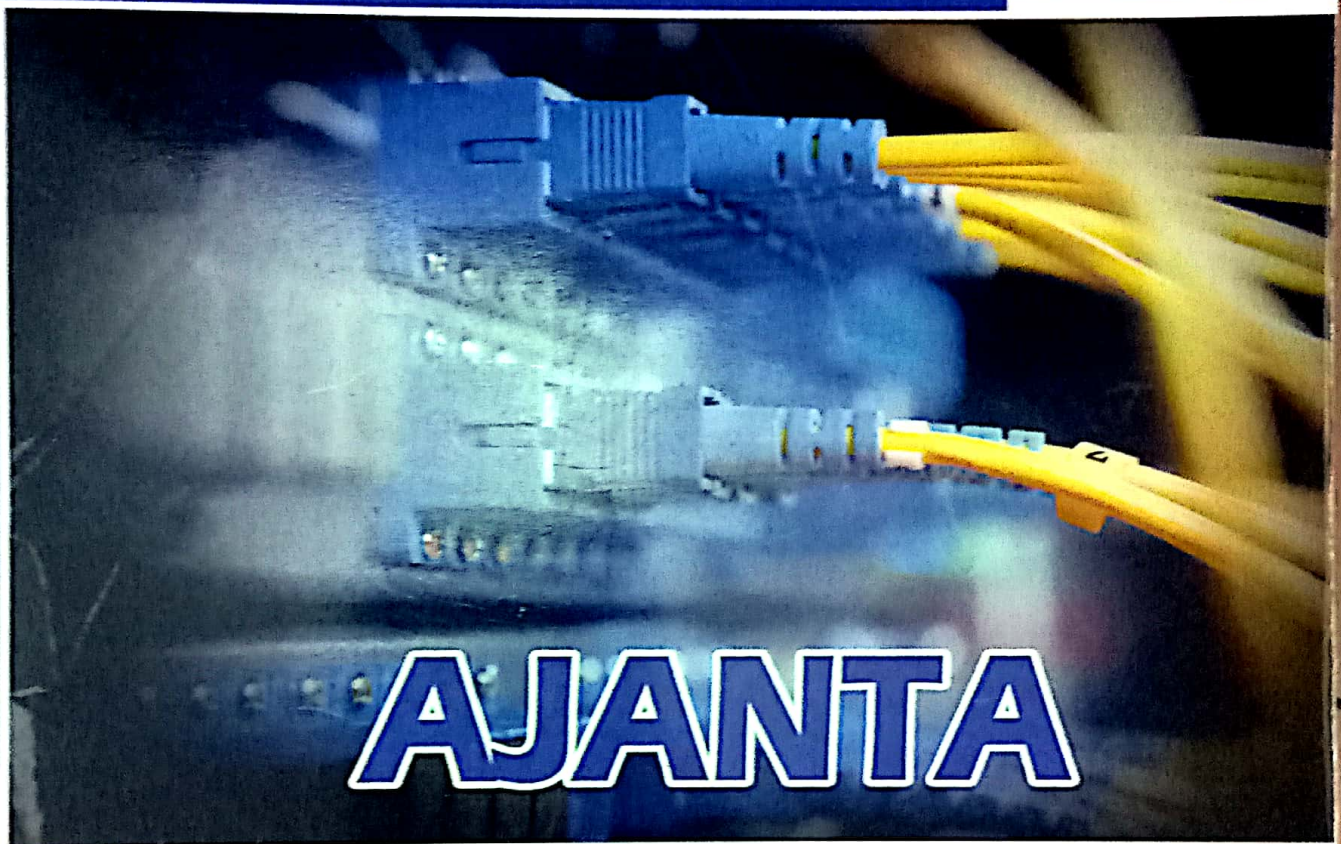




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12. Rural Women Entrepreneurs and their Entrepreneurship Challenges to Setting up Rural Business

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Abstract

Women play vital role in the development of a society. Developed countries have worked on providing favorable environment for women to work and contribute towards the development of their country. Unlike the developed countries, developing countries could not ensure that environment for women to become an entrepreneur. Women of the developing countries in general and of India in particular face multiple issues ranging from personal, family, cultural, social and technical skills to start their own work. In most developing countries, like India, women are the active players in the informal sector (mbeehe, 2002). It is estimated that women Entrepreneurs account for about 10% of the total entrepreneurs in India (Barhate, 2012). Though many women entered into the world of business and have become successful entrepreneurs, the rate of their participation in the business is very low, in spite of its increase in last one decade. This growth rate of women's participation in economic activities is lower than the participation of women in developed countries. Thus, in this article, an attempt has been made to find out the various problems faced by the rural women Entrepreneurs in establishing and running their business in terms of finance, marketing, social and cultural.

Keywords:- Entrepreneurship, rural women Entrepreneurs, problems.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship means different things to different people. Conceptually and in practice, the term hints of no orthodox model. Yet it's very etymology- derived from the French, 'entreprendre', which exactly means, to undertake` indicates the minimum characteristics of an entrepreneur. From the outlook of economic functions, three crucial characteristics of entrepreneurial activities are: risk taking, innovation and venturing into new business activities for profit. Entrepreneurship is the, "process of creating something new with value, allocate the

necessary time and effort assuming the risk and reward". Richard Cantillon was the first to introduce the term, "entrepreneur". He defined an entrepreneur as "the agent who buys means of production at certain prices in order to combine them into a product that he is going to sell at prices that are uncertain at the moment at which he commits himself to his costs" (Richard Cantillon 1951). So in this way entrepreneurs introduce new jobs, products, services etc. providing a boost in the nations growth as well as his/her personal stability. Women entrepreneur is an adult who introduces or runs an enterprise, mostly a commercial one either solely or jointly ventured with keeping the risk factors in mind. The concept of women entrepreneurship over the years has quite significantly made its way in the global business because of the rise of different organizations for empowering women.

Objectives of the study

The study was planned for assessing the following objectives:

- 1) To understand the concept of rural women entrepreneur and entrepreneurship.
- 2) To examine the various problems faced by women entrepreneurs in establishing and running a business enterprise.

Hypothesis

- 1) The Rural women entrepreneurs face various problems and challenges related to family, society, economical and marketing, etc.

Research Methodology

The information required for the study has been collected from secondary sources. This researcher has adopted the method of reviewing different research articles, research journals, and case studies, to collect data about various problems and challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs.

Women Entrepreneurs

The Government of India has defined Women Entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of business entrepreneurs. Accordingly, a Woman Entrepreneur is defined as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of employment generated in the enterprise to women". However this definition is subject to criticism mainly on the condition of employing more than 50 per cent women workers in the enterprises owned and run by the women (Khanka S.S. 2007). Women entrepreneurs are those women, "who generate

business ideas, identify profitable business opportunities, assemble the necessary resources, combine the factors of production, undertake risks and use their business skills to operate the enterprise for the purpose of generating profit income and growth" (Sudha G.S. 2007).

Concept of Rural Women Entrepreneurship

Rural entrepreneurship implies entrepreneurship emerging in rural areas. Rural entrepreneurship means rural industrialization. Industrialization can't originate or sustain without entrepreneurship whether rural or urban. Industries coming under the purview of **KVIC** are treated as rural industries. Rural industrialization means encouraging location of large and small scale units away from urban areas or planned shifting of units from urban areas to rural areas. Rural entrepreneurship can stop the increasing migration towards cities as it provides wide range of employment opportunities to the village people. In India, 65% of population lives in rural areas. Women population is 50 % share of general population. Therefore, rural women need to turn up into entrepreneur which is an important factor in socio-economic development. However, there is increasing evidence that more and more women are showing interest in small business ownership and actually starting up with the business, the status of rural women are bounded to low level.

Challenges for Rural Women Entrepreneurs

The main challenges that women face in business are Problems of raising start-up capital, educational and work background, difficulty in borrowing fund, balancing their time share between work and family, Thought-cut completions rare continuation of small companies, Problems of availing raw-materials access to export market without intermediaries, as well as an overall psychological barrier on the part of banks, suppliers, and clients alike, are a few of these challenges. There have been a lot of factors affecting women entrepreneurs around the country. These are affecting the confidence and motivation of women across the country. In addition to this some of the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs are as follows-

1. Problems of raising start-up capital

The first most important problem that women extremely face is raising funds for the enterprise. Bankers as well as financial institutions show their unwillingness to sanction funds to them due to their credit unworthiness. This induces the possibility of raising funds for the enterprise. Most of the rural entrepreneurs fail to get external funds due to absence of concrete security and credit in the market. The procedure to avail the loan facility is too time-consuming

that its delay often disappoints the rural women entrepreneurs. Lack of finance available to rural women entrepreneurs is one of the biggest problems. Major difficulties faced by rural women entrepreneurs include low level of purchasing power of rural consumer so sales volume is insufficient, lack of finance to start business, reduced profits due to competition, pricing of goods and services, Financial statements are difficult to be maintained by rural entrepreneur, stringent tax laws, lack of guarantees for raising up of loans, difficulty in raising capital through equity, dependence on small money lenders for loans for which they charge discriminating interest rates and huge rent and property cost. These all problems create a difficulty in raising money through loans.

2. Lack of education and Knowledge of Information Technology

Another setback for rural growth in India has been low literacy rate of rural women. Literacy makes them able to develop decision-making skills and decision taking ability which is most important for running an enterprise. According to a survey conducted by NSSO of Government of India, out of the total rural population, only 2.2 % of them have completed graduation level education as compared to 13% in urban areas. This figure shows that the businesses running or planning to get started by women entrepreneurs in rural India would possibly be without the basic needs for running the business which indicates a possibility in future loss. The literacy rate of women in India is found at low level compared to male population. Information technology is not very common in rural areas. They are not that much of aware of the new technologies and often unable to do research and gain the necessary training. In today's world internal linkages encourage the flow of goods, services, information and ideas.

3. Balancing their time share between work and family

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. Women in India are very much attached to their family. They have been made to believe that they are the ones supposed to all the household works like taking care of their children and parents, cleaning of house, food preparation etc. After such huge responsibility women get no time to think about their professional life. The intensity of family and personal relationships in rural communities can sometimes be helpful but they may also present obstacles to effective business relationships. Married women have to make a fine balance

between business and home. Moreover the business success depends on the support, the family members extended to women in the business process and management. Absence of proper support, cooperation and backup for women by their own family members force them to drop the idea of excelling in the field of entrepreneurship.

4. Failure of training in skills

Skill is the elemental thing, on which the success of every entrepreneur lies. Besides these, management skills and training should be offered based on their area of interest. Women entrepreneurs have very least amount or limited technological awareness about technology. In fact, they may not have any kind of technological knowledge, it will nil among rural women. If at all they have then the knowledge of technology less than the rural men. The only reason for the unawareness of technological knowledge is because, villages have always maintained the high statistics of dropping out and poor quality of education. There are few who have adequate education which is not at all of technological one. Therefore a rural women entrepreneur fails to receive training skills as their foundation of primary and secondary education is not well grounded. Rural women entrepreneurs suffer a severe problem of lack of technical knowledge. Lack of training facilities and extensive services create a hurdle for the development of rural women entrepreneurship.

5. Lack of awareness about government programmers and schemes

Unawareness is one of the drawbacks of rural women entrepreneurs. The government schemes are framed to be benefitted for such entrepreneurs. Therefore its very essential for one to be in touch with all the governmental schemes so as to utilize and enjoy all the facilities. Here the basic problem lies. As an entrepreneur is hailing from rural area, her social networking limits to her own village. There exists chance to get information about all governmental schemes. Even though India is under development, Indian rural condition remains same, especially the social status of women is concerned. It's even very sad that, some of the programmes are remained unused by the entrepreneurs because of lack of information.

Lack of Infrastructural Facilities

The growth of rural women entrepreneurs is not very healthy in spite of efforts made by government due to lack of proper and adequate infrastructural facilities.

Low Skill Level of Workers

Most of the women entrepreneurs of rural areas are unable to find workers with high skills. Turnover rates are also high in this case. They have to be provided with on the job training and their training is generally a serious problem for the entrepreneur as they are mostly uneducated and they have to be taught in the local language which they understand easily. The industries in rural areas are not only established just to take advantage of cheap labor but also to bring about an integrated rural development.

One of the most disappointing factors women entrepreneurs face is limited mobility. Due to our traditional values women aren't quite comfortable with driving vehicles which somehow delays the dealing process. Security of women in rural areas is another major problem. Even in today's world going out and staying the night out in hotel rooms for business purposes is still looked with suspicious eyes. And women often face men who are more interested in them rather than their business. This makes them totally depend on middle men, who take the advantage by charging huge commissions. This becomes a major setback for the growth of rural women entrepreneurs. Other than these basic problems there are a lot of other problems which cause setback for these women entrepreneurs like ; availability of raw materials, low marketing skills, social barriers, Legal formalities, lack of motivation, etc.

Conclusion

Women today are more willing to start their own business or to take over family owned business. The contribution of rural women to the economy is quite significant. Women entrepreneurs not only give employment to greater number of people, they also enhance the economy to grow faster than before, this results the women entrepreneurs to take challenging career and improve the nation as a whole. Women play a vital role in the growth and development of the economy of the nation. They attain the success in the entrepreneurial world by facing a lot many problems. There may be various problems for women to get entered into the world of entrepreneurship. But their ultimate aim is to reach the peak of success and to be economically sound. This type of target of every rural women entrepreneur brightens the development of country along with the development of women entrepreneurs. The problems faced by rural women entrepreneurs are more than that of the problems faced by the men of rural area and the women of urban area.

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