

Women Empowerment parameter for evaluating Women Entrepreneurship?????

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Full Paper

Introduction:

Women empowerment is the topic which many people, specially the men will not prefer to talk about. Doesn't mean all the men are alike. There are many men who support the women empowerment and development. Women empowerment has many meanings, some people say that it is something which is within the women, some people says that it is the state of women which helps her to take the decision of her choice. In the present paper an attempt has been given to understand the concept of women empowerment and the status of women entrepreneurs of Maharashtra.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the present paper are as

- To understand the concept of women empowerment from the various angles.
- To overt the problems of women .
- To know the extent of development of women.
- To provide the suggestions for further improvement in the development process of women.

Methodology:

The present paper is based on secondary data as well as primary data. The secondary data is collected through various books, journals, newspapers and websites. The primary data was collected from 100 women through questionnaire consisting 21 questions from various sectors of women from Hingoli District of Marathwada Region of Maharsashtra. The technique of observation is also used to confirm the validity of the responses. The collected data is analysed and is divided into four categories of development. The simple percentages are calculated based on the favourable responses by the respondents.

Limitations:

The present paper is based on secondary data of various books and journals, which purely based on the knowledge and opinion of the authors. The primary data was collected from 100 women, hence, the sample selected can be applied for the major women, and again the primary data collected is purely based on the opinion and attitude of sample women responses.

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship is something which is related to creativity, innovation or the capacity to take the challenges. Normally, these guts are possessed by male members of society. Hence, when one woman thinks to become the entrepreneur, she has to face infinite problems. Even in 21st century when we think that the women is already empowered, you may notice that still women are suffering from so many deficiencies. Specially in Rural India the conditions of women is not improved. There are more than 35 legislatives which are protecting the interest of women but unfortunately even educated women are not aware about their rights, so, in Rural areas the conditions are still worst. Still the system of Dowery is followed at the greatest level though the Anti dowery Act is known to every one. Even today women never complains about the physical and mental harassment given to her either by parents or inlaws. The rape cases are not going to stop at all. As per National Survey Sample and Police records in India the rape cases have been risen by 98% in 2013 as compared to 2012. So, how can we say that the women is empowered ? Women should be empowered Socially, Economically, Politically and Culturally. That is possible only when women will think about the self empowerment . In the present paper an attempt is made to understand the condition of women and the challenges of women entrepreneurs in Rural areas in Marathwada region of Maharashtra. From the inception of independence of India, the Indian Government has one mission to provide the basic necessity to each and every Indian. But even after 67 years we have not achieved our mission. Even today many people live below poverty line and not able to get food for everyday. Following table contains the details of poverty condition in India.

	MAHARASHTRA	INDIA
No. of poor people in rural area (in thousands)	15,056	2,16,658
% of People BPL in Rural Area	24.22%	25.70%
No. of poor people in Urban areas(in thousands)	4,736	53,125
% of people BPL in Urban areas	9.12%	13.70%
Total No.	19,792	2,69,783
% of BPL Total	17.35%	21.92%

India shares 20.6% of World's Poverty.

Source: Annual Report 2012 of RBI (Wikipedia)

Though it is stated by Indian Government that there is reduction in poverty by 22% but still we are lag in. This shows that some where we are not efficient in implementing the policies for the development of standard of living of the people. One of the reason may be the lack of encouragement of women entrepreneurship in India. In Urban India the condition of women is reasonably good as compared to Rural women.

Evolution of Women Entrepreneurship in India

Work participation in economic activity has been accepted as a natural phenomenon from time immemorial. Women have played a significant role in the society across centuries and geographical boundaries. The role of women has gone through several transformations. It took centuries for women's role to move to the present trend of emancipation. Women of the Vedic age played an important role in religious and social functions. There are some regions in the world where women still live in barbaric conditions, chained and shackled to the social and cultural taboos, religious restrictions and lakshman rekhas drawn by others who frame the women's code of conduct. At the same time there are other regions where women fight for freedom and opportunity to play their roles in the new context of modern life with ample occupations, occupational and intellectual pursuits to lead a new way of life. As regards the ancient industries of India, family was the unit of production process. Even during the period of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa civilisation, women shared a responsible position with men and helped in spinning and clay modelling and making other simple handicrafts. Women played a very pivotal role in creating household articles, providing utility requirements, weaving cloth and engaging in agricultural activities. In the traditional economy, they played vital roles in agriculture industry and providing various services. They were the makers of the intoxicant drink – soma-juice which required considerable skill. In the 18 th century, women had a significant role to play in the development of the economy, and had a definite status in the social structure. Women's informal trading activities in the international distribution system have been well documented since the early 1950s. Since 1970 systematic efforts have been made by the government to promote self-employment among women. Women entrepreneurship in India became popular in the late 1970s and now more and more women are emerging as entrepreneurs in all spheres of economic activities. According to the 1971 Census, the total female working population is about 13.8% of the total workforce. It was only from the 5th Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards that women's development was recognised as specifically identified sector. The decade of the 1980's provided the real breakthrough for women on many frontiers. During the 1990's women proved capable, competent, confident and assertive and had clear idea about the ventures to be undertaken and how to succeeded in them. Many women entered large scale enterprises of their parents or husbands and proved their competence and capabilities. Women acquired high self-esteem and the capability of solving the problem independently through economic independence.

The 21 st century will see women experts in all fields of human endeavour. Many of the new industries are headed and guided by women. Female role prescriptions have created mental blocks. Women are

projected to move twice faster than that of men, and thrice in the category of manageress. In recent years the entrepreneurship has gained wide popularity on the whole globe. The rate of becoming entrepreneurs in women is more compared to men. (Renzulli et al 2000) In north America 38 percent & small businesses are owned by women (Brush & Hierarch, 1999) The growth rate in women owned enterprises in some of the developing countries are higher as compared to the developed countries. According to ILO Statistics the growth rate is 24% in Malaysia, 30% in Thailand & 36% in Philippines & 42% in Indonesia. The growth rate was highest in the Tamil Nadu state of India. It was 18% in 2001. Self-employment in the context of development is considered important for a number of reasons that have to do with poverty reduction and employment generation. The thrust on self-employment is often based on the supposition that it signifies micro entrepreneurship, which is superior to wage employment and could eventually grow into small or medium enterprise and thus entrepreneurship. Self-employment has been a buzz word for almost two decades from now, especially in the context of female employment. One of the major discourses during the period of liberalisation has been directed at women as self-employed workers originating from the perception that beneficial effects of liberalisation lay in expanding the relationship between women 'entrepreneurs' in informal sector and wider markets. From above discussion it is quite clear that women entrepreneurs number is increasing only that may be because of Pull factors or Push Factors discussed as follows.

Pull Factors:

- Attraction to business
- Desire to know about the business running.
- Source of money earning
- Life style
- Standard of living

Push Factors.

- Lost of earning member of family.
- Shortage of income source
- Needs of family
- Empowerment
- Support from family.

If we analyse the above factors then we will be in a position to know that which factor is more important to be considered. As a teacher and within the limits of teaching, I can say that it women empowerment which is playing a vital role in the development of number of women entrepreneurs. For the purpose of evaluating the degree of empowerment of women of rural areas, sample of 100 women has been taken from Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. A survey was conducted and through questionnaire interview was conducted and collected the following data.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Questions	Response in YES	Response in NO	Response in N.A	The percentage of empowered women based on YES Option
Do you feel self confidence?	80	20		80%
Are you self Reliance?	56	44		56%
Are you Career ambitious?	50	44	6	50%
Do you feel that you have created self image	55	43	2	55%
On an average Psychological Empowerment				60.25%

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Questions	Response in YES	Response in NO	Response in N.A	The percentage of empowered women based on YES Option
Freedom to interact with Male members outside family	65	35		65%
Taking of food of your choice	53	47		53%
Actually participating in festivals.	90	10		90%
Freedom of performing festivals ceremonies.	90	10		90%
Freedom to wear the own choice dresses	47	53		47%
Freedom to decide food menu	39	61		39%
On an Average Cultural Development				64%

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Questions	Response in YES	Response in NO	Response in N.A	The percentage of empowered women based on YES Option
Work of own choice	53	47		53%
Free to visit Doctors and Hospitals	65	35		65%
Allowed to take decision about Family Planning	33	65	2	33%
Feeling of Socially Secured	45	55		45%

Participation in decision making about children Education	30	68	2	30%
Appreciation from family for significant contributions	80	11	9	80%
On average Social Development				51%

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Questions	Response in YES	Response in NO	Response in N.A	The percentage of empowered women based on YES Option
Aware about human rights	28	72		28%
Aware about women issues and rights	25	75		25%
Authority of employing labourer	50	50		50%
Access to modern technology	41	59		41%
On an average Political Development				36%

Challenges before Women entrepreneurs in India:

The following are the major challenges before women entrepreneurs in India.

- 1 Choice between family and career
- 2 Illiteracy or low level of Education
- 3 Dearth of financial assistance
- 4 Socio-cultural barriers

In developing countries like India women work long hours daily, carrying out family chores such as cleaning, cooking, bringing up children along with concentrating on their income generating activities. Such family responsibilities prevent them from becoming successful entrepreneurs. As regards illiteracy among women, available statistics reveal that two-third of the world's 876 million illiterates are women. In India of the 59.5 per cent of total population that is illiterate, women comprise almost 49%. As regards finance, women in developing nations have little access to finance due to the fact that they are concentrated in poor rural communities with few opportunities to borrow money. The Times of India, March 18, 2004 reports that compared to states like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the states of Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh have not done well in distributing loans to female entrepreneurs. Such lack of access to credit is still worsened by a lack of information on where credit can be sought and requirements for loans. According to a 1995 report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), despite evidence that women's loan repayment rates are higher than men's, women still face more difficulties in obtaining credit often due to the discriminatory attitudes of banks and informal lending groups. In many parts of India, women belonging to certain communities are found to be very conservative due to their upbringing in orthodox families. Insecurity for women is a common

phenomenon in many areas of the country and there is a requirement to educate the community about the need for transformation and to increase women's mobility beyond the home through long-term strategies. The conventional social roles assigned to women often proved to be a handicap for their free mobility and freedom to work. It is thus evident that women entrepreneurs have to confront more challenges from their culture, family and society than their male counterparts. Indian women are in no way inferior to men in all walks of life and they can be as good entrepreneurs as men in the country. Therefore, it is essential to exploit the potentials of Indian women. Women's participation in trade, industry and commerce, requiring entrepreneurship, is still poor mainly because of the problems associated with their gender roles. Therefore, promotion of entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of women poses a challenge to the government, funding agencies and non-government organizations. It is important for these people to focus on the limitations faced by women and to plan supporting system. Apart from these difficulties, the social difficulties are creating obstacles on the path of women entrepreneurs and these are non support from family. Many times the male dominated society is also creating lot of problems for women. The men working under women entrepreneurs are also creating problems because of egoism. Family may not be in full favour of women entrepreneurs. Even society is pointing women entrepreneurs and blames for defect in the fabric of society. All these are happening because of old and traditional attitude of the society and the people specially male members.

Conclusion:

In the present study the focus was given to see the level of women empowerment specially in Marathwada. It was observed that most of the women, even housewives are not empowered in the area of Psychological, Social and cultural. The Political awareness was not up to the mark. It is quite necessary to make some solution to these issues. Another thing, it was observed that though women were replying that they are self-dependent and socially empowered but when some personal questions were asked, they were not replying in the positive manner except few. Hence, it can be concluded that still all women are not satisfactory developed or empowered in the areas of Cultural or Social. As far as Psychological Development is concerned, almost women showed the positive response, and when confirmed by asking few more questions apart from questionnaire the responses were positive. The Economic Empowerment is the issue which was not focused much, but when observation was done, it was found that most of the women including working sector, depends more upon their family while taking investment decisions. As far as career ambitious part is concerned, most of the women including working women were not focusing on their own career but are thinking about more for their family and children. For them, if they are working, it just for giving financial support to their family. Very few women were there who are working for their career and their own identity. Personally, I feel that working women are more empowered than housewives because the family might have given some

liberty to working women for bringing financial support for them. Hence, still the scale of women empowerment which was supposed to be found in the paper was not measure. So, there is need to make the awareness about all the dimensions of the women empowerment.

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