

A Study on Problems and Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Nagercoil Town

M. Mary Helen Stella

Department of Commerce, Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil - 629 004.

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli - 627012.

Email: helenstella177@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

An entrepreneur is an individual who creates a new business, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards. The entrepreneur is commonly seen as an innovator, a source of new ideas, goods, services, and business or procedures. Women entrepreneur is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women, who is capable of contributing values in both family and social life. With the advent of media, women are aware of their own traits, rights and the work situations. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of digital era are growing rapidly that the job seekers are turning into job creators. They are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation. This study focuses on problems and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. For this purpose, both primary and secondary data were collected. For collecting data, convenient random sampling technique was used. This study concludes that, inspite of various difficulties the women entrepreneurs face, they are courageous enough to face the situation bravely and try to flourish in the business world.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, constraints, challenges*

Introduction

An entrepreneur is an individual who creates a new business, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards. The process of setting up a business is known as entrepreneur. The entrepreneur is commonly seen as an innovator, a source of new ideas, goods, services, and business or procedures. Women entrepreneur may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise. According to Schumpeter, "Women who innovate, imitate or adopt a business activity are called women entrepreneurs."

Women entrepreneur is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women, who is capable of contributing values in both family and social life. With the advent of media, women are aware of their own traits, rights and also the work situations. The challenges and opportunities provided to the women of digital era are growing rapidly that the job seekers are turning into job creators. They are flourishing as

designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation.

In India, although women constitute majority of the total population, the entrepreneurial world is still a male dominated one. Women in advanced nations are recognized and are more prominent in the business world. But the Indian women entrepreneurs are facing some major constraints like identifying the available resources, lack of confidence in their strength and competence, socio-cultural barriers, market-oriented risks etc.

Statement of the problem

Women entrepreneurs are very important for social development of a nation. Entrepreneurship plays the biggest role in women's life. In the current emerging market scenario, the Government of India and the State Government are providing lot of assistance and support to the women to empower them through self-entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship has a direct relationship with the economic growth and development. With regard to Nagercoil, the study area, there are many sectors that provide entrepreneurial opportunities to women. Hence the researcher has conducted a study on the topic "A study on Problems and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs" in Nagercoil.

Objectives of the study

1. To know the demographic profile of the entrepreneurs.
2. To find out the problems and challenges faced by the entrepreneurs.
3. To give necessary suggestions for improvement.

Methodology

The present study intends to analyse the problems and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Nagercoil. The methodology of the study includes selection of sample, method of data collection and analysis. For this study 50 women entrepreneurs are selected as samples using convenient random sampling technique. Primary data were collected from the sample women entrepreneurs using a well-structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from Websites, magazines and Journals.

Review of literature

Singh Surinder Pal, (2008) in his study identified the reasons and influencing factors behind entry of women in entrepreneurship. According to him the obstacles for the growth of women entrepreneurship are lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs, social un-acceptance as women entrepreneurs, family responsibility, gender discrimination, missing network, low priority given by bankers to provide loan to women entrepreneurs. He suggested

the remedial measures like promoting micro enterprises, unlocking institutional frame work, projecting and pulling to grow and support the winners etc.

Meenu Maheshwari, Priyasodani (2015) presented a paper on Women Entrepreneurship. The purpose of this paper was to look at the literature around women entrepreneurship in general. Lack of access to finance, technological constraints, environmental and societal issues, insufficient supply of labour and tax policies are providing a restrictive environment in which women entrepreneurs are finding it difficult to succeed, despite having clear motivations and goals.

Mala Mahanta (2016) found in her research on "Importance and challenges of women entrepreneurs" that development of entrepreneurship among women leads to greater empowerment of women. At present, women are coming to start their business in both traditional and non - traditional activities with support from their family, society, banks and government. Infrastructure facilities like power supply, building, space, family problems, lack of recognition and appreciation, non - availability of skilled manpower, lack of skill and financial support, adequate marketing are the major challenges for women.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table: 1
Demographic Profile

Sl. No.	Variables	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
I	Age	18-25	21	42
		26-35	10	20
		36-50	11	22
		Above 50	8	16
		Total	50	100
II	Educational qualification	HSC	13	26
		UG	17	34
		PG	7	14
		Professional	13	26
		Total	50	100
III	Marital Status	Married	29	58
		Unmarried	21	42
		Total	50	100

Majority of the respondents belong to 18-25 age category and most of the respondents are qualified with UG degree. More than 50 percent of the respondents are married.

Motive behind starting the business

There will be some motivating factors that trigger the women to take decision to become

an entrepreneur. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse these factors. The factors motivating the respondents to start a business is given in Table 2

Table 2

Motive behind starting the business

Motivating factor	No. of respondents	Percentage
Status	3	6
Passion	12	24
Livelihood	6	12
Ambition	12	24
Government Subsidy	1	2
Independence	11	22
Market opportunities	2	4
Others	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

The table 2 shows that “Passion and Ambition” to start business is a motivating factor to 24 per cent of the respondents and “Government subsidy” is the motivating factor to 2 per cent of the respondents. So, it is understood that majority of the respondents are motivated by “Passion and Ambition” to start a business.

Source from where women entrepreneurs borrow money

Money is the life of blood of any business. No single business can survive without making investment. Availability of finance is an important prerequisite for establishing any entrepreneurial activity. Table 3 shows the source from where the respondents raise finance.

Table 3

Source from where women entrepreneurs borrow money

Source	No. of respondents	Percentage
Friends and Relatives	21	42
Private money lenders	8	16
Loan from commercial banks	17	34
Loan from development banks	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

The Table 3 shows that 42 per cent of the respondents borrow money from friends and relatives, 16 per cent of the respondents borrow money from private money lenders, 34 per cent of the respondents borrow money from commercial banks and 8 per cent of the

respondents borrow money from Development banks. This infers that majority of the respondents borrow money from friends and relatives.

Problems faced by women entrepreneurs while applying for loan

While applying for loan women may face lot of problems. This is shown these in Table 4

Table 4

Problems faced by the respondents while applying for loan

Problems	No. of respondents	Percentage
Lack of proper security	13	26
Lack of convincing power	8	16
Lack of proper knowledge	12	24
Others	17	34
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

The Table 4 shows that “Lack of proper security” is the major problem faced by 26 per cent of the respondents, “Lack of convincing power” is the major problem faced by 16 per cent of the respondents, “Lack of knowledge” is the major problem faced by 24 per cent of the respondents.

The sector women entrepreneurs are doing business

There are many sectors that provide employment opportunities. Of them, the sector that provides employment in large is depicted in table 5

Table 5

The sector women entrepreneurs are doing business

Sector	No. of respondents	Percentage
Manufacturing	23	46
Service	16	32
Others	11	22
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 5 clearly shows that 46 per cent of the respondents are doing business in Manufacturing sector, 32 per cent of the respondents are doing business in service sectors and 22 per cent of the respondents are doing business in various other sectors.

Sources of finance selected by women entrepreneurs to solve their financial problem

Women entrepreneurs face lot of financial problems in their business field and they try to solve their financial problems in many ways. Table 6 shows how they solve their financial problems.

Table 6
Sources of finance

Source	No. of respondents	Percentage
Bank loan	14	28
Family support	21	42
Private money lenders	13	26
Others	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 6 shows that 28 per cent of the respondents solve their financial problem by borrowing money from banks, 42 per cent of the respondents solve their financial problems by borrowing money from family members, 26 per cent of the respondents solve their problems by borrowing money from private money lenders and 4 per cent of the respondents solve their financial problems by other sources.

Reason for the inability to survive in the business field by women

Even though an entrepreneur has all capacities, there are some difficulties that always stand on the way. There are some difficulties that affect the growth of entrepreneurship. The reasons for the inability to survive in business field is given in table 7.

Table 7
Reason for the inability to survive in the business field by women

Reasons	No. of respondents	Percentage
Family problem	10	20
Financial problem	15	30
Negative socio-cultural attitude	8	16
Lack of self confidence	9	18
Lack of support from the family	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 7 shows that 30 per cent of the respondents are unable to survive in the business field because of “Financial problems”, 20 per cent of the respondents are unable to survive in the business field because of “Family problems” and 16 per cent each of the respondents are unable to survive in the business field because of “Negative socio cultural attitude” and “Lack of support from the family” respectively, majority of the respondents are unable to survive in the business field because of “Financial issues”.

Challenges women entrepreneurs have experienced

The challenges and opportunities available to the women of digital era are growing rapidly that the job seekers are turning into job creators. Table 8 shows the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

Table 8
Challenges women entrepreneurs have experienced

Challenges	Garrett means score	Rank
Gender perspective	38.9	V
Family issues	60.7	I
Fear of failure	48	III
Lack of financial support	60.5	II
Lack of confidence	41.8	IV

Source: Primary data

Table 8 shows that “Family issues” ranked first with the mean score of 60.7, “Lack of financial support” ranked second with the mean score of 60.5 and “Gender perspective” ranked fifth with the mean score of 38.9. So, it is clear that Family issue is the major challenge faced by women entrepreneurs.

Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs during the start-up phase

Every start up founder knows from the outset that they have to face various challenges. This table shows the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs during the start-up phase.

Table 9
Challenges faced by respondents during the start-up phase

Challenges	No. of respondents	Percentage
No obstacles	4	8
Doubt of self confidence	9	18
Financial issues	24	48
Lack of information	11	22
Combining domestic and business life	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 9 shows that the main challenge for 48 per cent of the respondents is “Financial issues” while starting their business, and for 22 per cent of the respondents the challenge is “Lack of information” and for 4 per cent of the respondents the “Combining domestic and

professional life” is the challenge faced by them.

Present status of the business

Status is an accepted or official position, especially in a social group. Table 10 shows the current status of women entrepreneurs.

Table 10
Present status of the business

Status of the business	No. of respondents	Percentage
Its blooming	13	26
Running normally	15	30
Good enough to survive	20	40
Undergoing loss	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 10 shows that 40 per cent of the respondents said that their business is good enough to survive, 30 per cent of the respondents said that their business is running normally and 4 per cent of the respondents said that their business is undergoing loss.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made which can help the women entrepreneurs.

- Due to family issues many of the respondents are hesitated to start their business, so the family members of women entrepreneurs should come forward to support the women to achieve their goal.
- Steps may be taken to make the family members aware of the potentialities of women and their dual role in society. At the same time negatives social attitude towards women should be changed.
- Guidance cell for women entrepreneurs can be set up to handle the problems of women entrepreneurs.
- Housewives should be motivated to learn the technique of earning additional income.
- Better educational facilities and schemes should be extended to women folk by the government.
- Adequate training program on management skills can be provided to the women community.
- Encourage women's participation in decision-making.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women today are more willing to take up activities that were once considered the sole right of men, and have proved that they are shining like men with respect to contribution to the growth of the economy. Women entrepreneurship must be molded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges global markets and also be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial area.

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