



CATALYZING RURAL GROWTH THROUGH WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE

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Abstract: Women Social entrepreneurs are those persons who identify and solve social problems through their innovative and sustainable business ideas. The obstacles in their way are numerous but the thought to transform lives for the social good is the driving force that motivates such social startups in India to navigate the bumpy road of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs are important for rural development because they bring a unique combination of skills and perspectives to the task of solving rural social problems. They are passionate about social change, have a deep understanding of the needs of rural societies and wants to bring change for rural development. This research aims to analyze the importance of social entrepreneurs in rural development run by women. This paper also analyses key factors that have contributed in the increasing focus on rural development by new startups and also how women entrepreneurs are bringing a change that can have a positive impact on society by providing opportunities in rural economy. The data have been collected from secondary sources, such as the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) and the Labour Bureau, newspapers, magazines which throws a light on context of study.

Index Terms - Entrepreneur, Women Entrepreneur, Rural Economy, Employment, Rural Economy, Livelihood, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is the 2nd largest populated country in the world where around 65% of the population resides in rural areas after 75 years of independence and around 47% of the population is still dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. A majority of the population still faces the problems of inequality, unemployment, poverty, poor health facilities, lack of education facilities and low standard of living. Thus a country where there is a wide disparity among inequality, access to resource and economic growth in rural areas, it become important to focus on the upliftment of the rural economy for increasing its contribution in country's growth.

Over the past decades, however, there has been huge progress in reducing rural- urban development disparity, majority as a result of successful policies promoting economic opportunities for the rural population and expanding social protection in rural areas. Therefore, rural development has been the main concern of our country in present times to make India grow along with development. Thus in this context social entrepreneurs plays a very important role in boosting the rural economy along with government.

Entrepreneurs plays a vital role in rural development by addressing the different challenges faced by rural communities, such as poverty, lack of access to essential services, and environmental degradation. They do this by developing and implementing innovative business ideas that improve incomes, create jobs, and provide access to essential services. Social enterprises in rural areas operate a wide range of businesses, from agricultural cooperatives to renewable energy companies to tourism ventures. In the recent years, number of social entrepreneurs in rural sectors have increased specially of women entrepreneurs are also coming forward to solve the rural problems and providing livelihood opportunities focusing on women majorly. Favourable

policies and opportunistic business environment in rural areas have motivated more and more women turning into entrepreneurs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- I. Skill trainings in tailoring have transformed rural women's lives, enabling them to become self-dependent, improve their financial status, and enhance their self-esteem.(Patil, P., Kammar, M., & Muktamath, V. (2023)
- II. In India, women's entrepreneurship is an emancipation process that goes through stages like seeking autonomy, authoring, and declaring, and over time, both the entrepreneur and her social environment change(Banerjee, D. 2021)
- III. The fruits and vegetables preservation training increased rural women's knowledge, skill, and efficiency in preserving fruits and vegetables, leading to self-employment and economic empowerment.(Yadav, R., & Singh, B. (2021)
- IV. Rural women's entrepreneurial activity contributes to industrial, economic, and social growth in rural areas, enhancing their social and economic status. Rubert, E., & Shabu, J. (2020)
- V. The practical consequences of the finding support increasing women's participation in business to boost national growth and empower women in India(Srivastava, N. 2019)
- VI. This is especially important because India has very low levels of female entrepreneurship both within the nation and in comparison to other economies(Lenka, U. 2018)
- VII. Although the theoretical model predicts that cities may eventually replace towns as the drivers of rural poverty reduction, for India's current stage of development, the growth of secondary towns may do more to reduce rural poverty than big city growth(Gibson, J 2017)
- VIII. Initiatives aimed at empowering Indian rural women through the farming and dairy industries have emphasized the need to create and enhance networks of women entrepreneurs. These networks, being invaluable reservoirs of knowledge, should be supported(Uprit, S. 2016)
- IX. In order to ensure a just and inclusive transition from rural to urban status, urban development processes should take their unique issues and concerns into consideration separately. Previously rural villages in urban India are lagging behind in receiving basic urban services and infrastructures (Kumar, M. 2015)
- X. Furthermore, in a low-income country like India, concerns about the sufficiency of the rural labor must be addressed as part of a larger social development program that includes bolstering public service institutions and giving communities more power(Sheikh, K,2012).
- XI. Since social innovation is defined as the emergence of a new attractor that reflects the social innovations, it is demonstrated that the new attractor will replace the initial attractor, which represented subpar "business as usual" practices and social networks that had failed to address the social issue or seize the opportunity(Silberstang, J. 2010)
- XII. The innovators who pave the way for new paths to a better social world are social entrepreneurs(Tan, N. 2004)
- XIII. Prior knowledge, cultural values, societal status, upbringing, and educational background significantly impact how women entrepreneurs in India's nonprofit sector self-select(Renade, S. 2002)
- XIV. The political commitment to decentralize the development process is necessary for rural development, which can serve as the foundation for a sustained and equitable economic expansion of all sectors of the economy(Mustafa, K., 1999).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used when conducting research is essential. Because it helps with more than just the creation of the research question, it is essential to the research procedure. Additionally, it gives instructions on how to respond to questions about a specific research problem. In this paper, main focus is on looking how leading women entrepreneurs are contributing in rural development in different parts of our country. This paper also tries to understand how these women entrepreneurs are making an impact on the rural economy in various sectors. For this paper, mainly secondary data has been collected from a variety of articles, research papers, reports, journals, newspapers, and government websites which throws a light on this context.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it will give an idea regarding rural development and social women entrepreneurs in India. It will help to understand the leading women entrepreneurs of the country who are contributing in the development of rural areas by uplifting the rural economy and livelihood. This study will also be helpful to understand that how entrepreneurs bring a change in rural areas by promoting local art, utilizing raw materials available & generating employment opportunities in rural areas by using technology.

5. WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR LEADERS: TRANSFORMING RURAL INDIA

- I. **AJAITA SHAH** -With the help of rural women entrepreneurs who serve as our conduit to rural communities, Frontier Markets, a social commerce platform, aims to raise the standard of living for rural households by providing them with local access to high-quality, environmentally friendly, and gender inclusive products and services, including clean energy services.
- II. **CHETNA SINHA** - The Mann Deshi Foundation aims to empower women in rural areas of India by providing them with entrepreneurial skills, access to land, and means of production. Additionally, the foundation conducts financial literacy classes that teach women about saving, investing, insurance, and loans through interactive modules.
- III. **MANJARI SHARMA**- FarmDidi is a technology-driven food startup that empowers women in rural Maharashtra to produce top-notch food items and generate income.
- IV. **SHOBHA CHANCHLANI** - AgriVijay is the country's first startup offering agricultural and rural households renewable energy products. It has a significant social impact because it not only helps farmers and rural households become energy independent but also treats waste through biogas digesters, giving rural women clean cooking fuel. They are assisting farmers in increasing both their income and savings.
- V. **SHAHNAZ SHAIKH** - By reducing farmers' reliance on harmful chemicals that harm the environment, the Ag-tech company AI-Genix hopes to help alleviate the issue of food security.
- VI. **AKSHYA SHREE**- Tad Udyog Pvt. Ltd. was established with the intention of reshaping the Indian bamboo industry through innovation and rural value chains. The second-largest producer of bamboo is India. India has both the workforce and the resources, but hasn't been able to use them effectively, so the skilled artisans from these communities are leaving to work as day laborers in the cities. The community members are able to make money in their hometown thanks to this project.
- VII. **URAVSHI SAHNI** - The Study Hall Educational Foundation (SHEF) is a diverse NGO with a proven track record of improving the lives of millions of children, especially girls and young women. They manage a network of model schools and outreach programs in both rural and urban India, with a focus on community engagement and norm change. They also try to make government systems more equitable.
- VIII. **ANJU BIST** - Saukhyam creates reusable pads for periods out of cotton and banana fiber. The lack of appropriate menstrual hygiene products is one of the major causes of health and education-related issues for women and girls in rural India. It aids in addressing the problem of period poverty by providing rural women with high-quality, cheaper and reusable menstrual pads.
- IX. **RASHMI RANI** -Dhacraft is a startup works with local artisans in Bihar, generating employment opportunities for them, so that they are not forced to seek employment elsewhere and also empowering their local art to flourish.
- X. **DEEPA NARESH SADASIVAN** - Loomfolks is a startup empowering artisans and weavers from various villages across India to pursue a sustainable livelihood. Its mission is to further cultivate original design thinking in rural artisans and enable global audience to enrich their artisan roots.
- XI. **PINKY JAIN**- Mysa is a social startup that collaborates with rural women artisans to upcycle waste fabric from pre-production into sustainable products using modern arts and crafts. This has made it possible for rural women to generate a secondary source of income.
- XII. **POOJA KAUL** - Organiko creates organic beauty products using donkey's milk. By improving the financial condition of donkey owners, it does more than just offer natural skincare products to its customers; it also boosts the rural economy. By utilizing an underutilized resource, donkey's milk, they are giving Indian donkey owners a means of subsistence.
- XIII. **DR. RENUKA KARANDIKAR** - Bioprime uses specific bio molecules that modulate physiology to make crops climate resilient while guaranteeing farmers yields. They want to increase farmer prosperity and crop profits in order to make farming a viable and respectable profession and, ultimately, a career of choice.

- XIV. **WATILA LONGKUMER** - Naro Ki is working to improve the lot of Nagaland's female flower farmers. In order to connect local flower growers with markets and customers, the startup collects flowers from them. It guides small flower growers in modern horticultural practices and offers technical and advisory support.

6. WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS : CATALYSTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT ?

- I. Creating jobs and stimulating economic growth in rural communities - Women entrepreneurs are playing a vital role in society by not only driving economic growth but also creating job opportunities for rural communities, particularly for women who may be confined to their homes or lack access to higher education or specialized skills. By doing so, they not only contribute to the empowerment of women but also strengthen the overall socioeconomic fabric of their regions.
- II. Promoting innovation and social change in rural areas - With advancements in technology, there arises an opportunity to make a positive impact on society, especially in rural communities. By providing access to new innovations and empowering individuals, technology has the potential to bring about significant social changes.
- III. Inspiring and empowering other women in rural communities - Women in rural villages often face limited opportunities and are unable to leave their homes for work. By providing various opportunities and resources, these organizations are not only helping these women gain financial independence, but also motivating others in similar situations to pursue their dreams. With their dedication and support, these women are now able to overcome the barriers that once held them back and are embracing new possibilities for themselves and their communities.
- IV. Providing access to essential goods and services in rural areas - By providing educational opportunities, women can gain valuable knowledge and skills, equipping them for success in both their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, skill training opportunities can further enhance their employability and entrepreneurial capabilities.
- V. Promoting sustainable development practices in rural areas - In addition to education and financial literacy, promoting sustainable development practices in rural areas can greatly contribute to the empowerment of rural women. By implementing initiatives that focus on eco-friendly agriculture, renewable energy, and resource conservation, women in rural communities can not only improve their own livelihoods but also contribute to the overall health and prosperity of their communities.
- VI. Preserving and promoting traditional knowledge and skills in rural communities - Preserving and promoting traditional knowledge and skills in rural communities is crucial for the overall development and empowerment of these regions. By tapping into the rich cultural heritage and expertise that exists within these communities, we can create opportunities for economic growth and self-sustainability. Moreover, recognizing and valuing traditional skills can provide a sense of pride and identity for rural residents, fostering a stronger sense of community and belonging.
- VII. Advocating for policies and programs that support women's empowerment - Women entrepreneurs can use their voices and platforms to advocate for policies and programs that support women's empowerment in rural communities. This could include advocating for access to capital, training, and other resources for women entrepreneurs.
- VIII. Serving as role models and mentors to other women - Women entrepreneurs in rural communities can inspire and empower other women to pursue their dreams and start their own businesses. They can also provide valuable mentorship and support to other women entrepreneurs.
- IX. Promoting gender equality and inclusion in rural communities - Access to education and financial literacy are essential for empowering rural women. By providing women in rural communities with access to quality education, they can gain the knowledge and skills needed to improve their lives and the lives of their families. In addition to education, financial literacy is crucial in empowering rural women to make informed decisions about their finances. It equips them with the necessary tools to manage their money, save for the future, and start their own businesses..
- X. Creating a more vibrant and sustainable future for rural communities - A vibrant and sustainable future for rural communities is one in which all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential and live happy and fulfilling lives. It is a future in which rural communities are economically prosperous, socially cohesive, and environmentally sustainable.

7.CONCLUSION

Overall growth of our country ,it is only possible when rural development also takes place with same pace of country An increase in women entrepreneurship could be one of the way to bring women back into the labour force.Importance of rural development can be linked to the empowering of women and growing rural communities in past few years.Growing numbers of women entrepreneurs have contributed a lot in the upliftment of rural community through their innovation and creative business models by providing opportunities in rural areas.More and more scope for business opportunities in rural areas have brought the focus of growing entrepreneurs in our country .Women entrepreneurs are important to building a vibrant and sustainable future for rural communities. Thus by supporting women entrepreneurs, we can create a more just and equitable world for all.

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