

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND GENDER INJUSTICE

Anima Anjuri*

ABSTRACT

The present paper deals with the problems that the women entrepreneurs have to deal with in the market. These are the challenges that make it difficult for women entrepreneurs to achieve height and number of male entrepreneurs in the market. It is sad that across the globe number of women entrepreneurs taken altogether is very less and therefore there is need to study why it is so. The paper studies the reasons that pose challenge to the growth of women entrepreneurs like family problems, sociological upbringing, psychological conditioning and recommends various mechanisms to deal with those problems with the aim to find solution to better market with more females as entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is something very crucial to the market. Every settled industry which is now working in the market was once a start-up. Entrepreneurs are people who take risk and use their capital; contacts, skills and innovation to set up a new business entity and these entities are what in the long run become gigantic business firms and corporations. Loosely saying anybody with qualities of a good business mind and risk taking ability can become an entrepreneur but this is not what the deep look inside the business world tells you. Where are the female entrepreneurs? How many female entrepreneurs can you think of now? Yes there are women who have done extremely well in the fields of business world and there are many who hold very high positions but how many names come to mind across the whole globe when we think of female entrepreneurs. Even if there are names still the count is nothing as compared to the number of men in the same field. Also it is sad but none of the industries created and owned by women has been able to make into the list of market rulers. They lack in size, market confidence and name. Why?

* Second year student, Institute of Law, Nirma University, Ahmedabad.

For decades we have been blaming lack of recognition of woman's labour and lack of contribution to the market as the main reason for her passive position in the market but the question to ask is what made her labour secondary and why is she not able to contribute to the market.

The topic of this research paper is to study why is number of female entrepreneurs less? What can be the reasons because of which the number of females in entrepreneurial business is less? Is the stereotyping correct that women do not have a business efficient brain or they must only work as position holders and not as bosses?

To understand this we have gone through certain studies and we have tried to understand certain sociological and psychological explanation for the same. The methodology of the paper is theoretical research based and references are usually web based. Various studies across the planet have been done in general manner and in region specific manner to try to understand why the number of women entrepreneur is so less as compared to men and if at all the answer to this question is universal or specific to variables like place or race or country. The paper has been written in the way of an essay and has been structured to first understand why women have a back position in the field of business then talk about data which show that women entrepreneurs face more difficulty than male entrepreneurs and then discuss the reasons why female entrepreneurs face more challenges than their counterparts. In the end of the paper we have discussed some measure which can help women in coming up more confidently and better equipped in the business world and promote both their number and quality of firms. The last few pages of the paper discuss the learning outcome, the unanswered questions and bulleted conclusions of the entire paper, followed by bibliography.

First and foremost thing to understand is what has made women an outsider to the business world as per the stereotyping. To understand this we must consider the historical theory of feminism which tells you how and why the women lost their rights to the market and got secluded to the world inside the houses. When the civilisation started the women owing to their biological abilities got supreme rights over houses chores, property and agriculture. Men stayed off for hunting and only added to security and food while all other things from cooking to cultivation of crops to bringing kids up to alchemy to language building was women's work. But when the lands stopped giving crops for once the early humans had to move to new lands, in order to avoid feuds naming of lands started. For it was man who found new lands and protected them and cleared them of forests it became their property and

women lost the property rights. As land was limited and population grew not everybody could get land and with properties growing in number slowly need for commercial labour came up. With labour becoming more gender specific and markets evolving with surplus it was men who worked outside the homes who got more recognition and their labour became economic while women's labour degenerated to just housework. She became captivated in house doing what she did before while the men made and developed markets as per their needs and aptitude. Women's labour was not paid and therefore she became more and more economically dependent on men and an outsider to the market ways and measures. Her absence from the market then led to stereotype that women are outsiders to markets and this makes female entrepreneurship difficult and rare.

As we have understood what made women rare as market contributors now we should see if it is actually so. Do women entrepreneurs actually face so many problems? Studies tell us that women today make up only 30% of the total entrepreneurial market with many of them having been partners. Why is there such a large difference in women's participation? Is it the market that averse them or is it the vice-versa?

The first reason for women being less up for entrepreneurship is that this is how they are conditioned. Women are sociologically conditioned to be dependent on men and to believe that their prime duty is to get married, have children and look after the household chores. They have not been trained to be risk takers and innovators¹. They have been taught to make everybody happy and this is what can never happen in the business. They are not conditioned to be bold and take decisions. Women are taught to be safe and stay low and not to offend anybody and to try and keep everybody together and happy and work for betterment and not for profit making and therefore profit making never becomes their chief goal. Therefore in short we can say that the prime reason why women entrepreneur struggle is their sociological conditioning.

Second and most evident reason is the tension between family and business. Men do not struggle with this problem because it is normal to find them outside house doing other things but accepting women prioritising work over family is not accepted easily. She has multiple roles to fulfil inside the house and in the family and she cannot be everything else and an

¹Dr. Vijayakumar, A. and Jayachitra, S. Women Entrepreneurs In India - Emerging Issues And Challenges by International Journal of Development Research Vol. 3, Issue, 04, pp.012-017, April, 2013

entrepreneur at the same time.² Men usually are supported and promoted from the families but women entrepreneurs usually do not find support in families. Check of a good woman has been her efficiency in keeping the family happy and her spouse happy and content and not in doing what she wants to do. This point thus indicated that a problem faced by women entrepreneurs is fission between family and work.

A woman becomes in true self herself only when she becomes a mother and this is something which provides women reluctance to devote time elsewhere. It is one because of women's biological conditioning to take care of her children and two because of society's dicta. A woman is recognised good or successful by the kind of homemaker she is or by the kind of mother she is taken to be. She must take care of her child and be with him all the times to all his needs and spend time in the grooming. Nothing can be said against it but this is a challenge for it is difficult for businesswomen who have children to focus on innovation and expansion and risk taking while the men face no such bar. They may have children but they always have their spouse to take care of them plus they don't have to undergo society's judgement on how good fathers they are but every woman has to undergo society's check on how good a mother they are. Society's control on women's personal choices about her marriage and family and motherhood make it difficult for the women to compete for she cannot go unanswered to the society too. Childbirth and upbringing are challenges women entrepreneur face that pull them behind male counterparts.

Next we can say that the reason women entrepreneurs are less in number and less successful is because they are less educated and aware.³ Not only in developing or underdeveloped countries but across the whole world the women entrepreneurs fail because they do not receive the same education as men do. Education does not just mean schooling but means that women are not promoted to learn such skills and knowledge that they may need for setting up a business. Where boys are very easily introduced to the market ways and measures, girls limited access to practical knowledge can be one reason why they fail to understand the intricacies of the market. What they learn after getting into the business is what their competitors learn quite early and this is not good for the competition. Women are usually promoted to take up social sciences and medicines and arts and philosophy while it is men who get more technical and practical knowledge. In absence of knowledge of things that are

²Karyn A. Loscocco, Joyce Robinson, Richard H. Hall and John K. Allen ,Gender and Small Business Success: An Inquiry into Women's Relative Disadvantage by Social Forces

³Ibid.

actually market related and essential, women find it difficult to stay in competition with men. Therefore education of women also is a reason why they lack in understanding market and technologies.

Other reason why women face problem in starting up their own enterprise is because market does not take them seriously and this can be attributed to male chauvinism existing in the modern day business world⁴. Men believe in their hegemony over the market for they have the number, better experience and more social links. They down look the women entering into the business and this cold response from the market already lessens women's encouragement. Male dominance and male chauvinism therefore is a important challenge female entrepreneurs face.

Women have not been trained to socialise, they have been trained to see other women as competition and other men as threat and this is the reason they find socialising and forming contacts difficult and this is one very big problem for business cannot work without middlemen. Lack of right contacts not only increases the cost of production but also can create threat for business and maintain confidentiality and gaining trust in the market. This is a very big challenge for no business can grow without advertisement and contacts.

One more reason why women find it difficult to start an enterprise of their own is because they do not have the right training and skill. They do not understand investments, they face problem with technology, they face problem with laws and they do not take risks. Many a time businessman has to venture everything into the fire but again as women are trained to work on the safer side they would like to go slow and save money. Chances of women taking part in illegal practices for profit making are also less.

The financial resources needed for the start-up is again a problem for women for they themselves have been dependent on men and even if they have been independent then wages paid to women and men are discriminatory themselves. Usually the banks and other investors avoid granting women loans for they are taken to be bad investments. According to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "despite evidence that

⁴ Patricia G. Greene, Myra M. Hart, Elizabeth J. Gatewood, Candida G. Brush, Nancy M. Carter, Women Entrepreneurs: Moving Front and Center: An Overview of Research and Theory by American Journal of Small Business.

woman's loan repayment rates are higher than men's, women still face more difficulties in obtaining credit"⁵.Therefore the first difficulty that women face is finance.

In many countries where women do not have the property rights they are left with lesser options to use as assets. Taking loans in their names becomes a problem and without the support of families collecting finance for start-up becomes a huge challenge.

Women also have access to less human capital be it for lack of their networking or lack of trust they place, they have been known to select a small number of employees and place entire work load on the known and trusted ones. This becomes a problem when they need to expand.

One very important reason for failure of women entrepreneurs is that they invest and work in least profitable industries. The industries women have been known to work in are social work and social betterment, medicines, and clothing's and fashion. There is not much scope of everyday innovation and competition is already very dense. Even if women are able to set up small businesses the profit growth reduces after sometime and sustaining or expanding the business becomes a problem. The women entrepreneurs need to work in new fields and fields that are yet not know for dense competition. They need to work with new technologies and new ideas.

Another problem which is seen specifically with women is that they do not expand the business, this may be due to financial bar or may be because of family restrictions or may be because of lack of idea and hunger for profit but this is peculiar for women entrepreneurs lose market value and name because of their reluctance to growth.

Women also face certain problem due to newness or lack of experience of the market.⁶ In the long term they are unable to read the directions and upslope and downslope of the business cycles and this lack of long term vision becomes a reason for their struggle.

Women entrepreneurs lack organisational structure and established client or customer base⁷ for this happens by networking which women entrepreneurs have not been good in. They

⁵Dr. A.B. Siddiqui, Problems Encountered by Women Entrepreneurs in India for International Journal of Applied Research & Studies.

⁶Karyn A. Loscocco, Joyce Robinson, Richard H. Hall and John K. Allen , "Gender and Small Business Success: An Inquiry into Women's Relative Disadvantage."

⁷Jawaharlal Nehru*; ShubhraBhardwaj, "Women Entrepreneurship In India:Issues& Problems" , A Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, Vol.2 Issue 7.

have to put more resources in reaching to customer base for they wish to do it directly instead of through links and jumps.

Middlemen are something businessmen should avoid to cut extra charges and middlemen are something women work with for they compensate their lack of networking. They not only increase the production cost but also can cause mismanagement and legal issues.

Women are prone to more crimes than men and it is need for safety that pushes everything down the priority line and puts safety first and safekeeping comes with costs and restraints. Be it developed countries or developing countries, crime against women have been ever increasing. Neither women can expose themselves to random people nor can they travel without restriction for it is the idea of safekeeping that stops them. Also in many countries crime rates are so high, localities are so dangerous and commutation is so unsafe that it almost becomes impossible for women to come out of their houses.

Limited mobility is also a reason which makes it difficult for women to expand the business. It can be due to whatever reasons but this hinders growth and also it causes stagnation of ideas, capital and profit.⁸ Women owing to their biological structure are known to travel less and take more leaves from work and all this adds to their struggle.

Studies also reflect that the reason for women to start business of their own is to become independent or to safeguard ones economical rights or for helping the society or community whereas the reasons for men to entrepreneur is profit making and beings one's own boss and this marks they basic difference why men succeed more in competitiveness and business making. Difference in approach can be said to be important factor for studying the differences between male and female entrepreneurs.

To list all in short we can say that women entrepreneurs face following problems in different degrees and they are the reason why they face more challenges then men.

- Lack of financial support and reluctance of banks to invest in them
- Lack of experience in the field
- Lack of specific skill and training

⁸Patricia G. Greene, Myra M. Hart, Elizabeth J. Gatewood, Candida G. Brush, Nancy M. Carter, "Women Entrepreneurs: Moving Front and Center: An Overview of Research and Theory", American Journal of Small Business.

- Sociological conditioning which is anti-risk taking, anti-working out and anti-innovation
- Problems of middlemen
- Coldness of market and discouragement
- Stiff competition from male counterparts
- Domestic liabilities
- Motherhood and health factors.
- Reluctance to expand business
- Mistrust and lack of contacts
- Smaller size of women's business
- Concentration of business in least profit making industries and low growth industries
- Lack of risk taking
- Limited mobility
- Lack of effective education
- Male dominance over market and male chauvinism
- Cultural and traditional bar
- Need for safety

We have seen here the various reasons that explain problems that women face as entrepreneurs many of these are region specific like family structure and traditions and community mind-set. For example number of enterprises owned and run by women in China is more than number of enterprises run by men. Some other features like lack of networking, need for safety, sociological conditioning are more or less universal and can be explained for all women entrepreneurs across the world. But what should be done to safeguard women from submitting to these problems and promoting entrepreneurship in women.

It is important for women as a community and for women as individuals to know that they are not bound to any boundaries. They can work in whatever field they want and expand their businesses to whatever limits they want and to achieve this certain things can be done.

First and foremost business can happen only in a stable and free society. Crime and violence makes it difficult for any type of business to grow and innovations to happen and therefore it is important that the Governments promote and provide for better administration of law and

crime control. If women are sure that they would stay safe they can work longer and across various limits.

Secondly providing women with right kind of information is very important. They need to be well informed and well prepared for their challenges and they should be imparted with practical knowledge.

Education should be such that they not only get the information but also correct and practical approach of doing things. They should be inspired to take up technical studies and should be made known to scientific temperament.

Risk taking is something which is important for success not only the field of business but generally too and women must be conditioned to go out and try new things. They must be made to understand that failure is over rated.

Women should be supported and encouraged by their families to go out and innovate and take risks and work and motherhood must not be taken as a restriction or limitation.

For banks and investors make it difficult for women to acquire capital, Governments should make some schemes to promote women entrepreneurship and also assist them in expanding their businesses. Women entrepreneurs must understand the importance of networking and working in teams and that not everything can be done on one's own.⁹ Team building is necessary and productive for linking and networking not only advertises but also creates a customer base.

Financial cells and co-operatives can be made to help assist women in building up new businesses.¹⁰ Women work for community and this would directly help the community.

Vocational training, knowledge about leadership, production process, legal liabilities etc. should be made known to the women entrepreneurs.

Soft loans and subsidies should be made available to women entrepreneurs.¹¹

⁹Dr.Vijayakumar, A.,Jayachitra, S. , "Women Entrepreneurs In India - Emerging Issues And Challenges", International Journal of Development Research, Vol. 3, Issue, 04, 012-017.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Report on the Gender Initiative: Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship.

All the steps are needed because it is important for the nation that its women take parts in economy building and add to the GDP. A country can only become developed if all its citizens get equal opportunity to work and grow and no kind of discrimination can limit their betterment. We understand what importance entrepreneurship holds for the market. Without it the market would become stagnant with no new innovation and no new product and it is also important for business cycles to move at their pace. Therefore promoting entrepreneurship is very crucial and when promoting it, it must be kept in mind that men and women are both capable of it must get equal opportunity and promotion. Today there are not many names of female entrepreneurs but there are some significant names and they are doing some really appreciable works which proves that women entrepreneurs are no less capable. Therefore the problems that this paper has highlighted must be taken into account and dealt with for a better market and an unbiased market.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

It is commonly known that motherhood and domestic liabilities are considered prime duties of women and for women to be free of these can only happen when she gets support from her spouse and family. Though this seems easy but this is not generally accepted. Therefore until gender roleplaying is shunned not much help can be done.

Studies have shown that women are better at repaying the loans; still why the banks have a problem in investing in them is something I can't fathom.

CONCLUSION

- In this paper we first discussed why and how women lost their position in the market and became dependent on men.
- Then we talked about why women entrepreneurs face problems. Under this we discussed various issues with their explanations.
 - Sociological upbringing
 - Psychological conditioning to not trust and be safe
 - Need for safety and security
 - Lack of capital
 - Lack of skill and training
 - Lack of family support

- Lack of experience
 - Smaller size of business
 - Reluctance to expand the business
 - Motherhood and health issues
 - Limited mobility
 - Lack of networking
 - Liability due to newness in the market
 - Cold shoulder from the market
 - Male dominance and male chauvinism
 - Exploitation due to middleman
 - Traditional and cultural limitations
- Then we discussed certain measure that can be taken for promoting the women entrepreneurs.
 - Crime and violence must be controlled and safety must be ensured
 - Soft loans and subsidies must be given
 - Education and training must be efficient
 - Vocational training and leadership lessons must be provided
 - Family support needed
 - Govt should assist them with policies.

REFERENCES

- Karyn A. Loscocco, Joyce Robinson, Richard H. Hall and John K. Allen ,Gender and Small Business Success: An Inquiry into Women's Relative Disadvantage by Social Forces,Vol. 70, No. 1 (Sep., 1991), pp. 65-85 Published by: Oxford University URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2580062>
- Jawaharlal Nehru*; ShubhraBhardwaj, Women Entrepreneurship In India: Issues& Problems by A Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Vol.2 Issue 7
- Patricia G. Greene, Myra M. Hart, Elizabeth J. Gatewood, Candida G. Brush, Nancy M. Carter, Women Entrepreneurs: Moving Front and Centre:An Overview of Research and Theory by American Journal ofSmall Business

- Emilie J. Hutchinson, ScienceThe Economic Problems of Women by Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 143, Women in the Modern World (May, 1929), pp. 132-136
- Ingrid Verheul and Roy Thurik, orgStart-up Capital: "Does Gender Matter?" by Small Business Economics, Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue on European Approaches to SmallBusiness Research: Papers from the XIII European Research into Entrepreneurship (RENT) Workshop (Jun., 2001), pp. 329-345
- Report on the Gender Initiative: Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Ayala Malach Pines, Miri Lerner and Dafna Schwartz, Gender differences in entrepreneurship Equality, diversity and inclusion in times of global crisis available at www.emeraldinsight.com/2040-7149.htm