

EMERGENCE OF INDIAN WOMEN AS GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

“Women are from Venus and men are from mars”- An old age paradigm that has outlined the core differences between a man and a woman. Women have generally been stereotyped as emotional and weak. Whether it is true or a mere fallacy is a contagious issue in itself. But even if we hold it to be true, it is open to be seen in a positive or negative light, as our prejudices permit! We hold women’s emotional sensitivities as their strength. It gives them the ability to be empathetic and connect to others. Their gullibility gives them more strength than men to admit when they do not know something and ask for help. They are natural networkers and relationship builders, forging powerful bonds and nurturing relationships with clients and employees alike. They are also more inclined to seek out mentors and develop supportive teams. In business this translates into establishing rapport with clients and providing great customer service. This perhaps is the reason why many women tend to launch businesses that are client based or service-oriented. Since the turn of the century, the status of women in the world has been changing due to growing industrialization, urbanization, spatial mobility and social legislation.

Key Words: *Indian Women, Global Entrepreneurs, Growing Industrialization, Charismatic and successful*

Introduction

Considering the traditional role of women, going back to the Vedic Age, it is seen that the Rig Vedic Age women were the copartners of their men in life and in pleasure and hazards. The position of women was high. In the later Vedic Ages however the position of women deteriorated. They became minimally the vehicles of bearing sons and had to obey and follow behind her husband, regard him as her master and serve him faithfully.

Entrepreneurship has been a male-dominated phenomenon from the very early age, but time has changed the situation and brought women as today's most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs. In almost all the developed countries of the world women are putting their steps at par with the men in the field of business. Except some Islamic countries of the world, the law of the country has been made in favor of the development of women entrepreneurship.

Women Entrepreneurs are the women, who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. 'Women Entrepreneur' is a person who accepts challenging roles to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. Women owned businesses are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries. The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge into business ventures.

The Indian traditional set up made a distinction between "Men's" work and Women's work, particularly that of the women with family responsibility. It curtailed the employment opportunity for women in conventional and unconventional field of economic activity. In spite of this, number of women looking after business as a career has increased significantly over the past ten years. The technology changes, globalization and competition acceleration made the business world complex and dynamic. The business women can bring valuable innovation to entrepreneurship because they weigh more variables, consider more alternatives and outcomes, recall more points of view and see more ways to proceed. Moreover, with the change in market scenario, today's entrepreneurs are now able to alter plans quickly and frequently. A women's innate mental flexibility, their vision for long-term planning and the ability to tolerate ambiguity and changes better than men are a valuable asset for every venture and their capacity to negotiate in marketing the product to prospective investors, suppliers and customers.

"The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. Women are increasingly becoming conscious of their existence, their rights and their work situations. Today, women entrepreneurs represent a group of women who have broken away from the beaten track and are exploring new avenues of economic participation. Among the reasons for women to run organized enterprises are their skill and knowledge, their talents and abilities in business and a compelling desire of wanting to do something positive

With the advent of media, women are aware of their own traits, rights and the work situations. The glass ceilings are shattered and women are found engaged in every line of business from pappad to power cables. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of digital era are growing rapidly and the job seekers are turning into job creators.

They are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is the organized process of collecting and analyzing information in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are concerned or interested. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet.

During the research the critical stage is the stage of data collection. It needs maximum attention of researcher, as data is the base for whole of research undertaken. In this research both primary and secondary data has been collected to present a comprehensive analysis of various Indian industries.

- ❖ **Primary Data:** The study is mostly founded upon gathering of comprehensive data from primary sources like - in-person surveys, interviews etc comes under primary data.
- ❖ **Secondary Data:** The research was carried out depending on secondary sources which require no direct contact to gather information and is effectively based upon postal mail, electronic mail, telephone, web-based surveys, newspapers, business journals and periodicals, etc of the Indian Automobile industry.

This research comprises of the following tools for data collection:

- Interviews of Industry leaders
- Extensive literature survey
- Interaction with various Indian Industry leaders

Push-Pull factors and Women in business

Women in business are a recent phenomenon in India. Mostly, they had confided themselves to petty business and tiny cottage industries. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stands on their own feet. A sense towards independent decision-making about 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 situation is described as pull factors. While in push factors, women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is thrust upon them.

Ayadurai, Selvakumar and Sohail, M.Sadiq (1987) carried out a case study on "the profile of women entrepreneurs in war-time area" in the North-East, Sri Lanka by examining the demographic profile of "Tamil" women entrepreneurs who become entrepreneurs as a result of war. The study examined five main areas--their characteristics, factors that spurred them into entrepreneurs, their challenges, their measures of success and their demographic profile. The study revealed that majority of them were in business for the first time as they lost their husbands to the war and saw business as a means to end and their success in the venture is making a balance between family and work.

Challenge Faced By Women Entrepreneurs in India

Women in India are facing many challenges to get ahead their life in business.

1. The greatest deterrent to women entrepreneurs is that they are women. A kind of **patriarchal – male dominant social order** is the building block to them in their way towards business success. Male members think it a big risk financing the ventures run by women.

2. The **financial institutions are skeptical about the entrepreneurial abilities of women.** The bankers consider women loonies as higher risk than men loonies. The bankers put unrealistic and unreasonable securities to get loan to women entrepreneurs. According to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "despite evidence that woman's loan repayment rates are higher than men's, women still face more difficulties in obtaining credit," often due to discriminatory attitudes of banks and informal lending groups (UNIDO, 1995b).

3. **Inadequate financial resources and working capital:** Entrepreneurs usually require financial assistance of some kind to launch their ventures - be it a formal bank loan or money from a savings account. Women in developing nations have little access to funds, due to the fact that they are concentrated in poor rural communities with few opportunities to borrow money (Starcher, 1996; UNIDO, 1995a). The women entrepreneurs are suffering from

inadequate financial resources and working capital. The women entrepreneurs lack access to external funds due to their inability to provide tangible security. Very few women have the tangible property.

4. Women's **family obligations** also bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations. "Having primary responsibility for children, home and older dependent family members, few women can devote all their time and energies to their business". The financial institutions discourage women entrepreneurs on the belief that they can at any time leave their business and become housewives again. The result is that they are forced to rely on their own savings, and loan from relatives and family friends.

5. Indian women give more **emphasis to family ties and relationships**. Married women have to make a fine balance between business and home. More over the business success is depends on the support the family members extended to women in the business process and management. The interest of the family members is a determinant factor in the realization of women folk business aspirations.

6. **Stiff competition** in the market and lack of mobility of women make the dependence of women entrepreneurs on middleman indispensable. Many businesswomen find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular. They are not fully aware of the changing market conditions.

7. The **male - female competition** which is a hurdle to women entrepreneurs in the business management process. Despite the fact that women entrepreneurs are good in keeping their service prompt and delivery in time, due to lack of organizational skills compared to male entrepreneurs women have to face constraints from competition. The confidence to travel across day and night and even different regions and states are less found in women compared to male entrepreneurs. This shows the low-level freedom of expression and freedom of mobility of the women entrepreneurs.

8. Knowledge of alternative source of raw materials availability and high negotiation skills are the basic requirement to run a business. Getting the raw materials from different source with discount prices is the factor that determines the profit margin. **Lack of knowledge** of availability of the raw materials and low-level negotiation and bargaining skills are the factors, which affect women entrepreneur's business adventures.

9. Knowledge of latest technological changes, know how, and education level of the person are significant factors that affect business. The **literacy rate** of women in India is found at a low level compared to the male population. Many women in developing nations lack the education needed to spur successful entrepreneurship. They are ignorant of new technologies or unskilled in their use, and often unable to do research and gain the necessary training.

10. **Low-level risk taking** attitude is another factor affecting women folk's decision to get into business. Low-level education provides low-level self-confidence and self-reliance to the women folk to engage in business, which is continuous risk taking and strategic decision making. Investing money, maintaining the operations and ploughing back money for surplus generation requires a high risk taking attitude, courage and confidence. Though the risk tolerance ability of the women folk in day-to-day life is high compared to male members, while in business it is found opposite to that.

11. **High production cost** of some business operations adversely affects the development of women entrepreneurs. The installation of new machineries during expansion of the productive capacity and like similar factors dissuades the women entrepreneurs from venturing into new areas.

Woman leader Entrepreneurs doing Indians proud

Ekta Kapoor, Head Balaji Telefilms Ltd. She is an Indian TV and film producer. She is the Creative Director and Joint Managing Director of Balaji Telefilms, her production company, she is most famous for having created and supervised some of the most popular serials in Indian television history, serials that kept the audiences rooted to their television sets and also influenced the psyche of the people. Then she started making movies and produced some of the super hit movies. The Indian Film Industry has honored her with the number of awards.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Managing Director, Biocon. She is the first female master brewer and the richest woman in India. Her father was a master brewer and he encouraged her to get into this profession. She obtained her Honors degree in Zoology from Bangalore University. Then she went to Ballarat University to study brewing. Her first job was in Carlton & United Beverages in 1974, as a trainee brewer. She started her firm Biocon India in 1978 in her garage. When she applied for a loan to the banks, she was turned down. At that time, biotechnology was not known in India, she was a female, and her company did not have

much assets. With her hard work and determination, she overcome all these obstacles and turned Biocon into the biggest biopharmaceutical firm in India.

Neelam Dhawan, CEO, Hewlett-Packard. She has become a pioneering figure in the IT industry of India. Neelam Dhawan has been working in the Indian IT field for the last twenty-two years. Now, She is the new Managing Director of Microsoft India. Before coming to Microsoft, she worked in all the top IT companies in India such as HP, IBM and HCL

Indra Nooyi, CEO, PepsiCo. This brilliant corporate woman started her career in Boston Consulting Group and moved on to Motorola and Asea Brown Boveri. She joined Pepsi Co. in 1994. She turned the company into a bold risk taker. In 1998, Pepsi acquired Tropicana. In 1997, Pepsi started its own fast food chain. In 2001, she became President of Pepsi Cola. Wall Street Journal included her name in their top 50 women to watch in 2005. Fortune magazine declared her 11th most powerful women in business.

Indu Jain has many identities: spiritualist, entrepreneur, humanist, educationalist, great lover of art and culture. She was the **Chairman of the The Times Group**, the biggest and the most powerful media house in India. Among the major products of the company, The Times of India, the largest selling English daily newspaper of the world. In 2000, Jain delivered speech at the Millenium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders

Anu Aga- Chairperson (former) Thermax Group This woman became the Chairperson of Thermax Engineering after the death of her husband Rohinton Aga. The company's condition was critical at that time. Its share price dipped to Rs. 36 from Rs. 400. Anu Aga, the then Director of Human Resource, Thermax, was compelled to take charge of the company. In order to make the company profitable, she brought a consultant from abroad and restructured the company. The strategy worked and the company saw profit again. She stepped down from the post of chairperson in 2004. Now, she spends most of her time in social activities. Bombay Management Association awarded her Management Woman Achiever of the Year Award 2002-2003.

Lalita Gupte & Kalpana Morparia—93rd position—Joint Managing Directors, ICICI Bank Kalpana Morparia and Lalita Gupte are Joint Managing Directors of ICIC Bank, the second largest bank of India. Lalita Gupte holds a Master's Degree in Management Studies from Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies. She joined ICIC Bank in 1971. Her

reason behind success is her supportive family. She got great support from her husband and in laws.

Ms. Kalpana Morparia is a graduate in law from Mumbai University. She joined ICIC in 1975 as a senior legal officer. In 1996, she became General Manager. She became Executive Director in 2001. In 1999, for her contribution in Finance and Banking sector in India, Indian Merchants' Chamber awarded her.

Some of the ways identified for accelerating the Development of Women Entrepreneurs in India

Right efforts on from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the entrepreneurial activities. Following efforts can be taken into account for effective development of women entrepreneurs.

1. Consider women as specific target group for all developmental programmes.
2. Better educational facilities and schemes should be extended.
3. Training programs and workshops for every type of entrepreneur is available through the social and welfare associations, based on duration, skill and the purpose of the training program. Such programs are useful to new, rural and young entrepreneurs who want to set up a small and medium scale unit on their own and want to become a leader.
4. Knowledge in Business Administration – Women must be educated and trained constantly to acquire the skills and knowledge in all the functional areas of business management. This facilitates women to excel in decision-making process and develop a good business network.
5. Training and counseling on a large scale of existing women entrepreneurs to remove psychological causes like lack of self-confidence and fear of success.
6. Counseling through the aid of committed NGOs, psychologists, managerial experts and technical personnel should be provided to existing and emerging women entrepreneurs.
7. Continuous monitoring and improvement of training programmes.
8. Making provision of marketing and sales assistance from government part.
9. State finance corporations and financing institutions should permitted to extend purely trade related finance to women entrepreneurs.

10. The financial institutions should provide more working capital assistance both for small scale venture and large scale ventures, making provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level.
11. Repeated gender sensitization programmes should be held to train financiers to treat women with dignity and respect as persons in their own right.
12. Infrastructure, in the form of industrial plots and sheds, to set up industries is to be provided by state run agencies.
13. Industrial estates could also provide marketing outlets for the display and sale of products made by women.
14. Women Entrepreneur's Guidance Cell set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs all over the state.
15. District Industries Centers and Single Window Agencies should make use of assisting women in their trade and business guidance.
16. Training in entrepreneurial attitudes should start at the high school level through well-designed courses, which build confidence through behavioral games.
17. More governmental schemes to motivate women entrepreneurs to engage in small scale and large-scale business ventures.

Findings and Conclusion

Independence brought promise of equality of opportunity in all sphere to the Indian women and laws guaranteeing for their equal rights of participation in political process and equal opportunities and rights in education and employment were enacted. But unfortunately, the government sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women. The large majority of them are still unaffected by change and development activities have benefited only a small section of women i.e. the urban middle class women. The large majority of them are still unaffected by change and development. Some of the successful women entrepreneurs in India are Ekta Kapoor, Creative Director, Balaji Telefilms; Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, CEO, Biocon; Shahnaz Husain and Vimalben M Pawal; Ex President, Sri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad (SMGULP). Shahnaz Husain (Shahnaz) was another successful woman entrepreneur of India. She popularized herbal treatments for beauty and health problems. Her company, Shahnaz Husain Herbals, was the largest of its kind in the world and had a strong presence in over 100 countries, from the US to Asia. By 2002, the

Shahnaz Husain Group had over 650 salons around the world, employing about 4200 people. The net worth of the Group was \$100 million.

Highly educated, technically sound and professionally qualified women should be encouraged for managing their own business, rather than dependent on wage employment outlets. The unexplored talents of young women can be identified, trained and used for various types of industries to increase the productivity in the industrial sector. A desirable environment is necessary for every woman to inculcate entrepreneurial values and involve greatly in business dealings.

Empowering women entrepreneurs is essential for achieving the goals of sustainable development and the bottlenecks hindering their growth must be eradicated to entitle full participation in the business. Apart from training programs, Newsletters, mentoring, trade fairs and exhibitions also can be a source for entrepreneurial development. As a result, the desired outcomes of the business are quickly achieved and more of remunerative business opportunities are found. Henceforth, promoting entrepreneurship among women is certainly a short-cut to rapid economic growth and development.

Life for a woman entrepreneur having a small scale industry is not a bed of roses. The individual woman entrepreneur single-handedly faces a plethora of seemingly endless problems. But despite these numerous barriers and tangible obstacles women are, today, entering the field of business in increasing numbers.

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