

A Study On Women Entrepreneurs Of Assam

Dr (Mrs) PubaliSai kia, Assistant Professor,
VidyaBharati College, Kamrup (Assam).

ABSTRACT

The entrepreneurship development is a very noble concept. Such concept can be used to empower the women section of the society. Entrepreneurship is the activities undertaken by the entrepreneur in the pursuit of entrepreneurial objective. The present study was conducted with 120 women entrepreneurs selected from three districts of Assam which included both registered and unregistered women entrepreneurs. Data was collected through structured interview schedule. The study revealed that personal motivational factor was found as one of the most influencing factors compared with other two motivational factors i.e. Economic and Social factor in the gainful profession of weaving. The findings of this study also have implications for entrepreneurs as well as the policymakers who work for the improvement of entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

In developing economies, the small savings of rural areas are contributing more in establishing the small and micro enterprises in India. In the light of demise of rural artisanship, entrepreneurship has been given much importance as well as empowerment too. Entrepreneurship development among women is considered as a right approach for overall empowerment of women. Women entrepreneurship is a prominent element of economy today. Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as —an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stand on their own legs. Women entrepreneurship seems to be the motivating vigor to achieve economic growth of a country. It is the right way to job creation that can contribute to overall development simultaneously. It is efficiently dealing with economic and social problems all over the world. Entrepreneurs have

been considered instrumental in initiating and sustaining socio-economic development. In India, concept of women entrepreneurship is of recent origin. Women have become aware about their rights and situations and entered in different fields of business. They have established their own successful business empires. The biggest problem or difficulty of a woman entrepreneur is that she is a woman. Women need to play multiple roles at a time, such as, taking care of their after children, other members of family, house work and entrepreneurship. Keeping the above facts in view, the present study was carried out with following objectives-

- a. To study the profile characteristics of micro-enterprises run by women entrepreneurs
- b. To identify different influencing factors of women for becoming entrepreneurs.
- c. To critically examine the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

METHODOLOGY

An interview schedule was constructed after going through the review of existing literature related to the topic, books, magazines, journals and research thesis on the basis of objectives of the study. Some selected information regarding the enterprises run by women entrepreneurs were framed to collect data from women entrepreneurs. For motivational factors, a motivational scale consisted of 38 statements were administered to women entrepreneurs who constituted the sample for this study. For measurement of each item categories were made in five point scale i.e. Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with scores of 5,4,3,2, 1 respectively. On the other hand, problems faced by women entrepreneurs in establishing and managing the micro enterprises were identified at first and then categorized into different sub-heading like financial problem, socio-personal problem, managerial problem, technical problem and marketing related problem. Then the respondents were asked to respond against each statements on three point scale as always, sometime and never and scored as 3,2 and 1 respectively. The data was collected through personal interview method. During interview, all efforts were made to clarify the questions to the respondents. The collected data was coded, tabulated and analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study. The statistical techniques used for analysis of data were-percentage, mean score and t-test.

Table 1.Profile characteristics of the enterprise run by women entrepreneursN=120

Sl no	Category	Frequency & Percentage
		Weaving
1	Type of business	
	Retailer	82(68.33)
	Wholesaler	28(23.34)
	Retailer & Wholesaler	10 (8.33)
2	Legal status/ownership of business	
	Sole partnership	116(96.67)
	Partnership	4(3.33)
4	Ownership of Land.	
	Own	109(90.83)
	Rent	11 (9.17)
5	Source of fund	
	Assistance from funding agency	7 (5.83)
	Own capital	108 (94.17)
	Both	5 (4.17)

Type of business

The data presented in the Table 1 indicated that more than majority (68.33%) of the respondents used to sale the products in retail form, little less than that (23.34%) used to sale in wholesaleform and a least percentage of respondents (8.33%) used both retail and wholesale form to sell their products in the business of weaving. Most of the respondents sold different products in retail form rather than wholesale as it required less time to sell so that they can reinvest their profit in producing varieties of products hence majority of respondents involved in the retail form of business.

Legal status/ownership of business

The data presented in the Table 1showed that majority of respondents (96.67%) operated their business as a sole proprietorship/ partnership. Only a few (3.33%) were in partnership with their spouses in the field of weaving. Most of the respondents operated their business by own as they believed that own talents and creative abilities were more enough to start a business hence they

started the business alone. Moreover they involved the enterprise mainly to improve their economic condition so they did not want to share the profits of business among partners.

Ownership of land

It is interesting to note from the Table 1 that more than majority of the respondents (90.83%) operated their business from own land, only a small per cent(9.17%) operated from rented land. This findings reflected the intelligent decision making ability of the respondents to start business from their own house/land to save the rent fare/fees, because they preferred own land to manage both household as well as business activities. Due to the limited space in urban areas a few per cent of respondents used rented land to start their enterprises.

Source of fund

The data presented in Table 1 indicated the contribution of various sources to start an enterprise in the field of weaving. The findings shows that majority of the respondents(94.17%) did not depend on outside source of finance or capital, rather invested own capital for establishing and running their enterprises .While 5.83 per cent of them started by using finance from different sources like nationalized banks (PNB,UBI) ,regional rural bank(RRB) and DICCC in the field of weaving. The findings also reveal that 4.17 per cent of the respondents used / invested capital both from funding agencies/financial institutions or own fund. Respondents having got support from family and had personal invested own capital or respondents with low capital availed loan from different financial institutions to run their enterprises.

Table 2 Distribution of respondents according to engagement of employees (N=120)

Category	Frequency & Percentage
Regular	86 (71.67)
Contractual	21(17.5)
Casual	13(10.83)

Engagement of employee

It is evident from the data presented in the Table 2 that a high majority of respondents (71.67%) engaged regular employee followed by contractual employee (17.5%) and casual employee (10.83%) in the field of weaving. This confirmed that all the respondents engaged employee be it regular, contractual or casual. Engagement of contractual employee was higher this might be due to shifting of weavers to another work, they moved from one place to another due to marriage, sudden death, illness of family members and so on. Therefore, it was difficult to keep regular employee for production of woven products.

Form of marketing

Table 3 depicts that more than majority of respondents (74.17%) used retail technique/form to sale products followed by wholesale technique/form with 17.5 per cent. It might be due to the fact that respondents were very active and engaged in regular production hence sale their products through retail technique/form. Due to poor marketing facilities and irregular production respondent used wholesale technique/form to sale their products.

Table.3 Distribution of respondents according to form of marketing (N=120)

Category	Frequency & Percentage
Retail	89(74.17)
wholesale	21(17.50)

Motivational factors women entrepreneurs

The data on motivational factors presented in the Table 4 revealed that among three motivational factors, personal factor was ranked I with highest mean score of 65.13 followed by economic and social factor with II and III rank respectively in the area of weaving.

Table 4 Ranking of different motivational factors for becoming an entrepreneur (N=120)

Category	Weaving	
	Mean score	Rank
Personal	65.13	I
Economic	44.91	II
Social	40.49	III

These findings reflected that personal factor is a strong motivational factor among other factors to select entrepreneurship as a fulltime profession for gainful earning.

From the above findings it can be concluded that motivation is an important contributing factor to influence respondents to enter into the attractive areas of weaving for their rapid growth and development.

Problems faced by women entrepreneurs

In order to find out problems faced by women entrepreneurs in their journey of entrepreneur the respondents were asked through close ended questions to mention their problems.

Table 5. Ranking of different problems faced by women entrepreneurs

Aspects	Mean score	Rank
Financial problem	18.53	I
Socio-personal problem	10.19	IV
Managerial	11.02	III
Technical	6.77	V
Marketing	12.07	II

The data presented in the Table5 reflected the variation in ranking of different problems faced by women entrepreneurs while running their enterprises. The data in Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents faced the problem of finance for which they ranked first with mean score of 18.53 followed by marketing problem with mean score of 12.07. It was also found that managerial and socio-personal problems were ranked number third and fourth in the constraints list of the respondents with mean score of 11.02 and 10.19 respectively. Other problems got the lowest score was technical problem with mean score of 6.77 in the profession of weaving. Finance was found as one of the major problem for women entrepreneurs. Most of the women entrepreneurs were not having any assets in their own name such as house, deposits, jewelry etc., which are essential for procuring loan .Moreover, the bankers consider women loonies as higher risk than men loonies. Hence, women entrepreneurs suffered a lot in raising and meeting the financial needs for their business.

CONCLUSION

The modern concept of women entrepreneurship took shape in the region of the ourcountry on from the eighties. Though women from the north east are still backward but now they have come a long way now and have established themselves as successful and thriving entrepreneurs not only in the region but also beyond the boundaries of the nation.Entrepreneurship is the activities undertaken by the entrepreneur in the pursuit of entrepreneurial objectivewhere women entrepreneurs face various types of problems in various aspects of entrepreneurial journey.The entrepreneurship development is a very noble concept. Such concept can also use to empower the women section of the society. They are not regarded as economic powerhouse, rather they are treated as dependent part of the society. Though they equally possesses the potentialities to become a successful entrepreneur but the problems they face which are not similar to the men's problems, creates hindrances in the growth of entrepreneurial activities.Women entrepreneurs shouldbe encouraged to register their enterprises in DICC and KVIC to avail all facilities provided by government because well famous registered women entrepreneurs arebasically sponsored by DICC to participate different Expo and fair in at international level.Women entrepreneurs shouldbe encouraged to became member of any organization such as SHG to get more facilities to run their enterprises in right direction.It is the need of the hour to help women to scale new heights in their entrepreneurial journey. The right kind of assistance from family, society and Government can make these women entrepreneurs a part of the mainstream of national economy.

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