

## **Dalit Women Entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu- Challenges and achievements**

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### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is a typical global phenomenon attracting millions of economists, politicians, and social workers. In developed countries, entrepreneurship has gained attention in the last century. But in developing countries, it has been gained original consideration only in recent decades. In these countries, entrepreneurship development is considered as the way to promote self-employment -the panacea not only for chronic unemployment among the educated youth but also to sustain economic development and to augment the competitiveness of industries in the eve of globalization and liberalization. Social scientists and economists are in search of this factor as a competent agency for the coherent integration of resources to stimulate sustainable and balanced socio-economic development. In the industrial and agricultural sectors, threshold of new generation entrepreneurs has been welcomed for they carry out radical and tremendous changes in the arena of production and distribution. In the academic scenario, special importance is being given for the entrepreneurial lessons as a part of curriculum plan and a number of research studies are being conducted to learn the stimulants and inhibitors of entrepreneurship development.

### **Entrepreneurship- The Vital Human Resource**

Economic development is possible only with the help of planned and unrelenting business activities. Entrepreneurs are the human agency at the back of such activities. Entrepreneurship is the skill or quality of such human resource, which is snatching opportunities and organizing endavour for their commercial exploitation. They initiate changes to do ventures in a better way, to get more return from them or to impart more satisfaction to the consumers. Entrepreneurs bring together the productive resources and act as a catalytic agent in the process of economic development. Economic growth of any nation has been attained through the commercial exploitation of inventions by utilizing its available resources-both physical and human-, especially those that are not utilized so far. Entrepreneurship is the skill and ability, which initiate innovations and undertake the risk. 'Invention' is to find out something new that does not 'exist so far. 'Innovation' on the other hand is the commercial exploitation of inventions.

The significance of entrepreneurship to economic development of a country has been emphasized by him when he stated "the labour supply, existing capital and the state of arts only create potentiality for capital production, while it is the entrepreneur who performs the miracle of transferring the potential in to effective productivity" (Schumpeter- 1961 -The theory of economic development)

### **Need for Entrepreneurial skills**

The entrepreneurial talent is a very scarce resource for the developing countries and hence they cannot afford to waste this key performer of economic development. The environmental facilities created to augment the supply of the catalyst and physical facilities created to improve chances of success must be so coherent, well knit, and integrated to encourage and induce new generation entrepreneurs to contribute to the speed of economic development. In India,

increased attention has been given for the proper integration of "Entrepreneurship" to productive resources and economic growth. Consequently, entrepreneurship Development Programmes is being organised in India with a view to identify potential entrepreneurs and to motivate them to launch new undertakings

### **Women and Economic Development**

A need to accord special place to the role of women in the course of development, take due recognition of their potentials and give them a privileged position in the society, are well recognised at International levels. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralising the cumulative socio-economic, educational, and political disadvantages faced by them. To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the State has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and also to provide support for workingwomen. There are about 16 special enactments to protect and promote the interest of women in India, in the political field, the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution reserve 30 per cent seats in Panchayati Raj for women. It not only grants representation in the grass root level, but also opens new opportunity for women for their upliftment in general and improves their status in the society predominantly. Department of Women and Child Development in the Central Secretariat is the nodal agency to focus on the problems of Women and Child at the national level. Despite the efforts made by various entities women position considered to be pathetic in many spheres, their contributions were not accounted as work and didn't received incentives in terms of money or other kind. Women constitute almost one-half of the total population and form an important section of the total labour force. But their social, economic, and political status is lower than that of men in many countries, including India. The social status of women in the society depends upon the part played by them and the social attitude of the society towards them. The status of women is intimately connected with their socio-economic contribution, which depends on opportunities for participation in economic activities, In spite of the fact that women in developing countries are massively involved in key areas such as agriculture, food, production, trades etc. their work is not fully recognised and valued." The contribution of women in the informal sectors is totally ignored. Women working in the organised sector do not have adequate access to credit, appropriate scientific and technical information; training and policy supports "Most of the employed women are often placed in the bottom level of organisation and they have a little role in decision-making in the enterprise, Women traditionally were playing a crucial role in the family as well as in the farm. But their contribution was not duly acknowledged. However, now in all civilized society women are recognized with an equal status.

### **Dalit Women Entrepreneurship**

The involvement and participation in the process of development is essential for the upliftment of women and to raise their status in the society. Wage Employment' and 'self employment 'are the two potential sources for the deployment of human resource. Since the employment opportunities are' less, 'Self-employment' is the most potential source. Self-employment refers to starting a self owned business. It is a task of converting job seekers to entrepreneurs. A number of schemes and programmes are there to promote self-employment among women. In this context, promotion of entrepreneurship among educated women is the extreme need of the time. A number of State and Centre Government institutions and Non Governmental Organisations are engaged in the field of promoting entrepreneurship among women.

The policies of the Central and State Governments, conferring a wide variety of concessions, subsidies, incentives, rebates, Tax relieves, financial assistance etc. are attracting more and more educated unemployed youths to start new enterprises. A number of special schemes are also designed exclusively for women.

### **Objectives**

The present study has been undertaken to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Status of Dalit Women entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu.
2. Challenges of the Dalit women entrepreneurship.
3. Measures adopted to overcome the challenges.

### **Methodology**

Women entrepreneurs are mostly found in the self-employment small-scale sector. Registration of a small-scale unit empowers it to get various benefits and supports offered by the Government. Women entrepreneurs offered special benefits and assistances. Therefore, all the women entrepreneurs will register their units with the District Industries Centers. Hence, an exhaustive list of units registered with District Industries Centers would represent women enterprises in the State. Therefore, the study has been made on the basis of the small scale enterprises registered by women according to the records of District Industries Centers. Sample of the women Entrepreneur have been picked the list from DIC and case study have been made to understand the inferences qualitatively as well.

### **Review of Literature**

Plethora of the studies on the chosen domain stemmed below in order to make clarity on conceptual illustration of the themes,

Chethana K.L. Bhag (2000) conducted a study to examine the socio cultural situation of small-scale entrepreneurs. They found that high need for achievement is positively related to entrepreneurship emerging in open social structures and in situations where there is relative freedom of occupational choice. The study revealed that entrepreneurship among small scale manufactures is a situational phenomenon rather than an individual phenomenon and extended family system stimulate the entry of an individual to the small scale entrepreneurial sector

Maitreya Dixit (2008) made an attempt to find out the sociological factors that contribute to the development of small entrepreneurs .The study showed that community and family background contributed to the success of prospective entrepreneurs, formal education has not been a positive factor in entrepreneurship development, providing infrastructure facilities alone will not promote entrepreneurship development and the Association of Small Scale industries has to play an important role in identification and development of entrepreneurs.

Anne D Bruin (2001) conducted a study to analyse the status of self-employed women in rural areas. Economic activities through which the income of the women will be increased have to be identified with great care. They have to be in consonance with time availability with family roles and with their awareness levels.

### **Types of women entrepreneurs**

On the basis of the situation in which women turn to the role of an entrepreneur, they can be classified in to three:

### **a. Natural entrepreneurs**

Natural or pure entrepreneurs possess basic entrepreneurial talent and are often good managers too. They are motivated by economic rewards (make profit or generate income) or Psychological factors such as independent employment, social status etc. On getting a chance, they will start their carrier. Majority of them will establish without much external support and assistance

### **b. Created entrepreneurs**

Created or motivated entrepreneurs are prop up through incentives, training or such other schemes. Even though they are not self-starters, if someone gets them started they keep going all right. Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) and Governmental assistances are aimed at creating new generation entrepreneurs.

### **C. Forced entrepreneurs**

Forced entrepreneurs are reluctant to undertake any venture. But some incidents push them to undertake the responsibility of a business. Death of parents or husband, property, or family business inherited may force them to become entrepreneurs. They are by and large deficient in managerial proficiency.

### **Development of Women Entrepreneurship**

The overall context of Women Entrepreneurship Development can be described in terms of : (a) the Metro environment within which women entrepreneurs create and develop their enterprises; ( b) the metro sphere , the intermediary and institutional sphere within which women entrepreneurs can open and operational their enterprise, and (c) the micro sphere ( the family and house hold sphere) within which the gender specific division of labour and decision making power shape women's multiple identities, including his potential identity as an entrepreneur in a given cultural and ideological context. The macro environment comprised of many interconnecting structure and dynamics, including: laws and regulations, competition, labour market, international trade, technology, credit facilities, natural resources, physical infrastructure etc. While the macro environment impacts up on all entrepreneurs there is much evidence to indicate that women are more disadvantaged than men in relation to the opportunities and barriers arising from these structures and dynamics.

### **Women Entrepreneurship - World Scenario**

The political world pays increasing attention to small enterprises that are a driving force behind economic growth, social well-being, and the creation of jobs. The presence of women 'is particularly relevant in this area: According to recent estimates, the number of firms set up by women is growing twice as fast as those created by men. The worldwide amount of self-employed women has switched from 26 Per cent in 1970 to 46 Per cent in 2009. This dramatic growth has been possible despite the difficulties that small and medium-sized enterprises run by women must face when having to obtain funds and step into new markets.

### **Women Entrepreneurship in India**

The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period of time, especially in the 1990s. Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizable employment for others and setting the trend for other women entrepreneurs in the organized

sector. According to the Second All India Census of registered Small Scale Industries (for the base year 1987-88) share of women in the SS1 sector was only 7.70 percent. In 2008, it is estimated that women entrepreneurs comprise about 16 Per cent of the total entrepreneurs in India. It is also clear that this percentage is growing and if the prevailing trends continue, it is not unlikely that in another five years, women will comprise 20 Percent of the entrepreneurial force in India.

### **Dalit Women Entrepreneurship in India**

The Indian system has structurally denied the minimum level of entitlement for the Women especially dalit women are more vulnerable in this context, Dalits have been subjected to huge amount of humiliation, exploitation in the society, hence it was apparent that the proportion of dalit women in the entrepreneurial arena very miniscule, however there has been persistent efforts made by the dalits people have facilitated the space for the dalits women to engage in the entrepreneurial activities, most of the people have been engaging micro level activities.

### **Supportive measures of Government of India**

Governments at the Centre as well at the State designed a number of schemes and programmes for the support of entrepreneurs in general and for women entrepreneurs in particular. The Department of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation under the Ministry of Rural Development have initiated several schemes in which 30 to 40 per cent of the benefits are reserved for women below the poverty line, The concept of Women's Component Plan' mooted in the Ninth Plan document was an important strategy to ensure that not less. Than .30 per cent of fund f benefits from all development sectors should flow to women. Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana Scheme (SGSY), the amended and merged version of the erstwhile Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Integrated Rural Development program (IRDP) and Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), was launched in April 1999. It is a holistic credit-cum-subsidy program, covering all aspects of self employment. The stipulated 40 per cent reservation for women will be implemented through the Panchayat Samitis (local self - government) The Government in 1998 launched a new scheme, called the

Trade-Related Entrepreneurship assistance and Development (TREAD) it was designed to generate self-employment for 45,000 women in rural and urban areas. The package involves financial assistance and services through NGOs in the non-farm sector, Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) was launched in 1995 in over 200 blocks of India, for the holistic empowerment of women. IMY is being implemented in 238 blocks and till now, 40,000 women's groups have been formed under the scheme. Of these, 3,000 groups were formed in 1999-2000, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), a national credit fund extends credit facilities to poor and needy women. The RMK has extended loans to 20,000 self-help groups of women and has a membership of over 3, 00,000. It is instrumental in encouraging women to take control of their own development, and has helped build confidence and political awareness.

### **Case studies**

The case studies is important methodology to understand the constraints, challenges, involvements, achievements of the women entrepreneur in more effective way through qualitative inferences, hence the study have conducted the three case studies of the women entrepreneur in order to understand the challenges and achievements

1	Name of Entrepreneur	Mrs.Sundari	
2	Age	42	
3	Education	10	
4	Nature of Business	Trading	
5	Business- Purpose	Vegetable shop	
6	Business since when	1998	
7	Total Investment	20 k	
8	No. of Employees	5	
9	Annual turn over	Rs.12 lacs	
10	Own capital involved and source	Rs.50k	
11	Loan details	Loan from bank & Name of scheme	NIL
		Loan from Private borrowing	40k
		Subsidy if any	Not under any Govt. subsidy scheme.
12	Family Background	Born in OTTERI in CHENNAI. School study at Corporation school in Perambur.	
13	Previous work experience	Worked along with her mother in the same business for more than 15 years.	
14	<p><b>Challenges faced :</b></p> <p>No scope for survival neither studied well nor having good wealth.</p> <p>Banks were not ready to help even under Govt sponsord scheme.</p> <p>No job security for continuing in Private Company. Opportunities were denied despite hard work done.</p> <p>Husband was not cooperative and drunkard</p> <p>My present way to Entrepreneurship was chosen out of my choice but not due to compulsion.</p> <p>It is difficult to sell all the products within the stipulated time since all the goods are perishable.</p> <p>Precisely, she said that lack of support from the family, lack of education, awareness on various avenues and denial of opportunities are the challenges faced.</p>		



**Case study: 2**

1	Name of Entrepreneur	Sivagami	
2	Age	43	
3	Education	6 <sup>th</sup> Std to Degree	
4	Nature of Business	Self Employment	
5	Business-Purpose	Provision store	
6	Business since when	2000	
7	Total Investment	Rs.3.00 lacs	
8	No. of Employees	4	
9	Annual turn over	Rs.10 lacs	
10	Own capital	Rs 1 lakh	
11	Loan details	Loan from bank & Name of scheme	NIL
		Loan from Private borrowing	Rs.2.00 lac borrowed from local money lender
		Subsidy if any	Nil
12	Family Background	Father and husband were the hawkers near ayanpuram, Husband is a drunkard doesn't support the family, she has two female children both are studying in a college, her income is the sole source for their livelihood since her husband wont give money to them.	
13	Previous work experience	Got experience by providing assistance to her father and husband in the business, she also worked in the departmental store for more than 5 years in villivakkam.	
14	Challenges faced	<p>Initial contribution for the business had mobilized by mortgaged the jewels and borrowed the money from private money lenders.</p> <p>Lack of coordination in the early stage of the business.</p> <p>Lack of access to the market.</p> <p>Cartels of the peer groups in the business.</p> <p>Long waiting period to get Bank's finance</p> <p>Lack of supplemental income to meet family expenses.</p> <p>Commercial tax officer's constraints.</p> <p>Pressure on repayment of loan and, particularly when the income generation stopped due to external reasons.</p> <p>High rate of interest to be paid to private money lenders</p> <p>Some of the customers deliberately avoided to procure the items since the social stigma inhibits them to purchase from dalit shop.</p>	

### **General Observations of the study**

The general outcome of the study have been coagulated and stemmed below

### **Reasons for constrains**

Although the sample women have got the significant place in the business arena of their domain but they had struggled very hard to accomplish that position and still they have been undergoing huge distress to combat with the existing challenges, according to them financial constraints, lack of institutional finance, peer group cartels, social stigma of being dalits were the important constraints, however with the help of their individual power and the thrust they have successfully encountered the problems.

### **Major Findings**

- Dalit Women entrepreneurs are found to have an important impact on the economy, both in their ability to create jobs for themselves and to create jobs for others. Women entrepreneurs have an important impact on the economy both by the number of small firms and they are the exclusive source of income for the family.
- Specific obstacles to women's entrepreneurship are: type of education, lack of role models in entrepreneurship, gendering of entrepreneurship, weak social status, competing demands on time and access to finance.
- Dalit Women's entrepreneurship must be examined both at the individual level (i.e. the choice of becoming self-employed) and at the firm level (the performance of women owned and managed firms) in order to fully understand the differences between men's and women's entrepreneurship
- Dalit Women's entrepreneurship is dependent on both demand side (political and institutional framework, family policy and market sources) and supply side factors (the availability of suitable individuals to occupy entrepreneurial roles).
- In addition, women's entrepreneurship depends on both the situation of women in society and the role of entrepreneurship in that same society. Both the factors that affect the gender system and the factors that affect entrepreneurship in society are involved.
- In order to provide accurate statistics on women's entrepreneurship, a number of possible method biases need to be controlled especially the caste based pre-conceived notion of the common people.

### **Policy Suggestions**

**Foster awareness and a positive image of entrepreneurship among Dalit women:** Efforts should be made to foster a greater awareness of the benefits of entrepreneurship among women. Governments should promote an entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit, and eliminate the stigmas attached to failure. To this end, strong, positive female role models should be showcased to build self-confidence and encourage other women to consider becoming entrepreneurs.

**Improve the conditions for Dalit women's entrepreneurship:** Governments and institutions should work to improve the status of women in business and remove gender-related obstacles to entrepreneurship. They should work to improve their access to support services and seek measures which can lighten the double burden of professional and household responsibilities for women, in order to allow them to undertake entrepreneurial activities under conditions more similar to those confronting men, e.g., as regards inheritance and ownership and as well as access to finance.



**Foster entrepreneurial networks of Dalit women:** Governments should improve the conditions and infrastructure for well-functioning business networks aimed at both men and women, including through cooperation with regional and international organizations. Governments should help women entrepreneurs to explore and take advantage of opportunities to join and actively participate in existing networks for business people, or create their own traditional or virtual networks, at the local, national and international levels.

**Disseminate financial information to Dalit women:** Governments should encourage women entrepreneurs to learn about the full range of financial instruments, through the education system, targeted informational campaigns, and well-functioning business networks. Government also should facilitate innovations to overcome the constraints to women's access to formal credit through simplified forms and procedures.

**Improve Dalit women's asset position:** Governments should enforce or amend laws to ensure women's financial rights, particularly their rights to property, wages or inheritances, and work to improve basic social services for women and their families.

### **Conclusion**

Even though brimming with the success stories of women, they stand tall from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their achievements in their respective field. These women leaders are assertive, persuasive and willing to take risks. They managed to survive and succeed in this cut throat competition with their hard work, diligence and perseverance. Ability to learn quickly from her abilities, her persuasiveness, open style of problem solving, willingness to take risks and chances, ability to motivate people, knowing how to win and lose gracefully are the of the Indian women entrepreneurs. In a recent survey it is revealed that the female entrepreneurs from India are generating more wealth than the women in any part of the world. The basic qualities required for entrepreneurs and the basic characters of Indian women, reveal that, much potential is available among the Indian women on their entrepreneurial ability. This potential is to be recognized, brought out and exposed for utilization in productive and service sectors for the development of the nation.

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