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# CHALLENGES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: A STUDY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

# ZAHOOR AHMAD BOLAKI ASST. LECTURER DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE GOVERNMENT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN NAWAKADAL

### **ABSTRACT**

Women Entrepreneurs plays a vigorous role in the socio-economic welfare of the country. However, Jammu and Kashmir has a different picture where entrepreneurship is by and large considered as a male preserve and women are predominantly meant for household activities. In this context, this research paper aims at exploring the dynamics that helps or hinders the women in economic participation of the state. Jammu and Kashmir is an industrially backward and under-developed state of India where women have to face lot of challenge in establishing their own business units. The study underscored numerous factors such as infrastructural deficiencies, lack of finance, inflation, role conflict, lack of training, maintaining work life balance, discriminating treatment, government and institutional support etc. Furthermore, the research revealed a rank order of factors affecting them based on the opinions of the respondents. Financial and economic factors are ranked highest while factors like, family, self and societal, political and environmental and marketing and mobility are ranked as second, third and fourth respectively.

#### KEYWORDS

women entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurship, challenges, prospects.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

here can be no two opinions about the economic growth fostered by entrepreneurship, which has been proved beyond doubt in an extensive study in about 21 countries by Reynolds & other (2000), underscoring the fact that successful entrepreneurial activities is strongly associated with economic growth. Entrepreneurs occupy a central position in a market economy. They serve as the spark-plug in the economy's engine, activating and stimulating all economic activities. They discover new sources of supply of materials and markets and establish new and more effective forms of organization. There are evidences to believe that the most dynamic societies in the world are the ones that have the both male and female entrepreneurs plus the economic and legal structure to encourage and motivate entrepreneurs to greater activities. Last decade witnessed the steadily increase in the contribution of female entrepreneurs in the Global Economy e.g. women produce more than 80 percent of the food for Sub-Saharan Africa, 50-60 percent for Asia, 26 percent for the Caribbean, 34 percent for North Africa and the Middle East, and more than 30 percent for Latin America (Jahanshahi.at.al,2010). Female entrepreneurs are active at all levels domestically, regionally, and globally. In their study Deshpande & Sethi (2009) concluded that because of attitude change, diverted conservative mindset of society to modern one, daring and risk-taking abilities of women, support and cooperation by society members, changes and relaxations in government policies, granting various upliftment schemes to women entrepreneurs etc, the percentage of women participation in the field of entrepreneurship is increasing.

In a mixed economy of India both public and private sector entrepreneurs exist. The large scale industry fall within the orbit of public entrepreneurship and the small and medium entrepreneurs are under the private entrepreneurship. The pivotal role the small scale entrepreneurs play in the economy of India can be judged by looking at the statistical data: more than 55% of the total production in India today is from the small-Scale Sector (Desai, 2013). However, Jammu and Kashmir being the industrially backward state of India is not showing the substantial upward trend in entrepreneurial activities like other industrially developed states of India. One of the primary reasons to this alarming problem in Kashmir is due to less entrepreneurial participation of women in almost all the major areas of business. They are either confined to homes or not interested to run their own units and mostly prefer government or private jobs. In Kashmir, the idea of Self-employment among women is very insignificant especially in Industry & Manufacturing Sectors and they mostly prefer Agricultural & Allied and Trade and Service related activities viz, beauty parlors, boutiques, Fitness Centers, fashion designing, bakeries, handicrafts. Giving scanty preferences for specific entrepreneurial activities by female entrepreneurs are due to discriminatory socio-cultural norms, weak infrastructure, limited finance, lack of proper training etc. plus they also have to contend with many other problems during the process of entrepreneurship. The clear-cut understanding of the problems and their perspectives which are faced by women entrepreneurs is highly needed. This research was attempted to examine to what extent inhibiting factors impact on the women entrepreneural success. Findings of this research effort could enable policy makers and business development supporting institutions to re think or promote women entrepreneurship.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The interest in entrepreneurship lies on the fact that entrepreneurship stimulates economic growth and development (Naude, 2012). Entrepreneurship allows researchers, technologists and scientists to understand their idea, market value and launching ventures with impact. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value by developing the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and special risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Robert, et. all, 2002). Entrepreneurship refers to the functions performed by an entrepreneur in establishing an enterprise (Khanka 2002). There are evidences to believe that countries which have proportionate higher percentage of entrepreneurs in their population have developed much faster as compared to countries, which have lesser percentage of them in the society (Rao.at.all, 2011). The International Labour Organisation (ILO,1994, cited in Islam and Aktaruzzam, 2001) defines an entrepreneur as a person with a set of characteristics that typically includes self-confidence, result-oriented, risk taking, leadership, originality and future-oriented. Entrepreneurs are of different types, as they tie with existing physical, social, cultural, economic and political systems. Broadly, the characteristics of entrepreneurs are described in terms of: (i) socio-personal features like sex, education, age, marital exatus, caste or ethnicity, etc. (Frear 2007), (ii) psychological/individual characteristic, including courage, confidence, patience, modesty, risk taking ability, and (iii) business characteristic, comprising business types, initial financial investment, size and types of employees etc. (Dhār 1996). Researchers found that several factors influence entrepreneurs in the journey of entrepreneurship education and training, (2) socio-cultural, legitimacy and acceptance, (3) access to finance, (4) business assistance and support and (5) administrative and regulatory framework.

### 2.2. WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs on the basis of equity participation and employment, as an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of employment generated in the enterprise to women. The emphasis in the definition is clearly on the ownership and control of women in the business and employment to women, thereby, confirming her active role as entrepreneur. Macellina et al. (2002) has defined women enterprises as ones that were planned, started, owned and managed by women. Women Entrepreneurs get engaged in business due to "push or necessity" and "pull or opportunity factors" which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stands on their own legs. A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic

responsibilities women want to get independence. Under the influence of these factors the women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and as an urge to do something new. Such a situation is described as pull factors such as financial reward, independence, need for achievement, social recognition etc. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is thrust upon them (Vinesh, 2014). The push factor is allied with negative environment and the pull factor is attributed to the push factor may result from low income, low job satisfaction or lack of job opportunities and strict working hour. The pull factor, however, may result from the need of fulfilling the desire to help others and self-accomplishment (Robinson 2001). Empirical evidence on the push and pull factors revealed that women entrepreneurs in the developed countries were influenced by the need for achievement, while women entrepreneurs in the developing countries were influenced by a combination of push and pull factors (Orhan and Scott, 2001). Women are influenced by sociocultural complexities to become an entrepreneur in developing countries (Nilufer, 2001). Like a male entrepreneur a women entrepreneur explore the prospects of starting new enterprise; undertake risks, introduction of new innovations, coordination administration and control of business and providing effective leadership in all aspects of business (Uike 2012). Besides women entrepreneurs possess certain specific characteristics viz, Autonomy, Resilience, Confidence, Intuitive, Decisive & connect, that promote their creativity and generate new ideas and ways of doing things (Amy 2009).

#### 2.3. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Economic participation of women is evident in almost all countries. Women constitute 50 percent of the world population, compared to men (Revenga and Sudhir 2012), their potential has not been fully realized and utilized because of the systemic challenges that women entrepreneurs face (Hanson, 2009). Although women entrepreneurs also contribute to the economic development like male entrepreneurs, they are affected differently than men by modernization, development, and social change (Brown, 2006). According to U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, female participation in the workforce was less than 40 percent in 1960 but is predicted to reach 62 percent by the year 2015. However, It is reported that entrepreneurs in emerging nations face more formidable challenges than their counterparts in industrialized and developed nations and that women face greater challenges in most areas than men (Hunter and Kapp, 2008; ILO, 2007). Entrepreneurial challenges according to Gatewood et al. (2003) and Hakala (2008), fall into three categories: (1) human capital, (2) strategic choice and (3) structural barriers. Obviously, the extent and severity of these problems vary by gender or type of entrepreneur, sector, nation and region.

The greatest deterrent to women entrepreneurs is that they are women (Uike, 2012). This pertains to her responsibility towards family, society and work. With joint families breaking up, many women simply don't have the support of elders. Women have been confronted by such dilemmas ever since they started leaving home for the work place. On the other hand, the attitude of the society towards her and constraints in which she has to live and work are not very conducive. Researchers claim that Family-work constraints can lead women to pull double duty with home and work responsibilities, and in turn restrict business growth rather than encourage it, give higher priority to their spouse's careers, and make sacrifices in their own. This results in smaller employment size, revenues, and income levels of women-led businesses (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). According to Mustafa (2012), the women entrepreneurs of Jammu and Kashmir work in an unfavorable business environment characterized by corruption, infrastructural deficiencies, and financial problems. They are also constrained by their roles of wives, mothers and business women. In addition, the importance of management experience and ability to take calculated risks are the risks that have been identified by women entrepreneurs in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, in spite of the various constraints affecting start up and growth of business, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a steady increase in the number of women entrepreneurs. The weak state of infrastructure of Jammu and Kashmir needs to be addressed and government initiative should be targeted towards women to help them cope with infrastructural deficiencies.

#### 2.4. RESEARCH GAP

Scholars conclude that there still remains a research gap in studying women entrepreneurs (Ahl, (2006) & Minniti (2003), despite the magnitude of women's entrepreneurial activities. Past literature revealed that, so far, no such rigorous study on the very topic has yet been conducted in the state of J&K where all the dimensions of entrepreneurial environment in relation to major challenges of women entrepreneurship has been extensively researched and in this background, the present research was aimed at closing this research gap.

#### 2.5. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the current scenario of competitive economies, participation of female entrepreneurs in economic growth is highly encouraging factor for measuring the success of nations in the pace of development. Women entrepreneurs are a significant part of the Global expedition for sustained economic development & social progress. However, even after 68 years of independence women in India are struggling for entrepreneurial freedom. That is why women as entrepreneurial resource have not been widely recognized in India. There has been an increase in number of women owned enterprises in India, but despite governmental efforts, substantial growth could not be achieved. Thus, investigating into the factors responsible for sluggish entrepreneurial growth among female in India can be beneficial to: females currently engaged in entrepreneurship, aspiring and emerging female entrepreneurs and policy makers in framing the female-centric-policies and schemes for the promotion of women entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the more we understand about the determinants and antecedents of women's entrepreneurship at the societal level, we can devise more effective programs for women to earn the independence associated with running their own businesses (Rindova.at.al 2009). The fundamental problem encouraging this research is the crucial need to identify the influencing or inhibiting factors which may help or hinder the women in their journey of entrepreneurship & to develop the better understanding of the problems and prospects of female entrepreneurship. The study attempts to have full-scale research that is statistically significant and could answer the following major question.

What are the major challenges of Women entrepreneurs?

### 2.6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study aims at identifying the crucial factors which help or hinder the women in economic participation of a country. More specifically the study has the following specific objectives.

- 1. To Study the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kashmir
- 2. To make suitable suggestions to affectively overcome problems.

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. SAMPLING

Convenience sampling technique was adopted for the study. The reason for using convenience sampling was lack of availability of data relating to women entrepreneurs in the state of J & K. A sample comprises of 70 respondents was approached from almost all the areas of Jammu & Kashmir.

### 3.2. DATA COLLECTION

The study used only primary data collected from the selected women entrepreneurs through survey method with the help of a structured questionnaire. Based on the survey, the questions were modified and necessary improvements were also made in the questionnaire. Personal interviews were also held of those respondents who showed difficulties in completing the questionnaire. Cross questions were made to verify the answer and to ensure accuracy of data given by the respondents.

### 3.3. ANALYSIS

In this section the collected data were processed and analyzed with the help of suitable statistical tools. The analysis was made in order to measure the levels of problems of various kinds of women's in Srinagar. The problems of the selected entrepreneurs were quantified with the help of a 7 point scale suggested by Rensis Likert and a scoring scheme. The questionnaire was divided into five sections: the first section was to assess the demographic profile of the respondents and the other four sections includes; Personal & Socio-cultural Domain; Financial & Economic Domain; Political & Environmental Domain; Marketing & Mobility:

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As can be seen from Table 1, out of 70 respondents taken for the study 41 percent belong to the age group of 25-34 years followed by 35-44 years age group. This indicates that women in Jammu & Kashmir opt for self-employment in the mid-age of their working life. This is supported with the findings of another researcher who also found that women in Jammu & Kashmir are likely to become entrepreneurs in the middle section of their working life (Mustafa, 2012). Over 70 percent

females were married, with most being married over 5 years. They were fairly well educated with over 41 percent are holding the bachelor's degree and 29 percent are holding the post-graduate degree. Many women had previous experience of any type before they started their own business.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS (GENERAL PROFILE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS)

Particulars	Classification	Frequency N=70	Percentages N=70
Type of Enterprise	Manufacturing	08	11
	Agriculture	11	16
	Service	14	20
	Retailer	19	27
	Wholesaler	11	16
	Others	07	10
Ownership Styles	Sole Trader	45	64
	Partnership	25	36
Generation Type	First Generation Entrepreneurs	47	67
	Second Generation Entrepreneurs	23	33
Sources of Funds	Own funds	18	26
	Borrowings from spouse and relatives.	14	20
	Banks	26	37
	Government incentives	08	11
	Other sources.	04	06
Number of Employees	Up to 10	16	23
	11-20	20	29
	21-30	15	21
	31-40	05	07
	41-50	06	09
	More than 50	08	11
Age	25-34	29	41
	35-44	26	37
	45-54	10	14
	55+	05	08
Education	Post Graduate	20	29
	Graduate	29	41
	Higher Secondary	12	17
	Secondary & Less	09	13
	Uneducated	0	00
Marital Status	Married	50	72
	Unmarried	16	23
	Widowed	03	04
	Divorced/Separated	01	01

Results revealed that majority of female entrepreneurs were sole proprietors representing 68 percent and first generation entrepreneurs representing 67 Percent and only 23 percent were in partnership form of businesses and second generation entrepreneurs representing 33 percent of the sample. Mostly women entrepreneurs are found in Retail and Service sectors representing 27 percent and 40 percent respectively with most being involved in activities like boutiques, beauty parlors, cosmetics, and personal care and food items. In addition to this the results depict that a large number of female entrepreneurs employ 20 to 30 employees being 52 percent of the sample which also represents the size of the firm. Results revealed that the initial start-up finances utilized by the women entrepreneurs were mostly provided by Banks representing 37 percent while as 26 percent women entrepreneurs utilize either their own funds or borrow it from their spouses, friends and relatives representing 20 percent of the sample. Besides 11 percent women entrepreneurs utilized Government incentives along with other financial resources and 6 percent women entrepreneurs utilized other sources of funds. This indicates that state government has taken some initiatives to stimulate entrepreneural activities among women by providing seed capital and other financial incentives.

**TABLE 2: FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS** 

Factors affecting women entrepreneurship	Percentage %
1. Personal & Socio-cultural Domain:	30%
<ul> <li>Lack of family support&amp; orthodoxies</li> </ul>	02
- Work family balance	05
-Travelling	04
-Male dominance	04
- Gender Discrimination	03
- Non-cooperation of male counterparts	04
-Lack of confidence	02
-Marriage	02
-Lack of work experience	02
-Lack of proper training	02
2. Financial & Economic Domain:	35%
-Infrastructural deficiencies	12
- Poor credit facilities for women	04
- Lack of finances	10
- Heavy taxes/fee/ duties etc.	03
- Inflation	06
3. Political & Environmental Domain:	20%
- Stringent regulations and policies	03
- Red-tape/bribery etc.	06
- Lack of Governmental support	07
- Improper Training & Development Facilities.	04
4. Marketing & Mobility:	16%
- Motivating customers	05
- Unavailability of sale points	03
- Difficulties to find appropriate markets	04
- Unfavorable market behaviors	04

Table 2 elaborates the factors affecting female enterprise holders. These factors were adopted from Anjum.et.all (2012) and were slightly modified and classified into four broader categories/ domains of i) Family, Self and Social, ii) Financial and Economic, iii) Political and Environmental and iv) Marketing and Mobility. These domains were then further classified in to sub factors as elicited in Table 2.

According to the views of respondents, the factors constituting Financial & Economic domain are ranked highest among all other domain categories. 35% of the surveyed women entrepreneurs are of the view that issues pertaining to finance, infrastructure and inflation are at apex on the domain paradigm. Family, Self & Social domain is the second most affecting category, while the domains of Political & Environmental and Marketing & Mobility are ranked third and fourth according to the statistics of 30%, 20% and 16% respectively.

Table 3 compliments the findings presented in Table 2 as it elicits the rank order of sub factors instituting above cited domains. All sub factors are arranged from highest to lowest on the basis of their respective means. The table gives a clear picture of most to least affecting factors. The least ranked factors do not mean that they exert less adverse effects on women who are running their enterprises. In fact these factors are considered less contributory. The findings of this research are supported by the findings of another research that also identified the similar factors affecting women entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir viz, infrastructural deficiencies, lack of finances, Red-tapizm and lack of Government support the most crucial factors (Mustafa, 2012)

TABLE 3: RANK ORDER ANALYSES OF FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Factors	Mean Score	Rank
Infrastructural deficiencies	5.22	1
Lack of finances	5.12	2
Lack of Governmental support	5.10	3
Red-tape/bribery etc.	4.98	4
Work family balance	4.60	5
Attracting customers	4.28	6
Travelling	4.12	7
Inflation	4.01	8
Lack of family support & orthodoxies	3.97	9
Male dominance	3.81	10
Improper Training & Development Facilities	3.76	11
Difficulties to find appropriate markets	3.60	12
Poor credit facilities for women	3.42	13
Unfavorable market behaviors	3.09	14
Non-cooperation of male counterparts	3.07	15
Heavy taxes/fee/ duties etc.	2.70	16
Unavailability of sale points	2.55	17
Gender Discrimination	2.32	18
Stringent regulations and policies	2.96	19
Lack of proper training	2.91	20
Lack of work experience	2.16	21
Marriage	1.90	22
Lack of confidence	1.89	23

### **CONCLUSION& SUGGESTIONS**

### CONCLUSION

The study investigated the crucial factor that hinders the economic participation of women in Jammu and Kashmir. The findings of the study revealed that women entrepreneurs face many challenges at start-up as well as operating stage like, infrastructural deficiencies, role conflict, lack of training, lack of finance, maintaining work life balance, discriminating treatment, government and institutional support etc. Further it is noted that these women entrepreneurs are both "willing" as well as "forced" entrepreneurs. For some of them factors motivating to start their own enterprise is to support family financially, while for some of them it is the urge to be economically independent. The study also concluded that female entrepreneurs allocate less time to their business operations so that they can strike the balance between the two commitments. Besides male entrepreneurs own businesses across different types of the industry, whereas females own businesses mostly concentrated in trade and fashion sectors. The government should initiate the developmental programmes so that the women entrepreneurs can cope up with all the issues pertaining to infrastructure, finance, society etc. Consequently, the right kind of assistance from family, society and Government can make these women entrepreneurs one of the crucial entrepreneurial resource and they can contribute towards the economic and social development of State. Moreover, the findings of this study are applicable to women entrepreneurs in whole of India even though the current study is targeted towards women entrepreneurs of Jammu and Kashmir only.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

Right efforts from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the entrepreneurial activities. The following measures are suggested to empower the women to seize various opportunities and to face challenges in business.

### SUGGESTIONS TO GOVERNMENT

- (a) Efforts should be made to foster a greater awareness of the benefits of entrepreneurship among women. Governments should promote an entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit, and eliminate the stigmas attached to failure. To this end, strong, positive female role models should be showcased to build self-confidence and encourage other women to consider becoming entrepreneurs.
- (b) State government and institutions like EDI should work to improve the status of women in business and remove gender-related obstacles to entrepreneur-ship. They should work to improve their access to support services and seek measures which can lighten the double burden of professional and household responsibilities for women, in order to allow them to undertake entrepreneurial activities under conditions more similar to those confronting men, e.g., as regards inheritance and ownership and as well as access to finance.
- (c) The educational system should be mobilized as a vehicle to introduce boys and girls to entrepreneurial challenges and offer them equal opportunities to learn and cultivate their skills from an early age. To this end, teachers should be trained in teaching entrepreneurial skills and sensitized to the gender issues involved in education.
- (d) Government should encourage women entrepreneurs to learn about the full range of financial instruments, through the education system, targeted informational campaigns, and well-functioning business networks. Government also should facilitate innovations to overcome the constraints to women's access to formal credit through simplified forms and procedures.
- (e) Management and technical training for women entrepreneurs should be easily accessible, inexpensive, and available on flexible terms, maximizing the opportunities offered by e-learning and new technologies for skill building
- (f) "Women Only" training programs could be developed by the organizations like D.I.C (District Industries Centre) for which will focus on potential in women to become entrepreneurs.
- (g) Self-sustaining microfinance institutions should be promoted as an effective source of finance for women entrepreneurs with low capital requirements.

#### SUGGESTIONS TO SOCIETY

- (a) As the major lacunas found by the entrepreneurs in their way of success are the conservative mentality and attitude of their families and society as a whole towards female. It also calls for mental revolution of the society.
- (b) In India, women are still considered to be inferior to men. Women entrepreneurs play dual role and hence face role conflicts and difficulty in balancing work life. Reserve attitude of the society needs to be changed. Husband and other family members should share household activities.
- (c) There should be continuous attempts to motivate, inspire and encourage women entrepreneurs by the society.
- (d) There must be an end to the dependence on government jobs and private sector in the valley must be strengthened.
- (e) Experts and those who have excelled in the field must be involved in encouraging women entrepreneurship

#### SUGGESTIONS TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women themselves can speed up the process of entrepreneurship by:

- (a) Mobilizing themselves into groups to form network to support themselves and to access finance, markets, training, information and negotiate better terms.
- (b) Endeavoring to be represented in policymaking bodies and in other trade related bodies.
- (c) Actively pursue education in relevant areas to get the skills and expertise necessary to embark on the entrepreneurship role.
- (d) Advocating the importance of education and taking active efforts to spread awareness of women entrepreneurs as role models
- (e) Women should try to upgrade themselves in the changing times by adapting the latest technology benefits.
- (f) Women entrepreneurs should for "Women Entrepreneurs Association" where they can meet at central place, so as to discuss their need, problems, experiences and achievements.
- (g) Rather than working individually women can involve in "Group Entrepreneurship" or "Self Help Group" so as to overcome many problems.
- (h) In the initial stages women entrepreneurs may face problems but they must persevere, believe in themselves and not give up mid-way.

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