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***PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS***

***( A Study with Special Reference to Lanja Tehsil, Ratnagiri District (Maharashtra)***

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**ABSTRACT:**

***You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women” -Jawaharlal Nehru***

*Women development is the major aspect of national development. Women in India remained economically undeveloped for many decades. Women entrepreneurs are becoming alarming force to consider within the business world and they are not only involved in business for survival, but to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities. Though the women entrepreneurs have their own identity in the world of entrepreneurship and most of them are capable of fully identifying themselves in their new economic role in society, these women entrepreneurs have various problems in starting and operating a business. In spite of various problems, women entrepreneurship is exploring in India due to sincerity and devoted nature of women. According to the various studies it was revealed that Indian women entrepreneurs are more confident, business and growth oriented. It indicates that there is a bright future for women entrepreneurship in India. However the percentage of women entrepreneurs' in India is meager i. e. about 20 percent compared to nearly 80 percent male entrepreneurs. India has 13.5–15.7 million women-owned enterprises. In this research an attempt is made to evaluate problems and prospect of rural women entrepreneurs.*

**Keyword:** Women, Entrepreneurs, Problems, Prospects, motivational factors

**INTRODUCTION**

Economic development in any form is the outcome of human activity. Nowadays Women's development has considered the key to the overall sustainable development of a nation because



around 50 percent of the population is women. Women entrepreneurs are defined by Government of India 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 employment generated in the enterprise to women. Recently there is remarkable rise of women entrepreneurs in India due to over all changing perception of entrepreneurship, better access of education, increasing social acceptance, better infrastructure especially in information technology, better access to finance etc. The women entrepreneurship has been contributing in the economic growth by contributing not only self employment but also by generating employment to other female. However compared to male entrepreneurs' growth in male entrepreneurship is slow.

The global disparity is evident in a report which says nearly 126 million women have their own business across the globe while Indian women linger around the 8 million. In India there are most successful women entrepreneurs' as a role model. Other Indians women need to learn from these role models to take initiatives to start up the business by overcoming the problems in male dominated society. There are various problems of women entrepreneurs like gender-based barriers, discriminatory property, matrimonial and inheritance laws and/or cultural practices; lack of access to formal finance mechanisms; limited mobility and access to information and networks, etc.

The governments across the world as well as various Non-Government Organizations are motivating to women entrepreneurs through various schemes, incentives and promotional measures to start up and operating the ventures. Today, women entrepreneurs represent a group of women who are exploring new areas for economic participation. The motivating factors behind women entrepreneurs are their skill, knowledge, talents, abilities and creativity in business and a compelling desire of wanting to do something positive. The rural women are having basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. For accelerate the speed of women entrepreneurship in rural area they should be motivated, technical and managerial skills should be develop among them and support should be given from family, government and other organization. More over formation and strengthening of rural women entrepreneurs network must be encouraged.

Lanja tehsil in Ratnagiri district is hilly and industrially backward area but rich in horticultural produce. There are huge potentials to establish fruit processing industries, eco-tourism centers, agro-tourism centers, fruit processing industries to availability of horticultural produce, increasing tourism destinations and supporting infrastructural facilities like national highway and Konkan railway etc. Though favourable environmental factors for industrial development, entrepreneurial development is not remarkable due to migration of male to Mumbai, Pune and other cities. The proportion of female population is more in this region however rural women are



not aware and literate to handling all the legal and other formalities for establishing of business and operating a business. They have also lack of confidence in their ability to run the entrepreneurship. There are only few successful women entrepreneurs in this region. To increase the growth rate and success rate of women entrepreneurship in this region, women should be motivated for entrepreneurship development by arranging entrepreneurship development programme. The members of SHGs are engaged in the activities like cashew processing, processing of mango in the traditional products like pickle making, chutney, amchur etc. mango-based products, papad, Diwali snacks, and other food products, handicrafts as well as other products like papers bags etc. Apart from the activities of SHGs members the women entrepreneurs are engaged beauty Parlors, Tailoring, Marketing of garments and stationery etc. The scale of business is small and tiny. There are various problems of women entrepreneurs like lack of adequate training, adequate capital, professional and managerial skills, time etc. In spite of these problems and constraints, there is remarkable growth in women entrepreneurship in the resource region.

On this background the statement of problem was finalized as

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**Objectives of the study:**

1. To take an overview of women entrepreneurship in India in general and women entrepreneurship in Lanja tehsil in particular
2. To study motivational factors to become an entrepreneurs
3. To evaluate the problems faced by the women entrepreneurs' in the resource region.
4. To suggest the measures to overcome the problems and that would be contribute policy implication for a greater prospects to women entrepreneurs.



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## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The geographical coverage of the present study is restricted Lanja tehsil of Ratnagiri Districts of Maharashtra State.

### **Data Collection**

For the present study primary as well as secondary data is used.

### **Secondary data**

For collection of secondary data books, journals, reports and other published material is referred.

### **Primary data**

Primary data is collected from women entrepreneurs in Lanja tehsil with help of well structured interview schedule. For selection of sample, random sampling technique is adopted. A sample of 100 women respondents is taken on the basis of criterion that they are running the venture independently more than five years.

For analysis of data, techniques like tables, charts, percentage etc. are used.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Sathiabama. K** in her study “Rural Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development” has pointed out that economic empowerment of women is significant importance to political thinkers, social scientists and reformers. The members of SHGs are involved in Micro - Entrepreneurships. Through SHGs, women are becoming economically independent and providing employment opportunities to others also. It leads to economic empowerment of women and ultimately to nation.

**Preeti Sharma and Shashi Kanta Varma**, in their study “Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Activities of Self Help Groups” pointed out that concept of Self Help Groups (SHGs) is proving to be a helpful instrument for the women empowerment. SHG is an organization of rural poor, particularly of women that deliver micro credit to undertake the entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship development and income generating activities are a feasible solution for empowering women. It generates income and also provides flexible working hours according to the needs of homemakers.



**Dr. S. K. Choudhari, Dr. K.R. Swain and Dr. N, Nayak** in their study, “Rural Women Entrepreneurship In India: Opportunities and Challenges” pointed out that in India majority of people live in rural area and about 50 percent of this is represented by women community. In Indian men dominated society rural women are have very low status. In economic activities and decision making process their position is negligible; due to socio-economic constraints their economic activities are hindered. Majority of women do not take entrepreneurial venture. To overcome the constraints like illiteracy, poverty, lack of employment opportunities, resistance to change etc. in the rural women empowerment, an integrated and balanced development oriented policy must be channelized. It will be results in much economical benefits. It can be achieved through collective efforts of the government and rural women.

**Dr. Kalinath Patil and Dr. Santosh Bais** in their study ”Problems and Prospect of Women Entrepreneurship”, evaluated the problems of women entrepreneurship. They have pointed out that the biggest problem against women entrepreneurs is that they are women because in our male dominated society they are facing many problems of social barriers. Along with this lack of suitable and appropriate environment, problems of marketing, problem in getting loan, problems relating to production are the problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**



Table No. 1

## GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS'

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Demographic information of Women Entrepreneurs'</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Types of Business</b>		
	Service	20	40
	Trading	20	40
	Production and Marketing	10	20
<b>II</b>	<b>Awareness of Government policies</b>		
	Yes	35	70
	No	15	30
<b>III</b>	<b>Motives behind the venture</b>		
	Increase in the income		-
	Use of skills	10	20
	Self- reliance	30	60
	Unemployment	10	20
	Use of leisure time	-	-
<b>IV</b>	<b>Prospect of Business in future</b>		
	Bright	50	100

( Source: Primary Data)

**Table 2****Problems of Women Entrepreneurs' in Lanja Tehsil**

Sr. No.	Problems of Women Entrepreneurs	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>I</b>	<b>Problems Relating To The Production</b>		
	Non-availability of adequate raw material	10	20
	Lack of adequate infrastructural facilities	20	40
	Non-availability of Inadequate technical tools	16	32
	Inadequate technical staff	36	72
	Other problems	4	08
<b>II</b>	<b>Problem of Finance</b>	36	72
<b>III</b>	<b>Problems Relating To Marketing</b>		
	Higher price	25	50
	Availability of substitute goods	21	42
	High credit period	10	20
	Lack of marketing knowledge and skills	20	40
	Poor publicity campaign	20	40
	Exploitation from Middle men	10	20
	Stiff competitions	30	60
<b>IV</b>	<b>Socio-Personal Problems</b>		
	Social barriers	24	48



	Lack of self-confidence and risk bearing capacity	5	10
	Psychological factors	10	20
	Lack of family support	16	32
	Limited Mobility	27	54
	Lack of proper education	14	28
	Lack of technical and practical knowledge	30	60
	Problem of time management	38	76
	Dual duties	40	80
	Male dominated Society	38	76
	<b>Problems relating to Management</b>		
	Lack of confidence in decision making	40	80
	Lack of professional management attitude	35	70
	Lack of professional training	35	70

(Sources: Primary Data)

## **FINDINGS**

### **A. PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

#### **A. General Problems of Entrepreneurs**

##### **I Problems Relating to the Production**

- Non-availability of raw material Fruit processing industry is a major industry in this region. Due to seasonal nature of horticulture produce like cashew, mango etc. investment in fixed capital remains idle during the remaining part of the year.





- **Non- availability of Skilled Workers**

Non-availability of skilled, professional and technical workers and employees is one the major problem of the business enterprise.

- **Inadequacy of Modern Tools and Technology**

Due to small nature of business and lack of sufficient capital, women entrepreneurs' cannot adopt modern technology. It results in high cost of production as well as it affect quality of the product.

- **Non-availability of Infrastructure Facilities**

Due to low capital investment there is a lack of infrastructural facilities.

## **II Problem of Finance**

Finance is regarded as “life blood” for any enterprise, be it big or small. As women do not have any property on their names to use them as collateral security for obtaining loan from financial institutions. Financial institutions are also consider less credit worthy and they feel women entrepreneurs can leave any time. Therefore, they rely on their own savings, if any and loans from friends and relatives. Thus, women enterprises fail due to the shortage of finance.

## **III. Problems Relating to Marketing :**

The nature of business of women entrepreneurs is small and tiny. They have to face competition with medium and large scale business units. Due to lack of proper awareness about marketing environment, poor advertising campaign and exploitation from the middlemen women entrepreneurs have many marketing problems.

- **Stiff Competitions**

About 60 percent of the women entrepreneurs have agreed that they are facing stiff competitions from medium and large scale business and male entrepreneurs.

- **Lack of Marketing Knowledge and Skills and Poor Marketing Campaign**

About 40 percent of the women entrepreneurs have agreed that they have lack of marketing knowledge and skills due to limited social access and limited mobility.

- Women entrepreneurs also reported that due to lack of adequate capital and small nature of business their publicity campaign is also poor. It results in less competitiveness of the product.

## **B. Specific Problems of Women Entrepreneurs**



- **Socio- cultural Barriers**

In our man dominating society women entrepreneurs are always seen with suspicious eyes, situation in rural areas is too worse. Poor self-image of women, discriminating treatment to women, lack of freedom for expression, law of dignity of labour are the major constraints in the women empowerment. About 48 percent respondents felt that social barriers are one of the major constraints in the women entrepreneurship development.

- **Lack of Self-confidence and Risk Bearing Capacity**

Women in India lead a protected life. They are less educated and economically dependent. Risk bearing is an essential requisite of a successful entrepreneur. Women are hesitating to shoulder the responsibilities and to bear the risk due to fear of failure and criticism.

About 10 percent women entrepreneurs have reported that they have lack of self-confidence and always feel that they may not be successful and hence hesitate to take risk. Their risk bearing capacity is always less than man.

- **Psychological Factors**

Mostly women feel that she is 'women' and less effective than man. Secondly, family and home maintenance are her moral duties if she is engaged in such work. Then how can manage both the role? About 20 percent of the respondents told that they have to strive hard to balance their family life with care and hence feels better to be housewives.

- **Lack of Family Support**

About 32 percent of the respondents have reported that there was resistance from family members for starting the business enterprise and they have lack of support from their family members for operating the business.

- **Limited Mobility**

Unlike men, women mobility in India is highly limited due to various reasons. Due to low mobility she has to rely on men employees. The success rate of women entrepreneurship is lower due to limited knowledge of market position, limited interaction with society etc

- **Dual Duties and Time Management**

Women's family and personal obligations are sometimes great barriers in succeeding the business. In India, it is mainly a woman's moral duty to look after the children and other



members of the family. Due to family and business responsibilities she cannot devote more time for business. Time management is major problem of women entrepreneurs.

- **Lack of Technical and Professional Education**

In India, around three- fifths (60%) of women are still illiterate, illiteracy is the root cause of socio- economic problems. Due to the lack of education and that too qualitative education, women are not aware of business, technology and market knowledge. Also, lack of education cases low achievement motivation among women. Thus, lack of education creates problems for women in the setting up and running of business enterprises.

- **Male Dominated Society**

Due to male-dominated Indian society, women are not treated equal to men. This in turn, serves as a barrier to women entry into business and operating the business successfully.

**REMEDIAL MEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS:**

- **Market Facilities**

Many women entrepreneurs find difficult to capture the market and popular their product in the market due to lack of mobility and awareness about market conditions. To acquire the market and to popularize the product in the market following measures should be implemented.

- Effective utilization of media and internet to popularize the product in the market.
- Participation in the various exhibitions, yatras, festivals for marketing the product at local as well as national level.
- Marketing of the product on collective and co-operative basis by the small entrepreneurs.
- Government should made available space for marketing the products of small women entrepreneurs at subsidized rent.

- **Self- Motivation**

Self- motivation can be realized through mind set for successful business. Self motivation will lead to increase risk bearing capacities, enhancing capacity building and shouldering business as well as social responsibilities.



**Financial Assistance:**

Recently Banks and financial institutions are lending more freely to women entrepreneurs. Government has to lend more subsidies to women entrepreneurs. They should provide working capital at lower interest rate and on easy conditions.

**Stress on women education:**

Though Government has increased number of opportunities for women education yet it is necessary to increase the number of technical and professional schools for women.

**Infrastructural development:**

The development of transport and communication throughout the country will help for women entrepreneurs to market their products easily.

Only few women are able to succeed to shoulder the business and family responsibilities. To manage dual responsibilities efficiently and to devote more time for business, priorities should be determined properly by adopting effective time management techniques.

Women entrepreneurs should trained continuously to acquire the skills and knowledge in all functional areas of the business. This will be helpful to them in excel decision making and to enhance the business success rate.

**Awareness about the Government schemes and financial assistance**

Sincere efforts should be made to aware about government's schemes for women welfare and financial assistance of various NGOs and financial institutions.

**Awareness and exposure about training programs**

There are various associations, institutions and schemes for assisting to empower the women by developing their skills. These training programs are really useful for new young and rural youth for starting the venture by acquiring the necessary skills. Rural youth female should be motivated to participate in the training programme.



**Identifying the available opportunities and resources**

There are many Government schemes for women but women are hesitating for enterprising and dynamic to grab the opportunities and optimize use available resources. So women should identify the opportunities available in the domestic as well as global business environment.

**Governmental efforts**

Government agencies, associations of women entrepreneurs and NGO's have carried on so many programs for development of women entrepreneurship. India been the pioneer in initiating Entrepreneurship Development Programs, to identify, select, motivate, train and guide first generation entrepreneurs from all spheres of life. Practical and technical knowledge and informal education for small-scale entrepreneurship development should also be given for increase the number of micro women entrepreneurs.

**Self employment training programs**

For rapid growth of self-employment and women entrepreneurship training should be given to the rural and urban female youth.

**Research and survey programs**

Emphasis should be given to conduct research and survey, to identify needs and problems of women entrepreneurs and to solve their problems.

Plots / sheds should be kept as a reserve for deserving women entrepreneurs.

Counseling through the aid of committed NGOS, Psychologists, managerial experts & technical personnel should be provided.

Making provisions of micro credit system & enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level.

A women entrepreneur's guidance cell set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs all over the state.

Training entrepreneurial attitudes should be given at the High School level through well designed course.



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## **CONCLUSION:**

Kiran Muzumdar Shaw a 'Biotech Queen of India, Indra Nooyi, the CFO and president of PepsiCo., Neelam Dhawan, successful entrepreneur in Information Technology( IT), Shahnaz Hussain in herbal products, Ekta Kapoor etc are some of the examples of successful entrepreneur. Though the women entrepreneurs have their own identity in the world of entrepreneurship and most of them are capable of fully identifying themselves in their new economic role in society. These women entrepreneurs have problems in starting and operating a business, obtaining of credit, problems in marketing management, problems relating to the production, problems relating to the getting Government assistance etc. In spite of these problems, women entrepreneurship is exploring in India due to sincerity and devoted nature of women. The role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is also being recognized and steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurship must be molded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges global markets and also be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena.



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