



Women's Entrepreneurship: International Perspective

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women today are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the preserve of man, and have proved that they are second to none with respect to contribution to the growth of the economy. Female entrepreneurship is a growing phenomenon across the globe, but available knowledge on the nature and characteristics of women entrepreneurship and their system of functioning is still less and also insufficient for arriving at useful decision. Present paper focuses on the study of women entrepreneurship in International Perspective.

Key Words- Women entrepreneurship. International Perspective

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper aims to examine the extent and quality of efforts made to develop women entrepreneur in some developed and developing countries, with special focus on stimulants and constraints. A global overview can provide a forum for communication and co-operation between women so that entrepreneurship can be encouraged and developed in different countries of the world. This inevitably will help in fostering cross-cultural understanding as well as bringing about a positive change in the status of women.

Human Development Report, obscure that no society treats its women as well as its men. The problem is more acute for less developed countries as women here face a double deprivation overall development achievements are low and achievements on the women's front are lower than men's. In these countries, on an average, 60% more women than men are among illiterate adults, female enrolment even at the primary level is 13% lower than male enrolment and female wages are only three fourth of male wages. They tend to be highly concentrate in traditional jobs in clerical services, sales, processing and fabricating jobs doing women's work in offices, banks, stores, private home etc. Women's work in factories are concentrated in processing, machinery and fabricating occupations, whereas the more desirable professional, managerial and skilled manual jobs and defined as men's work in the labour market.

The strategy for promotion and development of women entrepreneurs has been increasingly attracting and attention of planners in many countries as an instruments of empowering women to join the mainstream thus contribute positively to the economic development of the state.

The study propose to ascertain the status of women entrepreneurship in the global economy.

Emergence of Women Entrepreneurs in the World Economy

According to a World Development Institute Report the occupational Division of labour by sex as well as differentiation by sex in access to education, resources and formal sector employment is pervasive in the both developing and developed countries. Domestic maintenance activities are heavy and costly for women and seldom shared by men. Regardless of the country, women have to fight orders in order to secure a positive for themselves. Despite these heavy odds, the global trend of taking up the mantle of entrepreneurship as an effective tool for women power has the inevitable consequence of raising their standard of living.

The pattern of women's lives, their aspirations and their expectations have changed dramatically in the latter half of the twentieth century. However, women issues are similar in all cultures child care, poverty, health care, education and political rights. Though the nature and extent of these might vary, nevertheless they exist in both the developed and developing countries. Just as women's issues are the same culture to culture, so is the exploitation of women. In many countries they have no legal rights, own no property are refused health care and education.

The performance of paid work is considered to be a circumstances in a women's life through which she can obtain equality both within the family and within the society increased education, higher inflationary pressures and an increasing desire for self fulfillment have compelled women to seek economic employment. The lack of many avenues in the formal sector, frustrations associated with existence of glass ceiling coupled with the need of juggling domestic and professional roles have led many women to opt for entrepreneurship across the globe.

The increased commercialization of traditional female dominated activities such as child care and food preparation also allowed more and more women to undertake market activity. The economic realities of the business sector in the last few years with its down sizing, mergers, and the resultant redundancies in large corporations have been particularly

harsh on the females. As a result, there has been a pool of well educated and experienced female personnel forced to look at alternate opportunities from the traditional work models.

Women in the developing countries, on the other hand are conditioned to work uncomplainingly in the most low skill, monotonous, low paid jobs to supplement family income. Regardless of social labour, more and more women are being pushed towards paid employment because of economic hardship. An acute shortage of opportunities for paid employment also compels these women to seek self-employment. In order to understand whether there is any difference in the entrepreneurial activities of females in different social and economic conditions, and attempt is being made to study women entrepreneurship in some developing and some developed countries.

Women Entrepreneurship in some developing countries

A study of the status of women entrepreneurs of Bangladesh and Nepal in Asia and Burkina Faso in West Africa can throw some light on the state of female entrepreneurship in developing countries.

Women Entrepreneurs of Bangladesh

Historically the vast majority in Bangladesh have been clearly the second sex in terms of social and economic status. The overemphasis on the purdah system prevented women from participating in productive activities outside their homes. However, growth of Bangladesh economy has been very erratic almost since its inception in 1971, due to a succession of natural disasters such as devastating floods and cyclones and the Gulf war in 1991. As a result, there has been Chronic unemployment which coupled with landlessness have brought increasing impoverishment to Bangladeshis.

As families get poorer, all members including women, regardless of prevailing kinship structure and cultural influences, seek paid employment.

The foremost challenge facing the Bangladesh economy has been to achieve sufficient growth on a sustained basis, to reduce poverty and create jobs, for according to a recent estimate there are over a million new entrants into the labour force each year. However salaried employment in the formal sector is not large enough to employ the huge workforce out of the so million workforce, only three million are in salaried employment. Where the rest 27 million are engaged in subsistence agriculture. Given the acute shortage of employment opportunities and virtual impoverishment of their families, it can be expected that women would turn to self employment and entrepreneurship for improving their economic well-being.

The government of Bangladesh did not make concerted efforts to uplift their women economically till 1980. Initially efforts were made to rehabilitate the war affected women and their children. Later some provision was made for supply of rural credit and support services to encourage women to enter income generating activities through self-employment with increased availability of funds and institutional support Bangladesh now has more than 230 skill development/management training and production centers to provide skill training and marketing linkages to women for self-employment. As a result vast majority of the women are employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector with only four percent being employed in production and transport. In urban areas however, some women are employed in various labour-intensive industries such as garments, bakeries, pharmaceuticals tea, jute mills, electronics and fish processing, but textile weaving and apparel industries are their largest employers accounting for 46 percent of the urban female work force.

Women Entrepreneurs in Nepal

Nepal is predominantly an agricultural country. Agriculture employees 90% of the labour force, earns 65% of the export revenue and contributes 50% of the G.N.P. women, who constitute around 50% of the population, are predominantly engaged in agriculture.

Heavy workload in a joint family little mobility and lack of access to education has resulted in women having subdued personalities. In fact, as in Bangladesh, the social status of women appears lower than men. This is further reinforced from the fact that Nepal's Gender Related Development Index is lower than overall Human Development Index.

The government of Nepal recognized the need for giving a boost to entrepreneurship to increase production and provide employment opportunities for its people. In order to involve women in these entrepreneurial activities, the government as well as a number of NGOs and International donors are setting up institutions to encourage train and develop women entrepreneurship e.g. SAP(South Asian Partnership) has set up a watch repairing and computer training center with an investment of US \$ 18,000. The small Business Promotion Project, Women Entrepreneurship Association, Women Development Division, and Mother's Club are all promoting entrepreneurship among women by organizing training programme on management, accounting market research, acquisition of credit and technologies.

As a result of the above efforts, a number of women have set up their units in the last few years. Most of them are engaged in traditional activities like weaving, knitting, tailoring, handicrafts and cattle rearing. They are also manufacturing laundry soap, chalk crayons, pickles, and dairy products. There is a growing market amongst tourists for wooden, bone and silver craft products as well as, a paintings. So, many have started these handicrafts activities. Some women are involved with bee-keeping, watch repairing block printing as well as beauty parlors. Paper masks, files, file covers and envelopes are also being made by women.

Status of Women Entrepreneurs in Developed Countries.

In developed countries like U.S.A., Canada where women entered the workforce in the sixties and also had the benefits of education, some qualitative difference is expected in the level and nature of female participation rates in overall activity as well as entrepreneurship. It is hoped that a study of female entrepreneurs of America, Canada will help in identifying the stimulants and constraints faced by female entrepreneurs of developed nations.

The American Women Entrepreneur

The American society may be called an Entrepreneurial Society. It follows that with this entrepreneurial impulse found in American Society, the American too should be driven by it. However, even in a country like the USA, women entrepreneurship is a recent phenomena. Women really entered the workforce in the 60s and 70s. By the last of the 60s, a declining birth rate freed them somewhat from family responsibilities and accelerated inflation women under the age of thirty of so into the workforce. The age decreased further as more women started working because of financial necessity alongwith their desire for higher living standards, they were backed by educational levels as well as by a rising acceptance of the working women and the fact that women wanted a carrier, not a job.

Profile of a female entrepreneur and compared it with that of amale entrepreneurs.

Table : - Profile of An American Entrepreneurs and His/Her Business

Male	Female
First Born Child	First Born Child
Father and /or Mother	Atleast one parent
In independence business	employee
College education	Liberal Arts Degree
- Married	Married
- Early 30's for first significant venture	Middle 30's
- Previous Experience in the same line	No experience
- Desire Independence	Desire Independence & Job satisfaction
<u>Biggest Profile in Start Up</u>	
Obtaining seed capital	Lack of business Training
Marketing	Obtaining Credit
<u>Biggest Problem in Current Operation</u>	
Cash flow management	Lack of experience in Financial planning
Weak Collateral position	Weak Collateral Position

A perusal of table brings out that the background, motivations as well as problems of male and female wholly similar.

Experts are attributing this starling increase of women owned business in the past decade to the fact that women are finally seeing possibilities they are viewing entrepreneurship as a career option and their MBA Degrees, management experience, business acumen as well as confidence and helping them along the way. Also they have more financial resources available to them as well as opportunities for attending counseling and training programmers'.

The service Industries predominates as nearly 85% women owned business are in retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, etc. though now more women are going on nontraditional areas like engineering manufacturing and construction. The gravitation towards soft industries is a result of low start up capital requirements as well as a natural outgrowth of the traditional female upbringing: A healthy dose of self confidence a high energy label that impels them to work hard an unusual blind of persistence, a perspective, caring, business survey have made these women very successfully.

Women Entrepreneurs in Canada

Canada is a member of Commonwealth , a democracy with a free press and independent judiciary, yet the racial linguistic and religious diversity as well as the political and economic background have led the women to shape their own destinies according to their circumstances and experiences. Canada has 13.1 million females accounting for around 51% of the population. Since the second world war, there has been a consistent and accelerating increasing in the percentage of Canadian Women in the labour force. The high cost of living, the availability of higher education and the changes brought on by the feminist movement rocketed women into the permanent labour forces.

In the table presents profile of a female entrepreneurs. It shows that the women entrepreneur from Canada is likely to be white, young married, with two kids and from a business background. She is likely to operate as a sole proprietor, in local markets in a ventures that has been financed with her own funds. She is likely to be a high school graduate with some work experience and running a service or retail outlet.

PROFILE OF A CANADIAN FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR

- ❖ Young (between 25-35 years of age)
- ❖ Married with Children
- ❖ High School
- ❖ Tradition of business in parental / husband family
- ❖ Preponderance in retailing and other services
- ❖ Own funded sole – proprietary firms

To sum up women entrepreneur in the west are opting for own venture intitation as opportunities for employment and growth in the Coporate Sector and Shrinking owing to ongoing restructuring and basis against their ascent to higher echelons of management. They are increasingly being exposed to business training and as a result now a number of them are branching off into non-traditional areas.

CONCLUSION

A study of female entrepreneurs of Bangladesh, Nepal, U.S.A.and Canada exhibit a lot of commonality by and large the pattern of women entrepreneurship in both the developing and developed countries is the same, though these are some variation in their nature and extent.

In all these countries, women entrepreneurs is comparatively a more recent phenomenon which has taken root in the eighties. The spread of education economic pressure and divorce rates have compelled women to seek employment outside home to provide economic security to their children. As far as their problem are concerned lack of access to primary education was reported by women in Nepal, Bangladesh and Burkina Faso. Though the general level of education was high amongst female entrepreneur of America and Canada, yet they lacked specialized business skills and training.

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