

CHALLENGES BEFORE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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Women constitute around half of the total world population. In traditional societies women were confined to the four walls of houses performing household activities while in the modern society they have come out of the four walls of houses to participate in all sorts of activities. The global evidence buttress that women have been performing extremely well in different spheres of activities. Now, they have started plunging into industry also and running their enterprises successfully. (Table 1).

TABLE 1
WOMEN OWNED PROPRIETORY ENTERPRISES

S.No.	INDUSTRY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Food Products	9.49
2.	Beverages, Tobacco & Tobacco Products	24.72
3.	Wool, Silk & Synthetic Fibre	11.54
4.	Jute hemp and Mesta Textiles	12.04
5.	Hosiery & Garments	1.94
6.	Wood Products	17.20
7.	Paper Products and Printing	16.42
8.	Leather Products	0.29
9.	Rubber & Plastic products	4.54
10.	Chemical & Chemical Products	0.09
11.	Non-metallic material products	0.78
12.	Basic medical Industries	0.02
13.	Metal Products	0.29
14.	Machinery & Parts except electronics	0.05
15.	Electrical machinery & parts	0.06
16.	Transport equipment & parts	0.03
17.	Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	0.09
18.	Service not else where classified	0.14
19.	Repair services	0.26
20.	Other repair services	0.01
	Total	100.00

Source : Survey of Manufacturing Industries

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Women Entrepreneurs in Kanyakumari District

A women entrepreneur is the child of middle-class parent, at least one of whom is independently employed. She has a close relationship with her father and after obtaining a graduate degree in some area of liberal arts, get married and had children. It is when the children are some what self-sufficient that she starts her first entrepreneurial venture in her late 30's or 40's.

A survey was conducted with a sample of 40 women entrepreneurs in Kanyakumari District which lies in the southern most part of Tamil Nadu State. Following were the findings.

1. Majority of them are in the age group of 30-40 (45%)
2. 50 Percentage of them have obtained only school level education and the rest were college level educated and professionals
2. 85 percentage of them belongs to married sector.
3. 90 percentage of the women entrepreneurs have small-scale business. Only limited percentage (10%) have large-scale business
4. 75% of the women entrepreneurs supply their product at district level whereas only 25% of them are supplying at state level. None of them are supplying their products at national or international level.
5. Majority of them (55%) have started their business with bank loan.

Table 2
Age -wise distribution

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
Bellow 30	16	40
30-40	18	45
40-50	6	15
Total	40	100

Table 3
Education of women entrepreneurs

Education	No. of respondents	Percentage
School level	20	50
College	16	40
Professionals	4	10
Total	40	100

Table 4
Marital Status

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Married	34	85
Unmarried	6	15
Total	40	100

Table 5
Market for the Product

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
State level	10	25
District level	30	75
Total	40	100

Table 6
Source of Finance

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Own money	12	30
Bank loan	22	55
Financial Institution	6	15
Total	40	100

Table - 7
Capital Investment

Investment	No. of respondents	Percentage
Up to 1,00,000	28	70
1,00,000 - 2,00,000	8	20
Total	40	100

Table 8
Monthly Income

Income	No.of respondents	Percentage
Below 5000	16	40
5,000 - 10,000	16	40
10,000 - 15,000	8	20
Total	40	100

Basic Problems of Women Entrepreneures

Women entrepreneurs still face a number of disabilities and constraints which are partly due to the fact of being a women and partly general to all trying to set up a new venture in controlled economy. Major problems associated with women entrepreneurs are :

1. Risk - bearing ability

Women in India lead a protected life. They are less educated and self-dependent. They do not take high risk as man do, though the definition of entrepreneur is to take

risk. So they cannot reach in a successive group as most of the entrepreneurs can reach. Studies indicate that risk-element is higher for young women entrepreneurs than women above the age group of 40. Moreover, risk element is high for school level educated women (90%) than college level educated women and professionals (75%).

2. Market Stability

Women entrepreneurs do not have organizational set up to pump in a lot of money for canvassing and advertisement. Hence they face the problem of market instability.

3. Problem of Finance

Finance is regarded as the life-blood for any enterprise. Generally women do not have property on their own names to use them as collateral for obtaining funds from external sources. Thus, their access to external sources of funds is limited. Moreover, banks also consider women less credit worthy and discourage women borrowers on the belief that they can at any time leave their business. Thus women enterprises fail, due to shortage of finance.

4. Competitive Environment

Women entrepreneurs have to face a stiff competitive environment for marketing which ultimately results in the liquidation of women enterprise. Survey indicates that, women below the age-group of 30 (40%) feels it easy to compete than women above the age-group of 30 (38%) Perhaps, this may be because of the enthusiasm and active participation of youngsters when compared to old women. Moreover, ability to compete in high incase of professionals (50%) when compared to college level (38%) and school (30%) educated women entrepreneurs.

Overall Ranks

The relative importance of the problem faced by women entrepreneurs were analyzed using weighted average ranks and were exhibited in Table 9. (Table can be viewed on the following page)

While considering the 40 respondent's ranks one can see that finance is the major problem for women entrepreneurs since it has secured 342 points. The second major problem concerned with women entrepreneurs is marketing their products in the competitive world, since it has secured 254 points and thirdly inadequate training and skill is considered as a problem since it scored 242 points and the least problem is discouragement from family member which has scored 106 points.

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The effective system of women entrepreneurship in fact, demands the restructuring of entrepreneurial activities that will automatically take care of the dimensions responsible for the problems associated with women entrepreneurship. The suggested restructuring strategies are :

Table - 9
Overall ranks of the problems of women entrepreneurs

S. No.	Problem	Weight	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Rank
		Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
1	Marketing problem		8	8	6	6	4	0	6	0	2		
			72	64	42	36	20	0	18	0	2	254	II
2	Discouragement from family member		0	6	0	2	0	0	2	10	20		
			0	48	0	12	0	0	6	20	20	106	IX
3	Financial Problem		30	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	0		
			270	48	14	0	10	0	0	0	0	342	I
4	Poor Production		0	4	8	6	8	6	6	2	0		
			0	32	56	36	40	24	18	4	0	260	IV
5	Inadequate training & Skills		2	10	8	4	8	4	0	4	0		
			18	80	56	24	40	16	0	8	0	242	III
6	Lack of Strategies		0	2	2	2	4	8	2	12	8		
			0	16	14	12	20	32	6	24	8	132	VIII
7	Poor Management		0	2	4	10	0	8	4	8	4		
			0	16	28	60	0	32	12	16	4	168	VII
8	Competitive and volatile environment		0	4	4	4	6	6	8	2	6		
			0	32	28	24	0	24	24	4	6	172	VI
9	Quality Maintenance		0	0	4	28	8	8	12	2	0		
			0	0	28	36	40	32	36	4	0	176	V

1. Starting Women Co-operative Societies

Marketing their products is a major problem for women entrepreneurs. Hence women co-operative societies could be started to procure the products from women entrepreneurs and to help them in selling their products at reasonable price.

2. Compulsory Training Programmes

Most of the women entrepreneurs feels that, because of lack of training they were unable to survive in the market. Hence, frequent training programmes can be organized with regard to new production techniques, sales techniques etc. This training should be made compulsory for women entrepreneurs.

3. Providing interest free loan

Finance is the first major problem for women entrepreneurs. Hence, the government can provide interest free loans to encourage women entrepreneurship.

4. Increasing the subsidy

To attract more women entrepreneurs the subsidy for loans can be increased.

5. Organizing Seminar/Workshops

Frequent seminar/workshops are capable of improving the efficiency of women.

6. Training girls who are studying in Colleges

Most of the women enter into entrepreneurship only after marriage. Unmarried women can come out successfully than married women in entrepreneurship business, if they are properly trained. Hence, the government can conduct entrepreneurial training programmes in colleges at least once in a month. This will motivate more young girls to enter into business of their own.

CONCLUSION

Today, there is a great awareness among women. Given an opportunity, they will deliver the results. In education, they have not only excelled but are also toppers. Likewise, in office many have shown brilliant results. With education and training women can show better performance even as entrepreneur.

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