

Difficulties and Challenges Faced By Women Entrepreneurs in Gurgaon

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Abstract: The statement “behind every successful man is a woman”, shows just how much women are capable of handling almost every problem, overcoming the hurdles in life and still be loving and caring. The male dominated world has always been hesitant to acknowledge the fact that women are as good as men in terms of capability, hard work, intelligence and even management skills. In some parts of India women are still being considered as someone who should be sitting at home and take care of the family. India, which is a veritable male dominated country, is now seeing a sudden surge in women entrepreneurs. We can now see the changing demographics, how women are now entering new and unique business avenues with creative marketing strategies to tap their customers. Customization and personalization is the new trend, and women entrepreneurs are doing just that to please their customers. Nowadays women are running several businesses like bakery shops, interior designing, beauty parlors/salon, general stores, boutiques, blogging sites, jewellery/accessories stores, etc. and that too with a lot of success. The aim of this research paper is to find out what problems women face in creating and maintaining their own enterprise, and how they overcome those hurdles and become successful. Through this paper, we intend to carry out primary research through questionnaire and personal interviews where women entrepreneurs were questioned about the motivational factors, problems they faced while starting up enterprise and other barriers they face during operations of their businesses. Questions about the nature of their enterprise, their family background and their abilities were also raised in order to get a clear picture. Also a brief highlight regarding the role of Web Marketing in women’s success is discussed.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs, Internet Marketing, abilities, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of India has defined the **woman entrepreneur** as the one who owns and controls an enterprise, having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to a woman. It is a group of women or a single woman running an enterprise or company in order to earn profit. Women entrepreneur may be defined as a woman or group of women who start, organize, and combine the factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risks and handle economic uncertainty involved in running a business enterprise.

In the last decade, we have seen a tremendous surge in women entrepreneurs in India. This can be attributed to the increasing education level of women, gradual evolution of society, ability and a compelling desire to achieve something in life, in addition to the need of financial independence. These are the women who have broken away from the beaten track and are exploring new avenues. Despite all the hardships, they are emerging as winners, by the virtue of their perseverance. We have many examples from India who have made it big in their fields like Shahnaz Hussain, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Vandana Luthra, and many more.

What motivates women to aspire for a career is a desire to explore and acquire freedom. One of their main factors, motivation for financial independence, is a critical driver that lead them towards entrepreneurship. Apart from this, the challenge and adventure to do something new, indicates a deeper commitment to entrepreneurial profession on the part of the entrepreneurs. In addition to these qualities, special qualities such as emotional stability as well as sensitivity and ability to manage resources are other main factors which ensure success of these women entrepreneurs.

Gurgaon which is known for its corporate culture is home to many of the Fortune 500 companies. Excellent infrastructural facilities like Metro, shopping malls, and tech internet savvy nature of people, have made way for a new generation of entrepreneurs who see the potential in the customers and try to tap them with their business model. We can see now despite the fact that many of the ventures are run from homes by the women; they strive to maintain the highest level of corporate standards and professionalism. For these enterprising women, it is much more than an employment opportunity. Apart from the sense professional pride and financial freedom, it has infused them with a fresh spirit, enabling them to transform hitherto ordinary lives and develop their own identity. Today, with the kind of communication networks and social media platforms available, it is no wonder that women are increasingly considering these options.

Web marketing is transforming lives of the women entrepreneurs in a big way. It is relatively cheap and has far reaching impact on its customers, just the way an entrepreneur wants. One does not have to go different places for advertising; everything is now just a click away. The problem of mobility for women has been solved by the internet and women can maintain a personal relationship with their customers. We are now moving to phase where customers are demanding high quality, unique design and customization, this is being successfully achieved by these women entrepreneurs. Whether it is consultancy, healthcare, apparel, home made baked goods, etc.; women are emerging as a front runner in these fields.

Approximately 1.4 billion of the world population is on Facebook and twitter, and by advertising on these sites, entrepreneurs can at least be sure that they are not missing on their target clients. As Gurgaon is a fast growing millennium city the people are always on the move, they do not have much time to go and shop in brick and mortar stores. Not only does creating and posting advertisements add up to significant costs, the level of customer trust in traditional advertising is fairly low. Start-ups, in particular, enjoy a much higher success rate using social media to promote their products or services.

Keeping in mind these changing demographic trends women entrepreneurs are tapping the potential and scaling new heights in business. Almost all the things can be done online- creation of websites for business, advertisements on web-pages, online orders, real time feedback by the customers, personalized chat forums, etc.; and all these things ensure that customers have a pleasant experience while shopping from the luxury of their homes.

With diminishing inequality in some areas in India, we can see that women, after receiving education and training, have gained confidence to do new work in different ways. The qualities and **abilities** of a woman entrepreneur can be summarized as: Committed, hardworking, skilful, educated, intelligent, motivated, ambitious, enthusiastic, patient, positive attitude, perseverance, high emotional quotient, managerial skills etc. and these qualities enable women entrepreneurs to become successful in their ventures.

Even though we see these women successfully operating their businesses now, we cannot ignore the problems they faced while starting up their ventures. One of the basic problems that all women entrepreneurs face is of finances; women do not generally have property in their names so they cannot use them as collateral for obtaining funds from banks. Thus, their access to the external sources of funds is limited.

Unlike men, women's mobility in India is highly limited due to various reasons. A single woman is still looked upon with suspicion. In order to obtain raw materials women have to venture out of their homes. Patriarchal outlook in India has been the root cause of this inequality, where the men think that women who wander late at night deserve to be punished. Even in broad day-light women cannot travel without being stared upon. In India, it is mainly a women's duty to look after the children and other members of the family. In case of a married woman, she has to strike a fine balance between her business and family. Her total involvement in family leaves little or no energy and time to devote for business.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To study the driving factors of women to start business,
- To study the problems faced by women entrepreneurs,
- To study the ability of Women Entrepreneurs,
- To study the means of marketing used by them.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. **Type of research-** Primary Research through Structured Questionnaire and personal interview.
2. **Target Group-** Women Owned proprietary enterprises.
3. **Sampling technique**
 - The study was conducted in **New Gurgaon and Old Gurgaon**.
 - Convenient sampling technique was adopted for the selection of study area.
 - A sample of 50 women respondents, 25 from New Gurgaon and 25 from Old Gurgaon was taken on the basis of criterion that they should be running their enterprise independently.
 - Enterprises taken up for the study were Kirana stores, Bakeries, Jewellery outlets, boutiques, beauty parlours, spas, consultancy firms, tuition centres and blogging sites of women.

The study was conducted in two different parts of Gurgaon. Random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of study area. A sample of 50 women respondents (25 each from each part) was taken on the basis of criterion that they should be running their enterprise independently and not in partnership. Enterprises taken up for the study were blogging sites, bakeries, boutiques, beauticians, beauty parlours, interior designer showrooms, general stores and jewellery stores. Well-structured and pretested interview schedule was used for collecting primary data by survey method. Tabular analysis techniques employed was chi-square test.

New Gurgaon is considered very high-end area with more number of high-income families, where we saw that women were more tech-savvy and used internet a lot for business purposes. But in Old-Gurgaon area, it was seen that not many women used internet for business purposes. They stuck to old brick and mortar shops and old marketing techniques more than using online models.

Women entrepreneurship in India is a very fast developing phenomenon but still women have to face a lot of stereotyping issues, financial issues, etc. Therefore, this study was conducted on fifty women entrepreneurs selected through random sampling technique in Gurgaon. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the psychological, economic, environmental constraints faced by women in their enterprises and to develop guidelines for becoming a successful entrepreneur. Tough competition from MNCs, lack of safe transport facilities, unsafe environment and increasing security risks for women, and non-availability of expertise were the significant problems faced by entrepreneurs. Common entrepreneurial problems can be dealt by formulating self-help and mutually aided groups. In Gurgaon, nowadays many women are creating Facebook pages specially to interact with the women having common problem. Also the problem of institutional credit need to be strengthened to keep entrepreneurs aware about loaning schemes/credit facilities for further expansion. Micro-financing is also starting to play a major role in aiding the finances of women entrepreneurs. Micro financing should be encouraged and its criteria should be modified so that many more women entrepreneurs can take benefit of such institutions.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to the research it was found that:

- 65% of the women entrepreneurs are in the age group of 24 years to 45 years.
- The women entrepreneurs are involved in Bakery, Jewellery making, Online Blogging, Tuition centres, Boutiques, Beauty parlours (beauticians), Interior designing etc.
- The major tool women entrepreneurs are using nowadays is WEB Marketing. It is through social media and micro-blogging sites like Facebook, Twitter etc. where they get online orders from their clients, and connect with them.
- The major factors motivating Women Entrepreneurs to start up their own business were:
 - Need for Self Achievement
 - Financial independence and economic gain
 - Flexible work schedule/ work -from -home
 - Discovering opportunities.
- The major problems that came in the way of Women Entrepreneurs were:
 - Financial problem

- Single /separated/Divorcee tag
- Balancing family and work life
- Cultural bias and discrimination
- Lack of public safety
- Qualities they felt they had to become successful entrepreneurs:
 - Patience
 - Positive attitude
 - Emotional bond with customers
 - Never give up spirit
 - Management of resources.

V. LIMITATIONS

The main limitations of this research paper are:

1. The Research is based on a sample size of 50 respondents which have been randomly selected from two different parts of Gurgaon. Though at most care has been taken to ensure that the sample is a true representation of the population, the generalization of the result of the study is limited as defined by the sample size of this sample and findings.
2. The study is based on two methods of data collection: Questionnaires & interview. Thus, the extent of reliability and validity of findings of the study depends on reliability and validity of these methods of data collection.
3. Only Interview method was used for the entrepreneurs who ran online blogging sites and ran online sites.
4. Time and budget limitations.

VI. CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs face many hardships in areas like finance, marketing, work place facility, time schedule and sometimes a taboo of single or separated women. Getting loan from banks also prove to be a tedious task for women as they do not have any collateral in their name, they have to convince more as compared to men. Poor location of shop and lack of transport facility are major marketing problems for women who had rented shops. Women entrepreneurs also faced problem of space as the rent in Gurgaon is very high, and thus, property cannot be easily bought/rented. This is the reason many women entrepreneurs chose internet to do marketing as it became very convenient and cheap for them. The qualities which these women entrepreneurs have projected should also be taken as a source of inspiration to other aspiring women entrepreneurs.

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