

Women Entrepreneurship in India: Shaping the Future

Dr. Prem Sonwal

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography
SCRS Government College, Sawai Madhopur (Rajasthan)



Abstract

A women entrepreneur is one who is innovative, confident, financially independent women proficient in achieving self-economic independence or in partnership, creates employment opportunities for the people, by promoting, setting up, and operating an enterprise, combining factors of production, undertake risks while keeping pace with personal and social life. Women are not only involved in business activities for their survival. They want to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and skill. For this purpose they have been formulating strategies and building a base. Their numbers in education, politics, self-employment, profession etc., are increasing at a greater speed also. Women education is the reason for social transformation. Due to social transformation, spread of higher education, pro-women legislations, spurting awareness, urbanisation, family support etc., have contributed to the emergence of women entrepreneurs in large numbers. According to a report by Bain & Company, nearly 20% of enterprises in India are owned by women. Today's woman has truly come a long way from the ancient times. She has broken the glass ceiling in many areas. Some of the most powerful people today are women – to name a few, Arunadhathi Bhattacharya, Indira Nooyi, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Ekta Kapoor, Sunita Narain, Sulajja Firodia Motwani, Ritu Kumar and Falguni Nayar.

Keywords: *Confident, MUDRA Yojana, Business Enterprise, Technology and Innovation, WEP*

Introduction

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."

—Helen Keller

Women's achievements in this time and age are exceptional with many of them making ground-breaking accomplishments in every sphere of life, particularly when it comes to entrepreneurship. And like elsewhere in the world, even in India, women-led businesses have been providing a great impetus to the economy. According to a report by Bain & Company, nearly 20% of enterprises in India are owned by women. While the country is steering towards transforming its economic and social development status through women-owned businesses, several women dy-

namos have ascended to fame with their stellar entrepreneurship skills. Image consulting, e-commerce, science, entertainment, are just a few industries where Indian women entrepreneurs have been smashing glass ceilings.

In modern days, women entrepreneurs are playing a very important role in business, trade or industry. Their entry into business is of recent origin. Women have already shown their vital role in other spheres like politics, administration, medical and engineering, technical and technological, social and educational services. They have proved that they are no less than men in the efficiency, hard work, or intelligence, provided they are given proper scope. Women Entrepreneurs

means the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. A woman entrepreneur is therefore a confident, creative and innovative woman desiring economic independence individually and simultaneously creating employment opportunities for others.

They have made their mark in business for the following reasons:

- (i) They want new challenges and opportunities for self-fulfillment.
- (ii) They want to prove their determination in innovative and competitive jobs.
- (iii) They want the change to control the balance between their family responsibilities and their business lives.

According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "When women moves forward, the family moves, the village moves, and the nation moves." Women entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important, untapped source of economic growth during the last decade. With the spread of education and awareness, Indian women have shifted from the extended kitchen, handicrafts, and traditional cottage industries to non-traditional, higher level of activities. The increasing presence of women as entrepreneurs has led to significant business and economic growth in the country. Women owned business enterprises are playing a prominent role in society by generating employment opportunities in the country, bringing in demographic shifts and inspiring the next generation of women founders. With a vision to promote the sustainable development of women entrepreneurs for balanced growth in the country, Startup India is committed towards strengthening women entrepreneurship in India through initiatives, schemes, creation of enabling networks and communities and activating partnerships among diverse stakeholders in the startup ecosystem.

Women Entrepreneurship

"An enterprise owned and controlled by woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% employment generated to women" —by Government of India

"Women who innovate initiate or adopt business actively are called women entrepreneurs."

-J.Schumpeter

"Women entrepreneurship is based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise."

-Ruhani J. Alice

Women Entrepreneur- In Indian Perspectives

India's booming startup ecosystem has created a new wave of entrepreneurs who are now leading the country's economic growth. There has been positive shift in the mindsets and people are now willing to become job creators and not job seekers. Deeper internet penetration, affordability of smartphones has enabled every individual to step on the entrepreneurial journey to solve existing problems and add more value to society, backed by technology and innovation. Among many positive outcomes, a noteworthy growth is the rise of women entrepreneurs who are fast taking the centre-stage in the country's entrepreneurial ecosystem. While it is encouraging to see more female business leaders breaking barriers, it is also imperative to ensure that this rise is not hampered and everyone gets equal access to opportunities and resources to make India the largest hub of entrepreneurs and largest startup ecosystem very soon.

The rise of female entrepreneurs is also captured in various industry reports. As per Nasscom, India registered an uptick from 8% to 13% of women-led startups between 2014-19. Also, a recent survey said that the number of women-owned businesses in India increased by over 20% in the last five years. This rate is higher than the growth of men-owned businesses which stood at 10%. Changing socio-economic conditions of women, rise of ecommerce, better access to finance and training, etc. are the key reasons behind this growth. While the rise is encouraging, female entrepreneurs still face a lot of hurdles as compared to male counterparts when it comes to entrepreneurial success. Facing unconscious or conscious biases, stereotypes, lack of access to markets, training are some of the few bottlenecks that have to be removed to link over 50% of the country's population to the huge entrepreneur-

ial opportunities brimming in India. Under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, our government has provided credit to small entrepreneurs without the need for collateral or a guarantor. 75 per cent of these loans have been given to women, with 9.81 crore women entrepreneurs already benefitting from them under this scheme. Over 47 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been promoted under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), with more than Rs. 2,000 crore of revolving fund disbursed to them. Skill development is another key aspect for raising the potential of our female workforce. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana a large number of Indian youth have taken up industry relevant skill training.

Women entrepreneurs can be broadly categorized into five categories:-

(1) Affluent entrepreneurs: These are daughters and wives of wealthy businessmen. These women have the financial aid and the necessary resources to start a new enterprise and take business risks.

(2) Pull factors: These are educated women living in urban areas with or without work experience who take the risk of a new enterprise with the help of financial institutions and commercial banks. These women take up a new business as a challenge in order to be financially independent.

(3) Push factors: These women take up some business activity in order to overcome financial difficulties. Generally widows and single women manage an existing family business or develop a new business due to difficult family situations.

(4) Rural entrepreneurs: These women belong to rural areas and choose a business suiting their resources and knowledge. Business carried out involves low investment, minimum risk and does not require any special skills.

(5) Self-employed entrepreneurs: They are uneducated women who fall below the poverty line. They choose tiny and small enterprise which are convenient to manage and adequate for the sustenance of her family.

The role of women entrepreneurs is explained in the following points:

- i. **Employment Generation:** It implies that women entrepreneurs not only establish their enterprise, but provide job to others.
- ii. **Economic Development:** It signifies that women entrepreneurs contribute to the gross domestic product of the country by establishing enterprises and producing goods and services. Due to their entrepreneurial activity, women entrepreneurs bring dynamism in market. In this way, they also help in increasing the national income of the country.
- iii. **Better Utilization of Resources:** It implies that the involvement of women in industrial development ensure the effective utilization of all available resources (labor, raw materials, capital).
- iv. **Improved Quality of Life:** It implies that women entrepreneurs are now economically independent and take decisions independently. They are now capable of upbringing their children according to their wish. They are providing quality education to their children and a better living standard to their family members.

Programmes for Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurship In India

Government has taken several measures aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among women in the country. These include:

1. Initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE): To encourage women entrepreneurship within the Country, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implements the project named 'Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Startups by Women'. The project pilots incubation and acceleration programmes for women micro entrepreneurs to start new businesses and scale up existing enterprises.

2. Initiatives of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME): Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP): a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-

enterprises in the non-farm sector. Any individual above 18 years of age is eligible to avail benefits of the program. For beneficiaries belonging to special categories such as women/ scheduled caste/scheduled tribe/OBC /minorities, ex-serviceman, physically handicapped, North Eastern Region(NER), Hill and Border areas etc. the margin money subsidy is 35% in rural areas and 25% in urban areas. Special provision of 3 per cent procurement from Micro and Small Enterprises owned by women.

3. NITI Aayog's initiative: The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) was launched on 8 March, 2018 on the occasion of the International Women's Day as NITI Aayog's flagship initiative. WEP has pan India coverage and does not have state specific programme/s. Registration on the portal and all subsequent services are provided free of cost for WEP users. WEP caters to both aspiring and well established women in the space of entrepreneurship.

4. Ministry of Rural Development is implementing the following: Skill development through Rural Self Employment and Training Institutes (RSETIs), is a Bank-led initiative, enabling a trainee to take bank credit and start his/her own micro-enterprise.

5. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana: Under this scheme, the Government has provided credit up to 10 lakh to small entrepreneurs without the need for collateral or a guarantor. Women have made up 70 per cent of the beneficiaries under the scheme.

6. Stand-Up India: This scheme facilitates loans between 10 lakh and 1 crore to at least one scheduled caste/scheduled tribe member and one woman per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise.

7. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK): It provides loans to NGO-MFIs termed as Intermediary Organizations (IMO) which in turn lend to Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women. Micro-credit is extended to women in the informal sector without collateral for income generation activities.

8. Mahila E-Haat: It is a website which leverages technology for showcasing products made/

manufactured/sold by women entrepreneurs. It provides access to markets for women entrepreneurs across the country.

9. Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Startups by Women (WEE) : It is being implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Germany on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project aims to pilot incubation and acceleration programmes for women micro entrepreneurs, enabling them to start new businesses and scale up existing enterprises in the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and 8 North Eastern States of the country. Under the title of '**Her & Now**', the project envisages a film and media campaign to tell the stories of successful women entrepreneurs and to foster a positive mindset change on gender roles and expand women entrepreneurship.

Few Known Women Entrepreneurs in India

Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon Ltd. – The business and managerial skills of Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has made her one of the richest business entrepreneurs in India. She ranks among the elite ranks of the Indian business fraternity and is a member of premier business organizations like CII, MM Bangalore and others.

Ekta Kapoor, creative head of Balaji Telefilms – The daughter of star actor Jeetendra and sister of Tushar Kapoor, Ekta Kapoor is known in almost all Indian households for her K series serials. She is one of the front runners of Indian television industry and has been responsible for the huge profits of her company Balaji Telefilms. Balaji has made crores of profit under her.

Sunita Narain, an environmentalist and political activist – A renowned social activist fighting for the importance of the Green concept of sustainable development, Sunita Narain has made India proud. She has been currently chosen as the director of the Society for Environmental Commu-

fications. She was also awarded the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2005.

Neelam Dhawan, Microsoft India managing director – A major name in the Indian business scene, Neelam Dhawan is the managing director of the Microsoft's sales and marketing operations. She is well known for implementing business strategies which have earned enormous profits for Microsoft.

Naina Lai Kidwai – Naina Lai Kidwai was listed by Fortune magazine as the World's Top 50 Corporate Women. She is the first Indian woman to crack the prestigious Harvard Business School. She is one of the top ten business women and the first woman to head the operations I of HSBC in India was awarded the Padma Shri award for her work.

Sulajja Firodia Motwani – Sulajja Firodia Motwani, a known name in Indian business is currently the Joint Managing Director of Kinetic Engineering Ltd and manages the overall operations and business development strategies. She has been nominated as the business 'Face of the Millennium' by magazine India Today and also as the 'Global Leader of Tomorrow' by the World Economic Forum."

Mallika Srinivasan, Director of TAFE India – Named as the one of the top ten business women of the year in 2006, Mallika Srinivasan is the director of TAFE India. Her skills and strategies have helped the company earn profits from a meagre Rs. 85 core to a mammoth Rs. 2,900 cores. She is also a leading figure in social services.

Dr. Jatinder Kaur Arora: Dr. Jatinder Kaur Arora has made India proud through her scientific research for development of women. Presently serving the prestigious post of a joint director in the Punjab State Council for Science and Technology, she was honoured with the national award for her brilliant works.

Ritu Kumar: Fashion Designer- Ritu Kumar is a famous female entrepreneur who introduced the boutique culture in India.

Divya Gokulnath : Co-founder of BYJU's-Divya Gokulnath is an Indian entrepreneur and educa-

tor who is the co-founder and director of Byju's, an educational technology company founded in 2012 in Bangalore, India.

Vandana Luthra: Founder of VLCC-Vandana Luthra is an Indian entrepreneur and the founder of VLCC Health Care Ltd, a beauty and wellness conglomerate represented in Asia, the GCC and Africa.

Falguni Nayar: Founder and CEO of Nykaa-Falguni Sanjay Nayar (born 19 February 1963) is an Indian billionaire businesswoman, who is the founder and CEO of the beauty and lifestyle retail company Nykaa.

Problems for Women Entrepreneurship Development

There is tremendous growth in women's entrepreneurship in India. But there are certain problems met by women entrepreneurs. They are as follows:

1. The problem of Finance: The external sources of funds for the women is limited because they do not generally own properties in their own name. They are depending on their own savings and small loans from friends and relatives.
2. Lack of Education: Illiterate and semi-literate women entrepreneurs face difficulties in respect of accounts, money matters, marketing, and day-to-day operations.
3. Lack of Network Support: The success of a business depends on the support of family members, friends, and relatives. But it is reported that women entrepreneurs get very limited support in times of crisis.
4. Stiff Competition: They have to face acute competition for their goods from the organized sector and from their male counterparts.
5. Lack of Information: The lack of knowledge or limited knowledge about subsidies, concessions, and incentives given by the Government will affect the business.

Suggestions for Women Entrepreneurship Development

Encouragement and support, from the family, society, and the government are the two most

important things that motivate women entrepreneurs. There are a number of schemes and programs which are started by the government to boost the morale of and provide financing to women entrepreneurs.

- Facilitating financial support to women and providing loans at low or zero interest, to motivate women.
- Government can run training programs for women, at nominal or no fees to train them regarding the operation of machinery and other equipments.
- Conferences, workshops, seminars, and webinars can be organized for encouraging women.
- Forums must be established where prospective women entrepreneurs can talk and chat with successful entrepreneurs and discuss their queries and share knowledge.
- Certain policies and rules are required to be made for women's empowerment.
- Help desk, websites and support forums can help in getting instant help.
- Encouraging home-based businesses, so that women can effectively coordinate with household and entrepreneurial responsibilities.
- The loan procedure by banks and other governmental organizations needs to be simplified.

The empowerment of women by way of women entrepreneurship encompasses three main factors i.e. access to resources and market, majority ownership, and active control.

Conclusion

During these years women are taking more professional education to cope up with market need and are flourishing in various areas. Important among them are – fashion designing, interior decoration, exporting, publishing, garment manufacturing, beauty parlors, basket weaving, consultancies, content writing, event planning, resume writing etc. It is perhaps for these rea-

sons; the government, NGOs, researchers and international agencies have started showing interest in the issues related to entrepreneurship among women. This is true in India also. Indian women are fast becoming entrepreneurs and taking up varied economic activities. Women entrepreneurs explore the prospects of starting a new venture. They willing to assume risk, introduce innovations, coordinate administration and control business by their skill and knowledge. Many women succeeded in their missions and emerged as successful entrepreneurs. The rise of women entrepreneurs is a positive shift that India needed. In order to sustain this growth, all stakeholders including policymakers, investors, industry leaders, academicians and customers should come together and create a conducive environment where they can thrive. More women entrepreneurs can not only support India's economic ambitions but also multiply chances of employment and revenue generation for holistic development.

References

1. Baporikar, N. (2007). *Entrepreneurship Development & Project Management*. Himalaya Publication House.
2. Langowitz N. & Minniti, M. (2007). *The Entrepreneurial Propensity of Women*. Entrepreneurial Theory and Practice.
3. Lalitha, I. (1991). *Women entrepreneurs challenges and strategies*. Frederich, Ebert Stiftung, New Delhi.
4. Rani, D.L. (1996). *Women Entrepreneurs*. New Delhi, APH Publishing House.
5. Singh, K. (1992). *Women entrepreneurs*, Ashish publishing house, New Delhi.
6. Gordon, E. & Natarajan K. (2007). *Entrepreneurship Development*. Himalaya Publication House, Second Revised edition.
7. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1796824>
8. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=1658320>
9. <https://wep.gov.in/>
10. https://www.startupindia.gov.in/content/sih/en/women_entrepreneurs.html