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A Study On “Issues And Challenges Of Women In Micro Entrepreneurship”, With Reference To Visakhapatnam District

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Abstract:

Micro ,small and medium enterprises(MSME's) play a very important role in ensuring the processes of economic growth. They are employment-friendly, generating more and more employment especially rural and urban areas and they contribute to greater regional balance in terms of development.

In India women actively played a meaningful role in the industrialization process of the country in 21st century. The role of women in social and economic development specifically in social and economic development was found to be primal in the economic development of their communities. The scope of women to realize their potential as entrepreneurs depends on both the status and role of women in the society and the forces operating within society which influence society. These relate to the political context , institutional framework , family policies , market forces and the suitability of particular individuals in terms of temperament and qualifications to assume entrepreneurship roles.

The main problems faced by them are generally poor educational background , lack of financial assistance , lack of role models , weak social status, competing demand on time , family responsibilities, business failures etc.. The present condition of rural women needs urgent attention. The strategies for development of rural women should aim at creation of capabilities of women . The rural women's capabilities could be created in terms of education and thus empowering them to utilize the opportunities.

This paper highlights the present issues, challenges and problems faced by the women entrepreneurs with respect to micro entrepreneurship in post- liberalisation era and as a part of it ,it gives some suggestive measures to eradicate the problems faced by women and for the development of women empowerment .

1.Introduction

Women have a unique position in the society. Indian women are in no way inferior to men in all walks of life and they can be good entrepreneurs as men in the country. As they represent half of the population of the country it is essential to tap the potential of women by exploiting their potential and encourage their participation in MSME's . Women participation in entrepreneurship is poor mainly because of the problems associated with their gender roles. He need for promotion of entrepreneurship and economic empowerment poses the challenge to the government, financial institutions and non governmental organizations. There is a need to emphasise the problems faced by women and to plan supporting systems and to enhance the women entrepreneurship in India .

2.Objectives Of The Study

- To understand the role and importance of women in micro entrepreneurship
- To study the factors that affect women entrepreneurial orientation and their satisfaction.
- To study the issues faced by women in the liberalized era
- To identify the factors of hindrance for women entrepreneurship with reference to Visakhapatnam district.
- To identify the areas of business of women entrepreneurs with reference to Visakhapatnam district.
- To recommend suggestions in the light of findings.

3.Research Methodology

The research is based on secondary & primary data. The secondary data is collected from review of past researches and other reports. The primary data was collected with a structured questionnaire and the study was conducted in different rural areas of Visakhapatnam district. The data was collected from 150 women respondents in different areas of the Visakhapatnam district. The data collected were analysed by using statistical tools like classification, tabulation, percentage to examine the problem of women entrepreneurs .

4. Concept Of Women Entrepreneurship

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME's) play a very important role in ensuring the processes of economic growth. They are employment-friendly, generating more and more employment especially rural and urban areas and they contribute to greater regional balance in levels of development.

Traditionally, our history and also as depicted in our mythology, women have been the moral force of the society. They have held prime positions in the families and have developed the culture and soul of our Indian civilization. In India women actively played a meaningful role in the industrialization process of the country in 21st century. The role of women in social and economic development specifically in social and economic development was found to be primal in the economic development of their communities.

India is one of the few countries where women population is lower than the men in 2001 census. The total proportion of women in the total population according to the census report 2009 is as follows

Sr no	Particulars	Male	Female	Total %
1	0-14 years	190,075,426	172,799,553	31.1%
2	15-64 years	381,446,079	359,802,209	63.6%
3	65-over	29,364,920	32,591,030	5.3%

Table 1 : Proportion Of Male And Female

Source: Demographic Statistics Composition Of Male And Female

Women represent half the resources and half the potential in all the societies. Efforts to promote greater equality between women and men can also contribute to the overall development of human society.

The traditional set up is changing in the modern era. The transformation of social fabric of the Indian society, in terms of increased educational status of women and varied aspirations for better living, necessitated a change in the life style of Indian women. If we see the census report of Workforce participation rate by sex, the women work force participation has increased from 14.2% in 1971 to 25.7% in 2001 due to the increased literacy rates in women.

States	Number Of Registered Units	No Of Women Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Tamil Nadu	9990	2930	29.32
Uttar Pradesh	7999	3680	46.09
Kerala	5735	2235	30.97
Punjab	4900	1818	37.10
Maharashtra	4550	1594	35.03
Gujarat	3890	1638	42.10
Madhya Pradesh	3892	1206	30.98
Andhra Pradesh	2997	892	29.76
Other states	14676	4195	28.58
Total	58629	20188	34.43

Table 2: Women Entrepreneurship In India

Source : Annual Report Of MSME

From the table 2 it is evident that in all the states out of total registered units nearly 30% of the registered units are owned by women entrepreneurs. The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period of time, especially in the 1990s. Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology, increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizeable employment for others and setting the trend for other women entrepreneurs in the organized sector.

5. Significance Of Women Entrepreneurship Development

The gender gap must be reduced in order to recognize the importance of women as essential actors and factors in the fight against poverty in an effort to achieve poverty reduction by 2015, as envisaged by the millennium Development Goals. One path which may be explored in order to achieve this goal is the establishment and building upon the linkages between Women as major economic actors and SME development. Thus, developing programs to support small and medium enterprises is a key aspect as SMEs are viewed as the economic engine of many developing countries, and a major source of job creation around the world. Small and Medium Enterprises, and in particular women, represent important accelerators of economic growth. Women are also responsible for almost two-thirds of consumer spending worldwide and they invest most of their income in the education and health of their families, producing real social impact and inclusive growth. The main barriers faced by women in establishing and growing SMEs are access to training and networks, access to markets and access to finance.

The financial inclusion through micro finance schemes among the rural women to enhance the women empower the national economy. The financial assistance to the rural women on micro enterprises to the rural economy development of the country. Micro enterprises can help in meeting challenges of a developing economy. It not only enhance national productivity and generate employment but also help to develop economic independence, personal and social capabilities among rural entrepreneurs.

economic development of entrepreneurs by microfinance lead to micro enterprises in providing economic opportunities , property rights,political representation,social equality, personal rights, family development ,market development and eventually the national development .

6.Common Features Of Women Entrepreneurs

- Women with small families are likely to be entrepreneurs.
- A majority of women entrepreneurs are married.
- Many women entrepreneurs belong to low income group
- Many women become entrepreneurs because of economic necessity.
- Women are hardworking and self confident.
- Women entrepreneurs are security oriented than growth oriented .
- Women prefer stabilized income and minimization of risk .
- Though the trend is changing still there are so many organizations owned by women but run by men
- In the field of technology women have made a conscious decision to set up technology based industries.
- Gender discrimination is encountered at every stage of business development.

7.Issues Related To Women Participation

Women sector occupies nearly 45% of the Indian population. The literary and educational status of women improved considerably during the past few decades. More and more higher educational and research institutions are imparting knowledge and specialisation. At this juncture, effective steps are needed to provide entrepreneurial awareness, orientation and skill development programmes of women.

The issues that generally come to mind in the context of promotion of self employment through entrepreneurship development among women are stated below.

- How women are largely employed in the unorganized sector can be organized to make a place for themselves in the competitive market?
- How can they be persuaded or activated to initiate a process of self development with a sense of drive self determination , achievement motivation, creativity, calculated risk bearing capacity, success and goal orientation and so on.
- What kind of project and programmes will help working women in unorganized sector to move towards self reliance?
- How far entrepreneurship development can enhance the capability of women to setup small, medium or large industries?
- How the Non government organizations (NGOs) be made responsible to remove the barriers in women's own development?
- How and in which spheres, the government assistance be augmented to help women entrepreneurs in starting industries?

Government and the financial institutions have to come forward to identify the issues and help women in empowering them by providing financial assistance and encourage women participation in MSME's .

8.Challenges Faced By Women Owned Enterprises In India

Problem may be varied and several problems differ from enterprise to enterprise, place to place and from time to time. Some of this problems may be common but some are more specific and related to the line of activity or the enterprise. Women entrepreneurs have to face so many challenges and problems due to internal environment and some due to external environment. According to various studies the challenges can be categorized as follows

8.1.External Problems And Challenges

The women in various sectors of economic and commercial activities like manufacturing , trading and service sectors face so many problems like

- **Availability of raw material**
This is the biggest problem of the manufacturing sectors related to garment industry, aromatic oil manufacturers, beauty product manufacturers , food processing sector and bakeries where women face lots of problems due to delay or availability of raw materials.
- **Financial constraints**
Women have limited access over external sources of funds. Commercial banks are reluctant to lend loans to women entrepreneurs who are basically housewives with less exposure to business and risk. The negative attitude of banks is hesitating to lend loans to women because they have fear of women leaving business due to family problems.
- **Acquiring plot / shop**
It is the problem generally faced by the service sectors . In the service sector it is associated with location and effects their performance , problem of high rent in prime location , delay in obtaining permissions from urban department to get shed allotment and also faces problems in getting a plot nearer to home .
- **Discouraging experiences**
There are so many experiences where sometimes women faces the problems while customers bargain for unnecessary reasons, some customers behave rudely, there is always a fear of threat from male customers that makes women discourage to continue the business.

8.2. Internal Problems And Challenges

Generally women are hardworkers but because of poor management the women owned enterprises are unable to reach the success. The studies have stated that women at small business are not professionally managed and here are some of the problems that effect women entrepreneurs .

- **Recruitment and training of personnel**

For women entrepreneurs recruitment of trained and skilled people is a big problem and even if they get skilled persons it is difficult to provide training to them. Training personnel takes lot of time and also time and cost have to be sacrificed. It must be a continuous activity which is not possible to great extent.

- **Financial problems with customers**

Generally when the goods are sold on the credit basis it is very difficult for women entrepreneurs to retain the money from the customers and also when the goods are sold on the installment basis where it is difficult to manage the collections from the customers.

- **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 and sometimes they have to depend on the family members to run the organization.

8.3. Family And Society Related Challenges And Problems

The biggest problem of women entrepreneurs is related with family and the society. Some of the common problems they face are

- **Male dominated society:** Equal treatment to men and women is absent at the family level and the social level. The male superiority ego complex creates a barrier in the path way of success .This situation is found sometimes even between husband wife and usually under such circumstances a women feels pressurised by male domineering ego
- **Dual commitment:** Women are performing a dual role where they are having commitments towards family as well as office. This create a role conflict which increases stress in women as well as less time dedicated to work where they are lagging behind men at organisations.
- **Social attitude :** Social attitudes are equally responsible for keeping women away from training and skill in rural areas ,overbearing presence of elders restrict the young girls form venturing out and very strict boundaries are drawn around their mobility.
- **Lack of education:** Education in women has been poor in India. Infact female literacy rate is lowest among all the countries. A woman is discouraged to learn more than the male members of the family. Due to lack of education she is unaware about the technological and marketing knowledge where she faces lot of problems because of poor knowledge.
- **Psychological problems:** Many women have low self esteem, lack of confidence , lack of ability to tackle the problems and desire to take the risk which lack the women to take the initiative to do something
- **Restricted mobility:** One's own business often demands greater mobility in meeting suppliers and customers .Women by their nature are less mobile and they are deprived of the benefits of low cost and high efficiency. Their actual physical condition and related cultural factors and safety provisions are responsible for their low mobility.
- **Male-female competition:** Though the women entrepreneurs are good in keeping their service prompt and delivery in time, due to lack of organisational skills compared to male entrepreneurs women have to face constraints from competition. The confidence to travel across day and night and even different regions and states are less found in women compared to male entrepreneurs.

9. Data Analysis

Age	No Of Women Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Below 30	27	12%
30-40	58	43%
41-50	36	26%
Above 50	29	19%
Total	150	100%

Table 3: Age Of Women Entrepreneurs

From the above table3 it is seen that majority of the respondents are 58 in the age group of 30-40 that corresponds to 43 % and 36 are in the age group of 41-50 that corresponds to 26% and other age groups corresponds to 19% and 12% . It can be interpreted that that most of the entrepreneurs are in the age group of 30 -50

Education Level	No of women Entrepreneurs	Percentage(%)
Illiterate	33	22
Primary	47	31.33
High School	34	22.6
College	46	30.6
Total	150	100

Table 4: Educational Level Of Women Entrepreneurs

From the above table 4 it can be seen that majority of the respondents have completed primary level of education corresponding to 47 (31.33%) and then college level corresponding to 46(30.6) and then high school corresponding to 34(22.6) and illiterate corresponding to 33% .It can be interpreted that majority the entrepreneurs have atleast minimum level of education .

Marital Status	No of women entrepreneurs	Percentage
Single	48	32
Married	56	37.33
Divorce	25	16.66
Widow	21	14
Total	150	100

Table 5: Marital Status Of Women Entrepreneurs

The table 5 depicts that most of the entrepreneurs are married which corresponds to 56(37.33%) and single corresponds to 48 (32%) and divorce corresponds to 25 (16.66%) and widow corresponds to 21(14%).This shows that most of the entrepreneurs have entered after completion of marriage or before marriage with their family support and rest of them have entered with the need of support to their family.

Family Size	No of women entrepreneurs	Percentage
Single	38	25.33
2-3	61	40.66
4-6	36	24
Above 6	15	10
Total	150	100

Table 6: Family Size Of Entrepreneur

The table 6 represents that majority of the women entrepreneurs were having a family size of 2-3 which corresponded to 61 (40.66%) and single corresponded to 38 (25.33%) and 4-6 size have corresponded to 36(24%) and above six have corresponded to 15(10%). It can be interpreted that less family size have lessened their family responsibilities which motivated them to enter into entrepreneurship.

Nature of Business	No. of Women Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Vegetable Sellers	25	16.66
Tailoring	36	24
Candle making	7	4.6
Pickles Making	21	14
Jams making	8	5.3
Papad Making	16	10.66
Kirana Shops	20	13.33
Hotels	17	11.33
Total	150	100

Table 7: Nature Of Activities Undertaken By Women Entrepreneurs

The above table 7 depicts the categorization of business of the women entrepreneurs where the women have opted different activities as a part of business. It can be observed that form the total of 150 respondents ,tailoring business have corresponded to 36(24%), vegetable selling have corresponded to 25(16.66%) , pickles making have corresponded to 21(14%),kirana shops corresponded to 20(13.33%) , small hotels corresponded to 17(11.33%) ,papad making have corresponded to 16(10.66) ,jam making have corresponded to 8 (5.3) and candle making 7(4.6).This interprets that all the women have mostly adopted for microentrepreneurship in the areas of tailoring , pickles making , vegetable selling , kiranashops for their basic livelihood .

Problems	Yes	No	Total
Raw Material	113(75.33)	37(24.77)	150
Stiff Competition	122(81.33%)	28(19.77%)	150
Transportation	95(54.22)	55(36.78%)	150
Market Problems	113(75.33)	37(24.77)	150
Middlemen Problems	85(56.66%)	65(43.44%)	150
Promotion Problem	56(37.33)	94(62.66)	150
Credit Problem	102(68%)	48(32%)	150
Delay In financial Sanctions	136(90.66%)	14(9.33%)	150
Skilled Labour Problem	57(38%)	95(62%)	150

Table 8: *Opinion Of Problems Of Entrepreneurs*

The above table 8 represents that out of 150 respondents most of the women entrepreneurs have faced so many problems and the data represents that majority of the respondents have problems to delay in financial sanctions corresponding to 136(90.66%) , stiff competition corresponded to 122(81.33%) , raw materials and marketing problems corresponded to 113(75.33%) ,credit problems corresponded to 102(68%) ,transportation problems corresponded to 95(54.22%), promotion problem 56(37.33%) and skilled labor problem corresponded to 57(38%).This interprets that women entrepreneurs in micro areas are suffering from so many problems mostly in the areas of finance , raw materials , stiff competition and other related areas .

10.Findings Of The Study

- Most of the entrepreneurs are in the age group of 30 -50 and have completed their minimum level of education.
- Majority of the entrepreneurs i.e overall 70% have entered after completion of marriage and out of this 21% widows and 25% were divorced and opted enterpreneurship with zeal and with the need of support to their family. . The rest were 32% who opted entrepreneurship before marriage with their family support .
- Majority of the women entrepreneurs were having a family size of 2-3 which corresponded to 61(40.66%) and thus can be interpreted that less family size have lessened their family responsibilities which motivated them to enter into entrepreneurship.
- All the women have mostly adopted for micro entrepreneurship in the areas of tailoring , pickles making , vegetable selling , kiranashops and some other areas for their basic livelihood where tailoring business have corresponded to 24%, vegetable selling have corresponded to 16.66% , pickles making have corresponded to 14%,kirana shops corresponded to 13.33% , small hotels corresponded to 11.33% ,papad making have corresponded to 10.66% ,jam making have corresponded to 5.3% and candle making 4.6%. out of 150 respondents .
- Most of the women entrepreneurs have faced so many problems and the data represents that majority of the respondents have problems to delay in financial sanctions corresponding to 90.66%, stiff competition corresponded to 1281.33% , raw materials and marketing problems corresponded to 175.33% ,credit problems corresponded to 68% ,transportation problems corresponded to 54.22%, promotion problem 37.33% and skilled labor problem corresponded to 38%.This interprets that women entrepreneurs in micro areas are suffering from so many problems mostly in the areas of finance , raw materials , stiff competition and other related areas.

11.Recommendations Of The Study

- There should be a continuous attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate women entrepreneurs.An Awareness programme should be conducted on a mass scale with the intention of creating awareness among women about the various areas to conduct business.
- Frequent training programmes should be conducted by the government ,different agencies and NGO'S to self help groups with regard to motivation, new production techniques, sales techniques, etc, This training should be made compulsory for women entrepreneurs.
- The government can provide interest free loans to encourage women entrepreneurs and to attract more women entrepreneurs, the subsidy for loans should be increased to overcome the financial problems.
- Making provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level.
- The weaker section could raise funds through various schemes and incentives provided by the government to develop entrepreneurs in the state. E.g. the Prime ministers Rozgar Yojana, The Khadi and Rural village industries scheme, etc.
- 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. Women entrepreneurs should utilize the various schemes provided by the Government.
- Parents of unmarried potential women entrepreneurs should be encouraged in spending money on setting up business rather than giving preference to their marriage.
- Women co-operative societies should be started to procure the products from women entrepreneurs. and help them in selling their products at a reasonable price at one market place.

12. Conclusion

The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period of time ,in the 1990's women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology ,increased investment, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizeable organization for other and being a trend setter for other women in the organized sector.

While women entrepreneurs have demonstrated their potentials the fact remains that they are capable of contributing more than what already they are. In order to harness their potentials and for their continuous growth and development it is necessary to formulate appropriate strategies for stimulating, supporting and sustaining an effort in right direction. Such a strategy should need to be congruence with field realities and should especially take cognizance need of problems women entrepreneurs face with the current system.

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