process.

(b) Women entrepreneurs in our society are facing various socio-personal problems that prevented them from becoming potential entrepreneurs. These problems are related to family problems, child rearing, limited freedom and also male dominance.

During field work, it was observed that most of the women entrepreneurs have identified the dual responsibilities, and conflict arises due to dual responsibilities. There is a lack of recognition and appreciation. Seven per cent women are not getting support from their husband, and 12% women are not getting support from their family.

Majority of entrepreneurs considered entrepreneurship as secondary to their home and family. They have to give importance to their husband, child and their relationship with them.

(c) Another problem of women entrepreneurs in the study is non-availability of skilled manpower. Most of the entrepreneurs (13%) are not getting the opportunities of entrepreneurship training. During the field work, it was seen that many women entrepreneurs have lack of knowledge about various government schemes related with training programmes, financial assistance, etc. They have lack of skill and financial support to start new enterprise.

(d) Adequate marketing is one of the most important factors of success of any enterprise. Generally, marketing depends on quality of products, advertisement or publicity, adequate mobility, knowledge of market, etc. But most of the women entrepreneurs have faced the problems of how to market the product, inadequate publicity, difficulty in travelling, competition with big enterprises, high production cost and high tax rate. Lack of knowledge in business-related activities is major problem of women entrepreneurship.

As per the objective, the ways of overcoming the barriers of women entrepreneurship are listed below.

In view of the problems cited above, it is realised to adopt appropriate measures to accelerate the development of women entrepreneurship.

Following recommendations have been made for the development of women entrepreneurship in Jorhat:

1. The financial institutions, mainly commercial banks, can play an important role by giving financial help through simple way and also at low rate of interest to women entrepreneurs to encourage them.
2. Awareness among women as well as other people of the society is very much important for women entrepreneurship. In this case, schools and colleges and different NGOs must take initiatives to generate awareness among the girl students. Knowledge of entrepreneurship must be included in curriculum of formal education.
3. Government must give emphasis on expansion of training facilities for women entrepreneurs. Training programmes for women entrepreneurs must be conducted from time to time, which should give emphasis on finance generation, management procedure, innovative production and marketing.
4. For unregistered women entrepreneurs, situation must be created so that they are encouraged to register their enterprises to get government facilities and financial assistance from banks.
5. Moral support from family members is very much important for the development of women entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs have gradually played an important role in spurring economic development and job creation. Equality among men and women that is essential for the development of society can be possible through economic independence of women. The women entrepreneurs should take the challenges of new economic policy. At the time of independence, entrepreneurship development in Assam was negligible. The potential for the development of women entrepreneur in Assam is very high. In Assam, handloom sector is almost handled by women entrepreneurs. Though government has taken various measures to develop women entrepreneurship, development of women entrepreneurship is not encouraging.
Developing entrepreneurship among women will definitely be the right approach for empowerment of women. At present, it is a matter of satisfaction that a number of women entrepreneurs are coming to start their business in traditional activities like weaving, embroidery, pickle making, knitting, jam jelly making, etc., and also in non-traditional activities like beauty parlour, computer café, crèches, restaurant, readymade garments, nursery, food catering centres, tailoring firms, etc. In this case, all kinds of support from family members, government, banks and society are needed. Moreover, expansion of education, financial assistance, training for entrepreneurship, infrastructural development, marketing facilities, family and society support, etc., are also very much important for revolution to entrepreneurship among women.

REFERENCES


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