**Challenges and Problems faced by Women Entrepreneurs in India and Remedial Measures**

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**ABSTRACT**

The ability to chart one’s own economic destiny by becoming an entrepreneur is one of the hallmarks of capitalism. Many of today’s most recognized companies and brands began as the brainchild of an individual who embraced the risks of entrepreneurship with hopes of realizing their entrepreneurial vision. Yet, while in theory entrepreneurship is anybody’s game, rates of female entrepreneurship have historically lagged those of men. Women these days end up being the backbone of not just their own homes but the economy of the country. It's often more of a great responsibility than a privilege, considering there is relatively more of an onus on them to find the right balance between their family and their career. The scope this paper is to through light on women entrepreneurs, the impact of women entrepreneurs on economic growth of different countries, challenges and remedial measures for women entrepreneurs.

**Key Words:** Women Entrepreneurs, Impact on Economic Growth, Challenges and Remedial Measures.

**1. Introduction**

Thankfully, for the benefit of innovation, business, and society as a whole, in recent years we have seen an increase in rates of women entrepreneurship. Globally, from 2015 to 2016, women entrepreneurship rates increased by double that of their male counterparts. In the United States, not only do women own 11.3 million businesses, it is estimated that 36 percent of all businesses are owned by women, an increase of six percent from 2007. Perhaps not surprisingly, according to a study by Dell, the United States ranks number one in the world in terms of providing the world’s most favourable business climate for women entrepreneurs.

Increasing female entrepreneurship rates are only half of the story. The economic impact of increased female entrepreneurial participation is significant and holds the potential to continue to be a major driver of economic growth. In the United States, with an economic impact of $3 trillion, women owned businesses are credited with creating or maintaining 23 million jobs. When coupled with statistics showing that women-led companies perform twice as well as those led by men, one can begin to imagine the significant impact the continued increase of women-led businesses can have on domestic job creation and economic growth. Furthermore, as investors continue to seek opportunities to maximize returns on their capital they would be wise to look towards female-led businesses; studies show that on average female founded companies create over 60 percent more value for investors than those founded by men.



Despite great strides, female entrepreneurs continue to face roadblocks. As noted by the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD), among other challenges, lack of training and financing remain major obstacles for female entrepreneurs in the United States. The lack of financing allocated for women-led enterprises is particularly appalling; of the $58 billion that was invested by venture capitalists in 2016 only $1.46 billion reached women-led companies. While female-led businesses are increasingly being funded, access to capital for female entrepreneurs is far from reaching parity.

Regardless of gender, any entrepreneur will tell you that successful entrepreneurship is a challenging task requiring deep commitment and unlimited amounts of motivation.

Women entrepreneurs are the fastest growing segment of the small business community. Although creating businesses at this fast pace, there are some significant road blocks that women business owners have to face that are different than their male counterparts.



**2. Challenges**

Some of the challenges and problems faced by women entrepreneurs are discussed below.

1. **Family restriction**: Women are expected to spend more time with their family members. They do not encourage women to travel extensively for exploiting business opportunities.

2. **Lack of Finance**: Family members do not encourage women entrepreneurs. They hesitate to invest money in the business venture initiated by women entrepreneurs. Bank and other Financial Institutions do not consider Middle Class Women Entrepreneurs as proper applicants for setting up their projects and they are hesitant to provide financial assistance to unmarried women or girls as they are unsure as to who will repay the loan — Either their parents or in-laws after their marriage. This humiliates unmarried women and they generally leave the idea of setting up their ventures.

3. **Lack of Education**: Women are generally denied of higher education, especially in rural areas and under developed countries. Women are not allowed to enrich their knowledge in technical and research areas to introduce new products.

4. **Role Conflict**: Marriage and family life are given more importance than career and social life in Indian society.

5. **Unfavorable Environment**: The society is dominated by males. Many business men are not interested to have business relationship with women entrepreneurs. Male generally do not encourage women entrepreneurs.

6. **Lack of persistent Nature**: Women generally have sympathy for others. They are very emotional. This nature should not allow them to get easily cheated in business.

7. **Lack of Mental strength**: Business involves risk. Women entrepreneurs get upset very easily when loss arises in business.

8. **Lack of Information**: Women entrepreneurs are not generally aware of the subsidies and incentives available for them. Lack of knowledge may prevent them from availing the special schemes.

9. **Stiff Competition**: Women face lot of competition from men. Due to limited mobility they find difficult to compete with men.

10. **Mobility**: Moving in and around the market, is again a tough job for Middle Class Women Entrepreneurs in Indian Social system.

**3. Remedial Measures**

Some of the remedial measures that can be undertaken to promote women entrepreneurship in India, are as follows.

1. **Promotional Help**: Government and NGOs must provide assistance to entrepreneurs, both in financial and non financial areas.

2. **Training**: Women entrepreneurs must be given training to operate and run a business successfully. Training has to be given to women who are still reluctant to take up the entrepreneurial task.

3. **Selection of Machinery and Technology**: Women require assistance in selection of machinery and technology. Assistance must be provided to them in technical areas so that the business unit become successful.

4. **Finance**: Finance is one of the major problems faced by women entrepreneurs. Both family and government organizations should be liberal in providing financial assistance to them.

5. **Marketing Assistance**: Due to limited mobility, women are unable to market their goods. Assistance must be provided to help them to market their goods successfully in the economic environment.

6. **Family support**: Family should support women entrepreneurs and encourage them to establish and run business successfully.

**4. Conclusion:**

Women constitute almost half of the total population in India but they are not enjoying their freedoms, equalities, privileges, on par with their male counterparts. Since implementation of planning in India, several policies and approaches were made to reduce inequalities between women and men. As a result a shift from ‘welfare’ to ‘development’ to ‘empowerment’ to ‘human development’ approaches has taken place to change the position and status of women. Both government and NGO’s sectors were intervening to empower the women. The National Empowerment Policy, 2001 also emphasized that women’s economic empowerment may be visualized only with the development of women entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurial development is one of the important area where majority of countries have focused upon as a part of overall Human Resource Development. It is well ascertained by policy makers across the countries that strategic development of an economy required equal participation and equal opportunities to all sections and gender. Entrepreneurial development is one significant instrument for sustainable socio-economic development.

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