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ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN PROMOTING WOMEN: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELF HELP GROUP WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Women's economic condition in nations like India is appalling, especially in rural areas where they have little options to earn money and are denied economic independence on a social and cultural level. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) have paved the way for the economic independence of rural women. Women Entrepreneurs play an important role in the present economy. Through the process of entrepreneurship, one person might become self-employed and give other people a job. Lack of financial and familial support, marketing, knowledge, suitable training, proper education, mobility, and other issues are common for women business owners. They were compelled to run a business because it was not something they wanted to do. In light of the several steps the Indian government has taken, under which NABARD has given them access to microloans and improve economic status. The provision of adequate microfinance in time to the women folk for their personal needs, the family and income generating activity by reliable agencies would naturally generate confidence and zeal among them for the performance of their activities. It is based on the recognition that the ability of the poor women for entrepreneurship could be encouraged with the availability of small-scale loans. There are several ways of microfinance provided by the government among which the most popular is Self Help Groups (SHGs). This paper reviews concisely the literature in this field and addresses particularly role of entrepreneurs in promoting Women.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Microloan, Economic

INTRODUCTION

India has historically been dominated by men. However, the passage of time has changed. Women had been obeying men's directions for hundreds of years. In every field, they are now moving at the same pace as men. Numerous issues have plagued India, some of which have been effectively resolved, but many others are still unresolved. To fill the gap the Government of India announced a holistic programme called Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), which is based on a group approach to rural poor promoted into self-help groups provided microfinance and lookup viable economic activities on their own.

SHG is a non-profit group formed around shared interests. SHG groups typically have between 12 and 20 members. Banks, cooperatives, and non-governmental organizations all support self-help groups. NABARD has taken the initiative in promoting SHGs and providing financial services to self-help groups so they can start microbusinesses. SHGs have been able to mobilize small savings either on a weekly or monthly basis which are deposited in the SHG common bank account. To address the members of the group's urgent credit needs, they offer internal lending. Seeing their habit of regular savings and internal repayment, the bank disburses microcredit to the members and facilitate them to enter into entrepreneurial activities.

In India, NABARD launched the SHG programme between 1986 and 1987. Rural areas lack institutional finance, which encourages the formation of SHGs. The concept of SHG is to fulfill and organize the rural poor to meet their production and consumption needs out of their savings. The SHGs' primary goal is to provide microcredit to their members, making them an effective tool for reducing poverty and empowering women. Credit management groups have started in India as a result of the availability of microfinance through SHGs, and NABARD is keenly interested in promoting it throughout the economy. There are numerous programs for women run by various departments and ministries for both the central and state governments of India.

STATUS AND CONCEPT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

India is one of the economies that is growing the fastest, and everyone recognizes the value of entrepreneurship. In India, entrepreneurship is now a crucial subject. Women who are entrepreneurs have the innate ability to add value to both family and social life. In India, women in business are a recent marvel. Several pull and push forces encouraged and compelled women entrepreneurs to start businesses. They have an independent occupation and stands on their own legs, which actually helps them to make an independent decision on their life and career. However, they face family responsibilities due to household chores and domestic duties. Agriculture and associated industrial sectors employ as 89.5% of the total female labor in rural India. In overall farm production, women's contribution is 55% to 66% of the total labor. According to a World Bank report-2017, at least 30% of women are self-employed; 94% of women are employed in dairy production in India; 51% of women are employed in forest-based small-scale enterprises. In conclusion, women's roles have been gradually shifting in recent years. Women are steadily making progress in all important disciplines, and they are now doing duties and tasks that males would

typically perform only in the home and in the kitchen. In order to build their own identities in the outside world, women have also ventured outside of their comfort zones.

FUNCTIONS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

- Innovative
- Risk bearing and handling of financial uncertainties
- Organizational and managerial function
- Decision making
- Planning, Organizing, Supervision, Directing and Co-coordinating

POLICIES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, and Rural Development, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises has numerous Centre and state government programs for women's self-employment: The Support to Training & Employment Program for Women (STEP) was established in 1986 to assist groups of disadvantaged women in starting their own businesses in order to successfully combat hunger, poverty, and low incomes while also enhancing their social standing. Making a Self Help Group (SHG) is the first step in the procedure since it helps members develop their financial literacy, save money, and manage their own finances. After receiving appropriate vocational training, the SHG members receive skill development, and working capital needs are jointly funded by a government grant, an NGO grant or loan, or a bank loan. Then, over a five-year period, subsidies are gradually tapered off with the end goal of self-sufficiency.

- The National Credit Fund for Women, also known as Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set up in 1993 provides access to microcredit to poor Indian women.
- The Swayam Sidha Scheme, also known as the Integrated Women Empowerment Programme was launched in 2001. SSS continued to support SHGs as federations, similar to Village Societies, and eventually encouraged them to federate into Block Societies in order to deepen the linkages between women's SHGs and increase their authority.
- Under the Micro and Small Enterprises - Cluster Development Programme (MSE – CDP) created in 2007 and supported female-owned enterprises to benefit from a government grant of 90%. The Trade-Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) for Women attempts to increase business owners' access to loans for non-agricultural ventures.

Like that other central and state government schemes also supporting women's self-employment. That is

- Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY-1999) It was renamed National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM – 2011)
- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
- .Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)

- Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDPs)
- Marketing of Non-Farm Products of Rural Women (MAHIMA)
- Indira Mahila Yojana
- Mahila Vikas Nidhi
- Women's Development Corporations (WDCs)
- Assistance to Rural Women in Non-Farm Development (ARWIND) schemes
- Microcredit Scheme
- Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME)
- NABARD-National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana (RGMVP)
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

The Ministry of micro, small and medium enterprises report 2016-17, noticed that the total number of establishments owned by women entrepreneurs was 8.05 million (13.76%) and provided employment to 13.45 million persons (10.24%), out of which 83.19% were without hired workers. Around 90% of the workers were employed in the establishments hiring less than 10 workers. The total number of Self Help Groups (SHGs) were 0.19 million and about 89% of women have saving accounts. About 34.3% of women belonged to agricultural activities, with livestock dominating therein having a share of 31.6%. The biggest share in the number of establishments under women entrepreneurship was held by Tamil Nadu (13.51%) followed by Kerala (11.35%), Andhra Pradesh (10.56%), West Bengal (10.33%) and Maharashtra (8.25%). As is evident, Tamil Nadu has the greatest proportion of female business owners.

In India, there are a total of 80, 50,819 businesses owned by women entrepreneurs, according to the Sixth Economic Census. The top five economic endeavors according to businesses run by women were:

- Agriculture (34.3%)
- Manufacturing (29.8%)
- Trade (18.23%)
- Other services (5.38%) and accommodation and food services (2.77%)

Although these figures are encouraging, much effort needs to be done to raise the proportion of female entrepreneurs in the nation.

AREAS OF SHG WOMEN MICROENTERPRISE

Development of microbusinesses focused on domestic operations, livestock management, and associated agricultural and allied activities. The majority of SHG members work in the following industries: Goat farming, Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Fisheries, Handicrafts, Simple chemicals, Tailoring, Agarbati making, Textile Shop, Grocery Shop, Fancy Store, Poultry, Catering, Food processing, Jude bag, Printing press, Weaving, Vermin compost, etc. Therefore, self-help group women cannot stop

with this; they have to go further and trained to be taken up new income generative activities both in organized and unorganized sectors to develop the family and the Society.

CHALLENGES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Women throughout the world received recognition for their roles and functions in contributing to the economy. In India, 77 % is the female population and farm 'housewife' often plays multiple roles as producer, entrepreneur, worker, consumer, and homemaker.

The following list of issues that women in India face in life and business...

- The role of conflict in many women entrepreneurs prevents them from taking prompt decisions in business and occupational backgrounds of families.
- The social attitude and the constraints in which she has to live and work is an added problem for them. A woman hardly gets equal treatment and the male ego puts barriers in their progress.
- Due to a lack of proper education, the majority of women are not aware of technology, marketing knowledge, and networking. They lack information and experience that creates further problems in setting up and running business enterprises.
- Women are exploited; their rights are violated and misused at home, in the families, in society, and in the country.
- Social Barriers: Women SHG is always seen with suspicious eyes, particularly in rural areas, they face more social barriers.
- The problem of finance: Women entrepreneurs lack property in their own name and hence banks and financial institutions may not support women based projects.
- Lack of information: Women SHG lack technical and advanced knowledge of the availability of information, raw materials, finance facilities, and government help and subsidy, etc.
- Problems of middlemen: Middlemen influences push them down more, as they generally depend more on them.
- The problem of Marketing: Women SHG faces marketing and networking skills in the modern competitive world.
- The core of the problem is that they shoulder a number of responsibilities, they are burdened with multiple roles and functions but they are not given adequate participatory or decision-making power in the family or elsewhere.

In addition to the above problem:

- Lack of safety and security
- Lack of infrastructure
- A weak financial foundation and the technology of the business
- Heavy Competition

Women ought to gain such power, through the SHG platform that improves their economic status, cultural and social status.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Malhotra (2004) in her book has examined how women entrepreneurs affect the global economy, why women start business, how women's business associations promote entrepreneurs, and to what extent women contribute to international trade. It explores potential of micro-finance programs for empowering and employing women and also discusses the opportunities and challenges of using microfinance to tackle the feminization of poverty. According to her, the microfinance programs are aimed to increase women's income levels and control over income leading to greater levels of economic independence. They enable women's access to networks and markets, access to information and possibilities for development of other social and political role. They also enhance perceptions of women's contribution to household income and family welfare, increasing women's participation in household decisions about expenditure and other issues leading to greater expenditure on women's welfare.

Manimekalai (2004) in his article commented that to run the income generating activities successfully the SHGs must get the help of NGOs. The bank officials should counsel and guide the women in selecting and implementing profitable income generating activities. He remarked that the formation of SHGs have boosted the self-image and confidence of rural women.

Rathore and Chabra, (1991) state that women find hard to adjust themselves to the dual role that they have to play as traditional housewives and compete with men in the field of business and industry. They experience mental conflicts, as they are not able to devote the necessary amount of time and energy to their home and children and find it more difficult and sometimes impossible to pursue as a career.

Imai et al. (2010) examine whether household access to microfinance reduces poverty, using a multidimensional welfare indicator using national household data from India, the treatment effects model is employed to estimate the poverty-reducing effects of microcredit for productive purposes, such as investment in agriculture or non-farm businesses. This models take into account the endogenous binary treatment effects and sample selection partiality associated with access to MFIs. Despite some limitations, such as those arising from potential unobservable important determinants of access to MFIs, significant positive effect of MFI productive loans on the multidimensional welfare indicator is confirmed.

METHODOLOGY

The contemporary study entitled on role in promoting women entrepreneurs: special reference to SHG women who are availed micro credit is a descriptive nature by observation and the data from various secondary sources like, Journals, Articles, Government reports, and related sites.

SUGGESTIONS TO PROMOTE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

For the growth of women entrepreneurs and their largest engagement in entrepreneurial activities, the Government of India, non-governmental organizations, banks, and industries must adopt the proper plans, attitudes, and actions. The following programs can be used to effectively create SHG women entrepreneurs:

- Adequate training programs on management skills, professional competence, and leadership skills should be extended to women entrepreneurs.
- Woman's participation in decision-making shall be encouraged.
- Provision of various vocational skill training to women community would enable them to understand marketing skills, the production process, and management. Apart from training, concentrate on providing marketing assistance to women entrepreneurs, so that the dimension of the market will be reasonable for them.
- Provisions of marketing for SHG women entrepreneurs, and sales assistance from the Government side.
- Training and counseling shall provide to help women entrepreneurs to overcome psychological issues, Family issues and improve self-confidence and fear of success.
- SHG members can take up more than one income-generation activity so that they can expect some consistent income.
- There are various government schemes and plans for the development of women entrepreneurs but, on the ground level their execution is poor and corrupted, there should be strong monitoring of these schemes and policies at different levels of execution.

CONCLUSION

SHG Women Entrepreneurs contribute significantly to the current economy and a sizable number of microbusinesses in developing nations. It is observed from many studies that SHG women Entrepreneurs face many problems like dual role, lack of safety and security, high competition, social barriers, marketing demands, finance issues, etc. The government must implement an inclusive marketing strategy for women-owned microbusinesses in order to address this issue. The neighborhood, society, and country as a whole will naturally grow and develop when a woman is given social and economic power. They will gain; enhance self-esteem through SHG platform that improves their economic status, cultural and social status.

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