

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN NEW INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Rural development has traditionally centred on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry. However, changes in global production networks and increased urbanization have changed the character of rural areas. Increasingly tourism, niche manufacturers, and recreation have replaced resource extraction and agriculture as dominant economic drivers. It is a general belief in many cultures that the role of women is to build and maintain the homely affairs like task of fetching water, cooking and rearing children. Since the turn of the century, the status of women in India has been changing due to growing industrialization, globalization, and social legislation. With the spread of education and awareness, women have shifted from kitchen to higher level of professional activities. In almost all the developed countries in the world women are putting their steps at par with the men in field of business. The role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is inevitable. Now-a-days women enter not only in selected professions but also in professions like trade, industry and engineering. Women are also willing to take up business and contribute to the Nation's growth. Their role is also being recognized and steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded 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 arena.

KEYWORD: Women Entrepreneurs, Role In India, Government Policies And Scheme.

"Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated Areas"

INTRODUCTION

In developing economies, the small savings of rural areas are contributing more in establishing the small and micro enterprises in India. In the light of demise of rural artisanship, entrepreneurship has been given much importance as well as empowerment too. The

women empowerment has been important role of Governments and other non-governmental organizations. The women are endowed with innate power that can make them successful entrepreneurs.

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In India, women constitute around 48 percent of the population but their participation in the economic activities is only 34 percent. As per the Human Development Report (2007), India ranks 96th on the gender related development index of 137 nations. The gender empowerment measures, which estimate the extent of women participation in the country's economic and political activities, rank India as 110th of the 166 nations. In the emerging complex social scenario, women have a pivotal role to play. Now women have taken up entrepreneurial role in order to create a meaning for themselves. The traditional roles of housewives are gradually changing into women entrepreneurs. Some of the factors responsible for these changes are better education, changing socio cultural values and need for supplementary income. When proper exposure, education and knowledge are imparted to them, Indian women will prove themselves to be highly potential productive force for the development of the nation. Concept of Women Entrepreneurs Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stands on their own legs. A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic responsibilities women want to get independence.

The study is based on secondary data which is collected from the published reports of RBI, NABARD, Census Surveys, SSI Reports, newspapers, journals, websites, etc. The study was planned with the following objectives.

Women entrepreneurship is seen as an effective strategy to solve the problems of rural and urban poverty. Traditionally, women in India have been generally found in low productive sectors such as agriculture and household activities. Human Development Report 2004 ranks India 103 in Gender related Development Index (GDI). As per 2001 census; women constitute nearly half of India's population. Out of this total, 72% were engaged in agriculture, 21.7% in other non agricultural pursuits with only 6.3% in household industries. Women are coming forth to the business arena with ideas to start small and medium enterprises. They are willing to be inspired by role models- the experience of other women in the business arena. The role of women entrepreneurs is especially relevant in the situation of large scale unemployment that the country faces. The modern large scale industry cannot absorb much of labour as it is capital intensive. The small scale industry plays an important role absorbing around 80% of the employment. The myth that women cannot engage in productive employment needs to be dispelled. They can be encouraged to set up small and medium scale industries on their own initiative. Entrepreneurship development for women is an important factor in economic development of India. Rural women can be encouraged to start cottage industries. Rural based micro enterprises have been encouraged by the government by various schemes-such as Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), At present, the Government of India has over 27 schemes for women operated by different departments and ministries. Some of these are: Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) Khadi And Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) Entrepreneurial Development programme (EDPs) Management Development programmes Women's Development Corporations (WDCs) Marketing of Non-Farm Products of Rural Women (MAHIMA) Assistance to Rural Women in Non-

Farm Development (ARWIND) schemes Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) Working Women's Forum Indira Mahila Yojana Indira Mahila Kendra Mahila Samiti Yojana Mahila Vikas Nidhi Micro Credit Scheme Rashtriya Mahila Kosh SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi Mahila Vikas Nidhi SBI's Stree Shakti Scheme NGO's Credit Schemes Micro & Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programmes (MSE-CDP). National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes Rajiv Gandhi Mahila Vikas Pariyojana (RGMVP) Priyadarshini Project- A programme for Rural Women Empowerment and Livelihood in Mid Gangetic Plains, NABARD- KfW-SEWA Bank project Exhibitions for women, under promotional package for Micro & Small enterprises approved by CCEA under marketing support. The efforts of government and its different agencies are ably supplemented by NGOs that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps. Of course we have come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding. Role of Women Entrepreneurs in India 479 Tips & Suggestions for Women Entrepreneurs Tips For Women Entrepreneurs Start a business that works for you and your personal life Research the product/ service Assess the market Start business with adequate funds Do networking. Consult with professionals. Here are some suggestive measures, to solve the problems confronted by them and for running their enterprise smoothly At this juncture, effective steps are needed to provide entrepreneurial awareness, orientation and skill development programs to women. The role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is also being recognized and steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. From these suggestions it is quite visible that for development and promotion of women entrepreneurship, in the region, there is a need for multi dimensional approach from different

sector, namely from the government side, financial institutions, individual women entrepreneurs and many more, for a flexible integrated and

WOMEN'S ROLE IN CHANGING SOCIETY

The status of women in our country is culture, region and age specific. The status of women in Hindu society has changed from time to time. Their position has been variously estimated and diametrically opposite views are held regarding her place in different stages of civilization. On the one hand she is considered little better than a slave or beast of burden, condemned to drudgery, bought as a cattle and treated as such. On the other hand, those who have had anything to do with tribes reckoning decent from the mother are likely to view a woman as the undisputed mistress of the family if not of community life as well. Both concepts are, "as far as the vast majority of the people are concerned, bound to be far away from the actual state of affairs." 9 In discussion of women's status in any society, the general convention has been to access their roles in relation to men. Two other dimensions have in recent times been introduced to facilitate such assessment particularly in a period of change: A. The extent of actual control enjoyed by women over their own lives. B. The extent to which they have access to decision-making processes and are effective in positions of power and authority. There is so much variability in the relation of women to society that any general statement must be taken with caution. Categorically, her utility, resourcefulness in domestic life, refreshing company and affectionate care of children have always proved a great asset to her partner in life and have, to a considerable extent, determined her status at different stages of civilization. In the ancient period of Indian history, the birth of a daughter was not welcomed, but it certainly did not frighten the parents. Early marriage was not a norm, and girls belonging to the ruling families

received administrative and military training and were entitled to the same education as boys and no limitations were put on their ambitions in this direction. In the choice of his or her spouse, both enjoyed equal freedom and equal opportunities. Generally speaking, before the advent of the Muslims, the status of Hindu women was certainly better. There were many factors directly and indirectly responsible for the continuous deterioration in the status of Indian woman in medieval times. Early marriage became a rule to safeguard the honour and chastity of girls. The Hindu law gave unequal and indifferent treatment to women. They were discriminated against in marriage, marital status, divorce, widowhood and inheritance. In a joint Hindu family, the father was the head of the family. Sons acquired rights in the family property as soon as they were born. Daughters had none. A widow without a son had a share in the property until her remarriage or death. Very few women in the 1850s received education. Literacy reached such low ebb after 1857 that there was probably one woman in a hundred who could read and write. This was so because of the evil socio-religious practices, sinister customs, irrational religious rites, and superstitions and ceremonies, unknown in the ancient period, which had crept into Hindu society. Some of these were early marriage, enforced widowhood, sati, temple prostitution, purdah, dowry system, female infanticide and the evil practices of polygamy and polyandry. These made Hindu society a huge, static and immobile social structure in which

women practically had no say and were neglected. In this period Hindu women were in a perpetual state of depression. It is not difficult to assess the social structure allowed men greater freedom and liberty. These practices were the product of medieval India for, in ancient times, once a daughter was born, every care was taken to bring her up and educate her like a boy, but female infanticide and social evils crept into Hindu society much later. Hindu society, which had been in a state of perpetual decline for several preceding centuries, had reached its lowest ebb in the nineteenth century (except in early Vedic times), when woman was assigned a position subordinate to man. The law did not recognize equality of sexes and equal rights of man and woman. Society permitted men to enjoy rights and freedom from which women were excluded. Different standards were adopted to judge the individual and social conduct of man and woman. Hindu women suffered because of their ignorance, early marriage, their infant motherhood, enforced widowhood and abject dependence on men. Perhaps the worst aspect of this social degeneration was the terrible sufferings and social failings of women and that is why the issue of emancipation of women and her education engaged the attention of almost all social reformers.

Reference

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