

**SHIFTING FROM HOUSEWIVES TO STALL QUEENS AND SELLING COOKING SERVICES
(A STUDY ON FACTORS ENCOURAGING WOMEN TO ENTER INTO ENTREPRENEURSHIP)**

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ABSTRACT

India has always been famous for being a circle of male dominated society and the hypocrisy of men should be involved in outside works and women must work at home is still prevalent. In this era of women empowerment, initiative of business by women is a major contribution in it. The present paper is an attempt to understand the reasons that have motivated women to undertake business start up. Most of the existing literatures have presented a number of problems or hindrances faced by women to start a business whether big or small. Thus, this paper tries to study the factors that encourage stepping forward, undertaking the risk and overcoming the obstacles. Assam is popular for being a state of equality to men and women but the numbers of women involved in culinary activities are more as compared to any other profession. The paper also tries to understand the reasons for choosing business of opening up a stall of foods than preferring other works.

Key words: entrepreneurship, culinary activities, women entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

‘You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women.’- Jawaharlal Nehru

Entrepreneurship is defined in a various way by different people. **Schumpeter** defines “entrepreneurs as individuals who exploits market opportunity through technical or organizational innovation.”

Today, in the era of globalization, digitalization and start up booms, entrepreneurship is considered as one of the important sources of livelihood. But becoming an entrepreneur is not everybody’s cup of tea. It requires confidence, support, financial and material collection as well as the ability to face challenges.

While talking about women entrepreneur it refers to a woman or a group of women who take an initiative to set up and run an enterprise. According to Government of India, a woman entrepreneur is defined as “an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman and having a financial interest of 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women.” But this definition is often criticized by many on the ground that condition of employing more than 50% women workers is discriminatory.

Women constitute around half of the total world population. They are therefore considered as the better half of the society. In traditional societies they were confined to the four walls of house hold activities. In modern society they have come out of the four walls of houses to participate in all types of activities. Among all the activities, cooking does not require extra training or coaching for women. Majority of women in India are quite skilled in cooking activity and thus they find it easier to enter into a business of selling cooking services. 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 have been designated as the new engines for growth and the rising stars of the economies in developing countries now a day to bring prosperity and welfare.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A.L.N.S Kalyani & GS Mounika, in the paper, “Factors influencing Female Entrepreneurship” said that there are various reasons for starting a business, mainly economic compulsion, quitting of job, using their leisure time, inspired by new idea etc.

Goyal Meenu& Prakash Jai in the paper, “Women Entrepreneurship in India-Problems and Prospects, endeavours to study the concept of women entrepreneur, reasons women become entrepreneur, reasons for slow progress of women entrepreneurs in India. The paper also provides suggestions for the growth of women entrepreneurs and various schemes for promotions and development of women entrepreneurs in India.

Kumar Sunil in the study, “Economic perspective of women empowerment: A study on working class & gender disparity in western Himalayan States of India”, the researcher tried to examine the working class of working Himalayan states of north India on the basis of gender, background and caste. The study found that there is a huge gender disparity in all work categories, Irrespective of the caste and background.

Duffy Jo ANN M, ZelbstPamla in the paper, “Financial challenges Facing women entrepreneurs: An exploratory Cross-sectional study.” The study examines the perspective of women entrepreneurs of US and Non-US on seeking fund for their business. Findings from the study indicate that women entrepreneurs throughout the world do not perceive that they are treated equally by bank or financial institution.

Dr. Swapna Dutta carried out a study entitled “Problems of women entrepreneurship in Assam: a case study in Lakhimpur District with the objective of studying the financial, marketing, production and social problems faced by women entrepreneurs and to suggest measures for promotion.

Limbu and Bordoloi carried out a research entitled “Women Entrepreneurship; Problems and prospects in Rural Assam” with the objective to identify the factors responsible for slow growth of women entrepreneurial activities in rural Assam and prospects for their development. The study shows that failure to start entrepreneurship in rural areas is high and the individual, social and structural problems like pre-reserved nature, lack of education etc

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the most influential factors encouraging respondents in undertaking entrepreneurial activity
2. To study the hurdles faced by the respondents in setting up or running the enterprise.

METHODOLOGY

Both Primary and Secondary data are used in the study. Primary data is collected through schedule by interviewing the respondents and secondary data is collected from sources like books, websites available on the internet as well as published journals.

The respondents are women entrepreneurs nearby Dibrugarh University who are indulge in the service of selling cooked foods by opening up small stalls that resembles that of a hotel. The area of the stall is small and less number of customers can be attained at a time.

Likert scale is used to rate the opinions of the respondents on the factors encouraging them to undertake a business as well as the problems faced by them in order to ascertain the most influencing factors. The impact factors of the statements in the Likert scale is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Impact factor} = \frac{m_i}{n_i} \times 100\%$$

Where m_i = Actual score

n_i = total score

Actual score for each statement is calculated as follows:

$$m_i = \sum(x_i p_i) \text{ Where } x_i = \text{scores i.e. } p_i = \text{no of respondents}$$

The results under impact study of Likert scale has been categorized as follows:

0-33.33% = Low Impact

33.33%- 66.67% = Moderate Impact

66.67%-100% = High impact

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Though the number of women entrepreneurs is seem to be increasing in many areas in India, still this number is very small as compared to that of a man.. The existence of some women entrepreneurs reveals that there is a willingness and enthusiasm on the part of women to undertake entrepreneurial activity but at the same time this less number is an indicator of some problems that need to be brought into the picture to encourage addition of more entrepreneurs to the path. This study makes an attempt to understand the factors which encouraged the women nearby Dibrugarh University to set up small stalls, take risk, start cooking and selling food items and enjoying profits or bearing losses

FINDINGS

Most of the respondents are married and are aged between 30-45 years. They belong to nuclear family and are undergraduates. Majority of them are running a newly established enterprise which is more than 5 years old and the initial investment for most of them amounts to Rs 10000-25000. Some of them have also started with a meagre amount of less than Rs1,000. As per most of the respondents, economic necessity, financial independence and unemployment are the major reasons for taking up entrepreneurial activity. However, for most of them lack of finance and inadequate infrastructure were the major obstacles at the time of starting the business. It was difficult to provide a better facility to the customers in order to gain more customers. Again, the major problems faced by them in running the business are related to employees and lack of managerial skills. The working staffs do not remain stable or remain absence frequently due to which attaining customers becomes difficult as new staffs have to be trained first.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The women involved in entrepreneurial activity should be given training on developing managerial skills and workshops should be organised for providing them some idea on management of employees as well as modern techniques of customer attraction.
2. The government should try to organise a women association consist of businesswomen to encourage other women who confine cooking to home and hesitate to enter the market.

CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs are becoming popular with the passage of time and women entrepreneurship through culinary activities is an increasing phenomenon. There are factors which push them into the circle of entrepreneurship or hold them back. This study discloses some of those important factors. The need of financial independency has a strong influence as the choice of being an entrepreneur arises out of this in most cases followed by economic necessity. Moreover, unemployment still remain the reason for entering into a business. But choice of selling cooking services is a volunteer decision. It has shifted women's cooking skill from one kitchen room to commercial world without any requirement of a degree or training. India has a female population of 48.20percent and if one half of this becomes entrepreneurs, it may create employment for the other half as well as the other. Though the women are being encouraged and helped by their family members, the number is still less because of problems like inadequate infrastructure or lack of managerial skill due to which professionalism in the work cannot be attained. These holes in the road can be repaired if some training programmes for women entrepreneurship are organised at regular intervals in every district or areas to make the existing women entrepreneurs capable of managing or operating at a large scale and association of women who are already engaged in entrepreneurship are formed to share their experiences and encourage other women.

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