

MOTIVATIONAL ASPECTS AND PROBLEMS OF SELECTED WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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Entrepreneurship has gained importance in the recent years. The number of women entrepreneurs in India though it is increasing, yet it is less when compared to the advanced countries. In India women constitute nearly 48 per cent of the population but their participation in quantifiable economic activity is 25.7 per cent. About 9.5 per cent of the women entrepreneurs were engaged in small business. The participation of women in business in India is low, since entrepreneurship depends upon economic, social, cultural, religious and psychological factors. Yet the need for survival forces women into entrepreneurship. With this background the study examines the motivational aspects and problems of selected women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore city.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship—an innovate self-employment is a key issue in today's economic growth. The word 'entrepreneurship' broadly stands for self-employment. It mainly involves identification of opportunities within the economic system. It involves assumption of risks and responsibilities in designing and executing a business strategy or starting a new business venture. Entrepreneurs are skilled organizers of various activities such as identifying the needs for various products or services, originating or generating ideas on how to provide the desired products or services, evaluation of well thought out ideas and presentation of a business enterprise opportunity and finally, evolving a plan of action to translate an idea into a commercially viable proposition (Kole Swapna and Aryakumar, 2005).

Entrepreneurs have a unique role to play in the economic development of a nation. It is specially so, in the case of a developing economy where unemployment, poverty and inequality plague the process of economic development. The only alternative is self-employment and its contribution for a better future (Nayan Barua and Aparajeeta Borkakoty, 2005).

The economic development of advanced countries of the world, to a large extent, has been attributed to growth of entrepreneurship in small and medium enterprises. In advanced countries, majority of small enterprises has been managed by women. Women produce more than 80 per cent of the food for Sub-Saharan Africa, 50-60 per cent for Asia, 26 per cent for the Caribbean, 34 per cent for North Africa and the Middle East, and more than 30 per cent for Latin America. Female entrepreneurs are active at

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all levels domestically, regionally, and globally. Women in advanced market economies own more than 25 per cent of all businesses. In Japan 23 per cent of private firms are established by women. In Russia women own 64 per cent of firms employing 10 people or more. In China women founded 25 per cent of the businesses since 1978. In Germany women have created one-third of the new businesses since 1990 representing more than one million jobs. In Hungary women started more than 40 per cent of all businesses since 1990. In Poland women own 38 per cent of all businesses. In Mexico 32 per cent of women-owned businesses were started less than 5 years ago. In France women head one in four firms. In Switzerland, women account for about 70 per cent of micro, small, and medium enterprises. In USA women own 38 per cent of all businesses (8 million firms), employ 27.5 million people (or 1 in 5 workers), and generate \$3.6 trillion in annual sales. In Great Britain – Women are one-fourth of the self-employed sector. (A study of Estes, 1999; NFWBO, 1998; Women in Business-Lesotho, 1998; Jalbert, 1999c; Carter & Cannon, 1992, as quoted in Jalbert, 2000).

In India, women constitute nearly 48 per cent of the population but their participation in quantifiable economic activity is around 25.7 per cent (Census, 2001). The effect of this economic inequality is mirrored in the social scenario, where a small percentage of population is becoming more and more prosperous and nearly two-third of the population still remains poor and untouched of technological progress (Poonam Syal and Dhameja, 2003). About 9.5 per cent of the women entrepreneurs were engaged in small business (GOI, 2001). The participation of women in business in India is low, since entrepreneurship depends upon closely inter-linked economic, social, cultural, religious and psychological factors (Vivek, 1993).

Women's entrepreneurship has a tremendous potential in empowering women and transforming society. Yet this potential remains largely untapped. Traditional gender role expectations and patriarchal attitudes in many developing nations make it even more difficult for women to relieve themselves of family responsibilities. The familial and social conditioning in many developing countries inhibits the confidence, independence and mobility of women. This translates into poor access to information, credit, technology, markets, etc., and prevents women from starting a business or women entrepreneurs from growing beyond a particular level. The situation is more critical in many South Asian countries, defined as comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Shalini Sinha, 2004).

Cultural and social traditions play a large role in determining who within a society becomes an entrepreneur. For example, social conditions in some societies inhibit women from starting their own businesses. For a female business owner, the process of starting and operating a new enterprise can be difficult because often they lack the skills, education, and support systems that can expedite their business pursuits. Women's motivations for starting a business are related to their need to be independent, achieve job satisfaction, attain personal accomplishment and fulfillment, be creative and economically self-sufficient (Susanne E. Jalbert, 2000).

The paper aims at realizing the following objectives

1. To examine the reasons for the women respondents to enter the work force and
2. To analyze the severity of the problems faced by the women both at work place and at home.

Selection of Sample Units

The sample unit consists of 150 women entrepreneurs. Only those women entrepreneurs, who had set up the units within the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation limits, were selected. Convenience sampling technique was adopted in the selection of sample units.

Type of Activities

The occupations of the respondents were divided into three categories such as business, industries and service. The occupations considered under 'business' are 'provisional stores', 'textiles', 'fancy stores', 'petty shops' and miscellaneous. The occupations falling under 'service' include 'tailoring', 'mess', 'computer centres', 'beauty parlours', 'dry cleaning' and miscellaneous. The occupations considered under 'industries' are candle manufacturing, pottery making, frame works and manufacturing leather products.

Motivation

Much of a business woman's drive to pursue entrepreneurship is due to the immense passion she has for her work. Many women entrepreneurs are not afraid of taking risks and are two times more likely to make above average risks than their male equivalent, making monetary gain a less likely factor in their business pursuits. Instead, they possess very strong business ideas and seek any and all means to share their business ideas with others who may benefit from their discoveries. Another motivating factor behind women entrepreneurs is the desire for control. Many successful female business owners are provoked by the opportunity to be their own boss and run their own company, a prospect that would never occur if they had worked for someone else. Women entrepreneurs are also motivated by philanthropic commitment to society. Their new businesses will greatly stimulate economic development in their community and create new jobs for many people. Another inspiring component that many successful women entrepreneurs share is the fact they have the tendency to balance family life and career. Many people may have had doubt in this ability when these women first entered the field because of the long work hours, but these reservations have often been proven wrong. It is no wonder that many successful women entrepreneurs have an amazing ability to multitask, properly balancing both personal and professional life with their goal-oriented approach (Go4Funding, 2007).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2007) study on women's entrepreneurship found that more than 95 per cent of the respondents were involved in entrepreneurial

activities for two primary reasons: opportunity or necessity. Prevalence rates of entrepreneurship vary significantly by motivation between the low/middle income country groups and high-income countries. That is, opportunity and necessity motivations influence entrepreneurs differently across country groups. Opportunity is the dominant motivation for most entrepreneurs regardless of gender across all Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) countries with the exception of Croatia, Hong Kong, Serbia, Turkey, and Uruguay where it was close to 50 per cent for women entrepreneurs. In the case of India the women was motivated by opportunity (50 per cent) necessity (30 per cent) and both (20 per cent).

An analysis of the influencing factors which were instrumental in guiding, encouraging and convincing the women respondents to venture into business is being carried out. The motivational factors for starting the enterprise by the sample respondents were classified as economic and non-economic factors. Economic factors included 'poverty', 'earning extra income' and 'supplementing the family income'. The non-economic factors were 'independence', 'utilization of free time', 'family member's compulsion', 'advice by friends and relatives', 'government incentives' and 'interest in the particular work'. To find out the extent of influence of these factors, ranking technique was adopted.

The sample respondents were asked to rank the given motivational factors from 1 to 9, giving 9 to the highest motivating factor and 1 to the least motivating factor. The mean scores of all the factors for the entire study group were arranged and the ranks assigned are given in the following Table 1.

Table 1
Scores and Ranks for Selected Motivating Factors - Sector Wise Analysis

Sl. No.	Motivational factors	<i>Business</i>		<i>Service</i>		<i>Industries</i>		<i>All</i>	
		Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank
<i>Economic factors</i>									
1	To supplement family's income	5.17	7	9.13	6	15.49	2	10.07	6
2	To earn extra income	15.21	2	16.27	1	16.47	1	16.20	1
3	Poverty	12.94	3	12.23	3	9.92	5	11.85	4
<i>Non-economic factors</i>									
4	To be independent	15.53	1	13.68	2	10.55	4	13.43	2
5	Government incentives	12.90	4	11.65	5	8.70	6	11.23	5
6	To utilize free time	11.09	5	12.23	3	13.72	3	12.52	3
7	Interest in the particular work	8.59	6	6.82	7	6.98	7	7.56	7
8	Advice by friends and relatives	4.82	8	4.23	8	4.43	8	4.56	8
9	Family member's compulsion	1.96	9	1.96	9	1.96	9	1.99	9

Source: Calculations based on field survey.

Sector wise analysis of the motivational factors using ranking technique was carried out for business, service and industrial sectors. The ranks and scores assigned for the selected factors in the three sectors are given. The table clearly depicts that in the service and industrial sectors, 'to earn extra income' was identified as the most important motivating factor, which compelled women to be self-employed but for the women in business it was 'to be independent'. The desire 'to earn extra income', 'to be independent' and 'supplementing family income' emerged as the second important motivational factor for women of business, service and industrial sectors for resorting to self-employment, with the mean score of 15.21, 13.68 and 15.49 respectively followed by 'financial constraints', with the mean score of 12.94 and 12.23 for the women entrepreneurs of business and service sectors respectively. But for the women in the industrial sector, it was a non-economic pull factor, viz, 'utilizing free time' which made them to work. 'Family member's compulsion' to work was the least motivating factor with the mean score of 1.96 for the women of three sectors.

The findings revealed that the economic factor 'earning extra income' was the first most compelling factor for the women entrepreneurs to undertake jobs. The second was a non-economic pull factor, viz, 'to be independent' which made them to work. The three groups assigned different ranks for other factors. External motivations like friends and relatives hardly had any influence on the women entrepreneurs to start their business.

Economic factors outweighed non-economic factors among the women entrepreneurs of service and industrial sectors which motivated them to undertake work. Push factors were dominant. For the women in business, service and industrial sectors, the push factor and the pull factors also were largely responsible for women to enter into business.

To find out whether the ranks assigned by the women differed Kruskal Wallis χ^2 test was applied. The calculated χ^2 value was 0.011. The calculated values were less than the theoretical values of χ^2 . Hence it was inferred that the rank assigned by the women in service sector did not differ from the ranks assigned by the women in business sector and industrial sector.

Problems at Work Spot

Women entrepreneurs face specific problems in setting up business that is different from those faced by male-owned businesses. Women have particular problems with raising finance and may have had less chance than most men to accumulate the confidence, skills and contacts necessary to start and run a successful business. In addition, gender discrimination by finance and support providers, customers or employees may be an issue (Carter and Cannon, 1992). Therefore, an analysis of the various problems faced by the women at work spot becomes essential.

The respondents were asked to indicate if they had faced any problem during the course of starting and managing their business. The problems identified were:

(1) difficulty in obtaining materials, (2) labour problems, (3) problems in the availability of credit, (4) heavy competition, (5) inadequate knowledge of the various governmental schemes, (6) problems in acquiring new skills and (7). To find out the extent of influence of these factors, Garrett's ranking technique was adopted. The sample respondents were asked to rank the given problems from 1 to 7, giving 1 to the highest problem faced and 7 to the least problem. The order of merit as given by the sample respondents were changed into per cent position by using the following formula

$$\text{Per cent position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where, R_{ij} is the rank given for the i^{th} factor by the j^{th} respondent, N_j number of factors ranked by the j^{th} respondent.

The per cent position of each rank thus obtained was converted into scores by referring to the table given by Garrett (1983). For each factor the scores of individual sample respondent were added together and divided by the total number of sample respondents. Based on these mean scores the ranks were assigned. The mean scores of all the factors for the entire study group were arranged in the descending order and the ranks assigned are given in the following Table 2.

Table 2
Scores on Problems Faced by Women Entrepreneurs at Work Spot

<i>Problems</i>	<i>Mean score</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Difficulty in obtaining materials	162.90	4
Labour problems	181.99	2
Problem in availing credit	166.93	3
Heavy competition	190.39	1
Inadequate knowledge of the various governmental schemes	86.77	6
Problem in acquiring new skills	132.04	5
Harassment from officials	44.34	7

Source: Values calculated based on field survey.

From the table it could be seen that 'heavy competition' was the main problem of the women entrepreneurs. The mean score for this factor was 190.39. The 'labour problem' emerged as the second important problem faced by the women, with the mean score of 181.99, followed by 'problem in availing credit', with the mean score of 166.93. 'Difficulty in obtaining materials' and 'problem in acquiring new skills' had the score of 162.90 and 132.04 respectively. 'Harassment from officials' was the least problematic factor with the mean score of 44.34. The range between the highest and the lowest score was 146.05.

Sector wise analysis of the problems faced by women entrepreneurs was analyzed using Garrett's ranking technique was also carried out for business, service and industrial

sectors. The ranks and scores assigned for the selected factors in the three sectors are given in the following Table 3. The table clearly depicts that for the women entrepreneurs in the business, service and industrial sectors, 'heavy competition' was identified as the most important problem faced by the women entrepreneur.

Table 3
Scores and Ranks for Selected Problems Faced by Women Entrepreneurs at
Work Spot-Sector Wise Analysis

Problems	Occupation	Business		Service		Industries	
		Average score	Rank	Average score	Rank	Average score	Rank
Difficulty in obtaining materials		167.24	4	150.94	5	164.14	4
Labour problems		182.89	2	176.08	2	179.85	2
Problem in availing credit		168.32	3	152.47	4	173.44	3
Heavy competition		189.56	1	186.77	1	187.38	1
Inadequate knowledge of the various governmental schemes		86.68	6	82.37	6	87.85	6
Problem in acquiring new skills		114.29	5	160.34	3	116.31	5
Harassment from officials		43.76	7	43.76	7	43.76	7

Source: Values calculated based on field survey.

The second important problem faced by the women entrepreneurs in the business service and industrial sectors were the same that is 'labour problems'. But the order of problem was same for women entrepreneurs in both the business and industrial sectors but for service sector it differed. The third highest mean score of 160.34 in the service sector was assigned for 'problem in acquiring new skills', followed by 'problem in availing credit', with the mean score of 152.47. The least problem for the women in the study group in business, service and industrial sectors was 'harassment from officials' with the mean score of 43.76.

To find out whether the opinions expressed by the women entrepreneurs in different occupations on the problems faced were dependent on each other, Kruskal Wallis χ^2 test was applied. The null hypothesis tested was,

Ho: The opinions of the women entrepreneurs on work related problems do not differ significantly and

Ha: The opinions differ significantly.

The calculated Kruskal Wallis χ^2 value was 0.201. The calculated values were less than the theoretical values of χ^2 (9.49). Hence it was inferred that the opinions of the women in three sectors did not differ significantly.

Problems at Home

Dual responsibility has always resulted in conflicting situations, demanding adjustments in personal, family and social life of the women entrepreneurs. An analysis becomes necessary to have an understanding of the problems faced by the self-employed women

in their homes. The problems were identified as, (i) no family support, (ii) no time to take care of children and elders, (iii) no time for household chores, (iv) no time for social obligations and (v) not able to find a servant. These five probable areas of conflict at home were identified and with a view to elicit the opinion of the respondents, each respondent was asked to indicate the extent of the problem in each area. The total weighted score for each of the areas of role conflict were calculated sector wise and average scores were derived and are presented in the following Table 4.

Table 4
Average Scores for Conflicting Problems Faced at Home of the Women Entrepreneurs

Problems	Business		Service		Industries		All	
	Average score	Rank	Average score	Rank	Average score	Rank	Average score	Rank
No family support	169.97	4	170.26	4	182.22	3	176.45	3
No time to take care of children and elders	173.15	3	172.37	3	163.60	4	171.95	4
No time for household chores	184.87	2	184.59	2	184.11	1	186.97	1
No time for social obligations	184.89	1	185.67	1	182.97	2	186.95	2
Not able to find a servant	117.63	5	117.63	5	117.63	5	119.18	5

Source: Calculations based on field survey.

For all the stated items on the problems, the women among the business and service sectors agreed that they had 'no time to meet social obligations' and for 'household chores'. The assigned rank for these factors was 1st rank and 2nd rank. But for women in the industrial sector the main problem was that they had 'no time for household chores' (1st rank) and 'to meet social obligations' (2nd rank). 'No time to take care of children and elders' (3rd rank) was problem faced by women in business and service sectors but for women in industries it was 'no family support'. The least problem for the women in the study group in business, service and industrial sectors was 'not able to find a servant' (5th rank). Women faced difficulty in combining career with household responsibilities. But the respondents highly disagreed over the fact that they could not find a servant.

The mean scores of all the factors for the entire study group were analyzed and found that 'no time for household chores' was the main problem for the women entrepreneurs in different occupations. The mean score for this factor was 186.97. 'No time for social obligations' emerged as the second important problem, with the mean score of 186.95. The range between the highest and the lowest score was 67.79.

To find out whether the ranks assigned by the women entrepreneurs in different occupations on the problems were dependent on each other, Kruskal Wallis χ^2 test was applied. The null hypothesis tested was,

Ho: The ranks assigned by the women entrepreneurs in different occupations were independent on the problems faced, and

Ha: The ranks assigned were dependent.

The calculated Kruskal Wallis χ^2 value was 0.242 much less than the theoretical table value. Hence it could be inferred that in assigning ranks, women entrepreneurs in different occupations did not differ significantly.

Conclusion

The role of women in development process is inevitable. Resurgence of entrepreneurship is required to face competition from other entrepreneurs. It is essential for the women entrepreneurs to raise their management skills and competencies to face the challenges by adopting various innovative marketing techniques.

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