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MODERN DAY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF TAMILNADU – A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of women entrepreneur is defined as the women or group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise. The educated women do not want to limit their lives within the four walls of the house. Despite all the social hurdles, many women have become successful in their career. These successful women have made name and wealth for themselves with their hard work, diligence, competence and will power. This case study highlights such women entrepreneurs particularly in Tamilnadu who have created a niche for themselves in the competitive business world and have won many laurels. This case analyses and presents the business career and achievements of Ms.Latha Pandiarajan, Ma Foi; Ms. Shanthi Duraiswamy, Shakthi Masala; Ms. Radhika Sarathkumar, Radan Media works Ltd; Ms.Chinmayi of Blue Elephants; Ms.Soundarya Rajesh of Avtar career creators. These modern day women entrepreneurs have played a supportive role to their husband in starting a business firm and have thereby achieved great laurels like Ms.Latha Pandiarajan and Ms.Shanthi Duraiswamy or have invested their income from their high profile career in film industry to become entrepreneurs like Ms. Radhika Sarathkumar and Ms.Chinmayi or have started a new service firm targeting women employees like Ms.Soundarya Rajesh.

KEYWORDS

Women entrepreneur, Ms.Chinmayi, Ms.Latha Pandiarajan, Ms. Radhika Sarathkumar, Ms.Shanthi Duraiswamy, Ms.Soundarya Rajesh.

INTRODUCTION

In life, you get what you negotiate. Any woman has the capacity to do what I did – it doesn't matter what you want, what matters is how badly you want it" – Shahnaz Husain, Founder – Shahnaz Herbal products.

In the global scenario and in India women have been performing exceedingly well in different spheres of activities like academics, politics, administration, social work and so on. Now they have started plunging into industry also and running their businesses successfully. The concept of women entrepreneur is defined as the women or group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise. The government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise.

As an entrepreneur, women entrepreneur has also to perform all the functions involved in establishing an enterprise which can be broadly classified as risk-bearing, organization and innovations. Though women constitute around half of the population in India, our society is still male-dominated in terms of literacy level and work-participation. In our country only 5.2 % (C.B.Gupta and S.S.Khanka, 2009) of the women are self-employed.

In India, women entry into business is a new phenomenon. With growing awareness about business and spread of education among women over a period of time, women have entered into various sectors of business like engineering, electronics and energy. Women entrepreneurs in India accounted for 9.01% of the total 1.70 million entrepreneurs in 1988-89.

The government of India has been assigning importance to the development of women entrepreneurs in the country in recent years. In the Industrial policy 1991, the government of India further stressed the need for conducting special entrepreneurship development programs for women with a view to encourage women to enter industry.

There are several institutional arrangements both at the centre and state levels like nationalized banks, state financial corporations, state industrial corporations, district industry centers and voluntary agencies like FCCI's Ladies Organization (FLO), National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE) which have been engaged in protecting and developing women entrepreneurs in the country.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This paper highlights the cases of such women entrepreneurs who have struggled and have established a mark for themselves in this male-dominated industry particularly in the state of Tamil Nadu. As the area of study is emergent, research into women entrepreneurs is necessarily exploratory in nature. The data collected were secondary in nature and the sources of data were internet, magazines and newspaper articles.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF TAMIL NADU - A CASE STUDY

CASE 1: SMT. SANTHI DURAISAMY, DIRECTOR, SHAKTHI MASALA PRIVATE LIMITED



"SAKTHI MASALA" the household name among the million today, had a humble beginning 35 years ago. Mr.P.C.DUR AISAMY, the Founder of the Company attributes the success of the firm to Dr.Santhi Duraisamy who stood behind him for all his achievements. She handles the role of an understanding life partner and business partner with elegance. The Company employs mostly women and differently abled persons from the rural areas and makes them to lead an honorary life. (www.sakthimasala.com).

TABLE 1: SNAP SHOT OF SAKTHI MASALA

Year of inception	1975 (36 years) at Erode, Tamil Nadu
Initial investment	Rs 10,000
Annual Turnover in 2005-06	Rs 940 million
Annual Turnover in 2010	Rs 300 crore
Annual growth rate	15-20%
Tax paid to government	Rs. 25 crores
Current employee strength	8000 employees and 150 differently abled employees.
Competitors	Aachi, Chinni, MTR, Everest, CBR, Ashirvad
95% of turnover is from domestic market sales and 5% are from export sales.	Future plans: To establish a FOOD COURT in Erode with an investment of 100-200 crore.



TABLE 2: SNAP SHOT OF SMT. SANTHI DURAISAMY

Designation	Director , Sakthi Masala
Educational qualification	6 th grade
Father's occupation	Hotelier
Husband's occupation	Turmeric powder business.
Novel idea	Packed masala preparations
Strengths	Positive attitude and perseverance
Awards and recognition	Stree Sakthi Puraskar in 2006. Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore in 2009

She strongly believes in perseverance and also wants to be supportive to others in every possible way. She strongly believes "Success is not the destination but a journey". She also runs the Shakthi Rehabilitation Center in Erode which is exclusively involved in treating and training the disabled children.

Awards and recognition: Smt. Santhi Duraisamy, Director of the Company has received Stree Sakthi Puraskar in 2006. She was awarded for her dedicated and selfless work in the field of Women Development and Empowerment in the face of extreme difficulties and challenges. She was lauded, for not only employing the physically-challenged in good number, but also instilling in them a sense of confidence and pride. (www.disabilityindia.org). She was conferred with Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore in 2009.

CASE 2: MRS. LATHA PANDIA RAJAN, DIRECTOR, MA FOI



Mrs. Latha Pandia Rajan, is the Co-founder of Ma Foi Management Consultants Limited. She has played a pivotal role in building Ma Foi into an organization which works with passion, integrity, transparency and commitment. (www.mafoi.com).

TABLE 3: SNAP SHOT OF SMT. LATHA PANDIARAJAN

Designation	Co-founder and Director , Ma Foi Management Consultants Ltd.
Educational qualification	Chartered Accountant
Initial capital	Rs.60,000
Road blocks faced and overcome	Babri Masjid demolition (1992) – affected outsourcing business. Typical of an entrepreneur she took this as a challenge and immediately pledged her jewellery to stabilize the business.
Current turnover	Rs 435 crore
Employees	Its own staff strength was 1,800 core employees — half of them women — and 28,000 others on their rolls deputed to other client systems

They both started Ma Foi (French – ‘my word’) a management consultancy with a capital of Rs 60,000. During its inception they faced the greatest obstacle to their business due to the Babri Masjid demolition which brought a ban on Indian workers in the Gulf and hence the outsourcing business got affected badly at that time. (“Unusual entrepreneurs – Trial blazers”, India Today, November 7, 2008).

Ma Foi has today emerged as a one-stop HR services firm, with operations in 44 Indian cities and nine countries like the US, the UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and West Asia.



Ms. Saundarya Rajesh, Founder - President of AVTAR Career Creators, has completed her Masters in Management from the Central University, Pondicherry and is a gold medallist in English Literature from the University of Madras. Saundarya has over 20 years of work experience, which began with her tenure at Citibank in 1990. She has subsequently worked full-time and flexi-time in assignments in management education, consulting and counseling, each adding a different dimension to her personality. Saundarya moved into talent strategy consulting, by founding AVTAR Career Creators in 2000 and AVTAR I-WIN (Interim Women manager's Interface Network) in 2005. AVTAR Career Creators is among the very first consulting firms to be awarded the ISO 9001:2000 for high quality systems and processes in human capital search and selection.

She loves spending time with young children, and is a regular facilitator at many out-reach programs aimed at students and adolescents. She is also the Founder-Trustee of the AVTAR Human Capital Trust - a registered Not-For-Profit which powers many of the activities in women's development undertaken by AVTAR. (www.avtarcc.com)

Awards and recognition: Saundarya has been awarded the SCOPE Woman Exemplar (2006) award, the Yuvashakthi Entrepreneur of the Year Award (2007) and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch Women Leader Award (2008). (www.avtarcc.com). She received the first edition of the 'Chinnikrishnan Innovation Awards 2011' instituted by CavinKare ("Awards for four budding entrepreneurs", The Hindu, 2011).

CASE 4: CHINMAYI SRIPADA, CEO, BLUE ELEPHANT TRANSLATION SERVICES



This youngster says, "It's a matter of pride that I've never lost a client. My company has made a name for itself without any advertising and marketing. It couldn't have been done if the service of my company wasn't top quality"

Chinmayi started Blue Elephant in 2005, a company that provides translation services as many as 75 languages to English, when she was at the age of 21. In Chennai, the company has 15 employees and around 3000 independent linguists. Blue Elephant performs tasks as Language Translation and Interpretation, Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreters in over 100 languages worldwide, Corporate Language Training and Production and Post Production Film, Television and Radio. She plans to open branches in Bangalore, Hyderabad and in U.S. (www.worldpress.com)

TABLE 4: SNAP SHOT OF MS. CHINMAYI SRIPADA

Role	Founder and CEO, Blue elephant translation services.
Debut as an entrepreneur	College II year at the age of 21 years
Role model	Her mother
Awards	SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneur Council (SCWEC) Women Entrepreneur Excellence award during November 2010.
	An Entrepreneur, voice-over artiste (the voice of many Tamil heroines) and an RJ

Her spark over entrepreneurship began when she was in high school; one of her cousins asked her to translate a document in German. She was learning German at that time but was able to impress him by her translation. She says that she came up with the idea of starting her own company when she was in second year of her college. Chinmayi is very fluent in English, Telugu, Hindi, German, French and has working knowledge in Spanish. She owns a master degree in psychology from Madras University. A single parent's child, who has shone in the entertainment industry, hailed her mother in nurturing her to attain success in the entrepreneurship arena.

Awards for entrepreneurship: Chinmayi was honored with SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneur Council (SCWEC) Women Entrepreneur Excellence award during November 2010. Chinmayi won the award for her efforts to expand the scope of her enterprise to localization services, subtitling, transcription and transliteration services and corporate training which reflects her zeal for innovation, expansion and progress of her enterprise. (www.yourstory.in, March 8, 2010)



RADAAN
RADAAN Mediaworks (I) Limited

Mrs. Raadhika is the daughter of the late Tamil actor and comedian, M. R. Radha. Her mother is a Colombo Chetty from Wennapuwa. She is married to actor Sarath Kumar. She started her career in film industry at the age of 15 years. Now at 47 years she has established her self as a successful women entrepreneur. (www.radaan.tv)

After becoming successful in cinema, Radhika wanted to do something different and decided to take on the small screen. In 1994 she set out to produce her own TV software and thus was formed Radaan Media Works. After some initial hiccups, the company re-emerged successfully in 1999, and by 2008, has an annual turnover exceeding Rs 10 crore. She has delivered her success stories at various B-schools in Tamil Nadu.

TABLE 4: FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF RADAAN FOR THE PAST 4 YEARS

Financial Performance of last four years at a glance

(Rs. in lakhs)

Particulars	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
Turnover	3229.13	3218.90	4536.63	3014.54
Profit Before Interest, Finance Charges and Depreciation and after Unrecoverable Bad Debts	198.26	236.54	470.00	427.98
Interest and Finance Charges	143.43	80.84	85.79	59.18
Profit before Depreciation	54.83	155.70	384.22	368.80
Depreciation	135.29	132.25	130.57	131.31
Profit / (Loss) before Tax	(80.46)	23.44	253.65	237.49
Provision for Income Tax:				
Current Tax	10.00	20.00	34.00	25.00
Deferred Tax	(29.67)	(12.59)	52.39	22.53
Fringe Benefit Tax	3.84	3.24	3.79	4.01
Profit / (Loss) after Tax	(63.83)	12.80	163.47	185.95
Extraordinary items:				
Provision for Unrecoverable and Doubtful Debts	671.00	-	-	-
Net Profit / (Loss)	(734.83)	-	-	-

Source: www.radaan.tv

CONCLUSION

"Always do what you are proud of. Do it your way – whatever it may be, and your instincts would be right. Money is a commodity you don't take with you. It is the strong desire to do the best, which should drive me. Everything is transient including success. There is always this confidence that I will make it. I believe one should make human relationships work. I feel we all have a strong sense of duty of our existence. It is important to be good and find nice things about people and relate them" - Hemu Ramaiah, founder – Landmark Bookstore

India is brimming with the success stories of women. They stand tall from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their achievements in their respective field. These women entrepreneurs are assertive, persuasive and willing to take risks. These women entrepreneurs from Tamil Nadu have proved that the lack of formal business education or age or external factors can never pull them down. They managed to survive and succeed in this cut throat competition with their hard work, diligence and perseverance. The basic qualities required for entrepreneurs and the basic characters of Indian women, reveal that, much potential is available among the Indian women on their entrepreneurial ability. This potential is to be recognized, brought out and exposed for utilization in productive and service sectors for the development of the nation.

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Thanking you profoundly

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