

Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Guwahati Municipal Corporation

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Abstract- A nation can only be developed if its women are given ample opportunities. Developing entrepreneurship among women will be right approach for women empowerment. This would enhance their socio-economic status. Once a woman feels that she is economically strong, she will feel equal to man in all respect. This is perhaps the need of the hour.

Keywords: Empowerment, Poverty alleviation, Respondent, Constant monitoring

I. INTRODUCTION

The term 'women empowerment' has come to occupy an important position globally over the years. Educational attainment and economic participation are the key constituents in ensuring empowerment of women. The economic empowerment of women is a vital element of strong economic growth in any country. Entrepreneurship happens to be one of the best ways towards self sufficiency and poverty alleviation for women in a country where employment is not guaranteed. Involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities would ensure effective utilization of labour, generation of income and hence improvement in quality of life. Women empowerment through entrepreneurship is a must for a modern developed economy.

Assam is not lagging behind the rest of the country in respect of women entrepreneurship. This is evident from the fact that Assam accounts for 18 percent women entrepreneurs as against 7.7 percent in the country. Besides, the potential for developing women entrepreneurs in Assam is very high. Generally, women entrepreneurs in Assam are engaged mainly in traditional activities like weaving, knitting, embroidery, beauty parlour, running of schools, creches, readymade

garments, jam, jelly and pickle making etc. In recent years it has been observed that women entrepreneurs of Assam are venturing into non-traditional traits also.

II. OBJECTIVES

Following are the objectives of the study:-

- To understand the impact of economic status of women entrepreneurs;
- To examine the attitude of family and society towards women entrepreneurs;
- To identify the problems faced by the women entrepreneurs;
- To suggest measures for promotion of women entrepreneurs.

III. METHODOLOGY

The samples under this study are taken of the women entrepreneurs of the Gauhati Municipal area. The study was conducted during the month of January, 2012. The total numbers of samples selected are 50. The study is primarily based on the primary data collected from the respondents. An interview and questionnaire was prepared to collect information regarding family background, income, trade and knowledge about enterprises. The secondary data has been collected mainly from various publications of Government of India, Government of Assam, Journals and periodicals, bulletins and articles in connection with the study.

IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The data collected from the field are analyzed to assess the problems and prospect of women entrepreneurship.

TABLE: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	No. of Entrepreneurs
21 – 25	13 (26%)
25 – 35	15 (30%)
35 – 45	22 (44%)
45 and above	05 (10%)

Educational Qualification	No. of Entrepreneurs
Below HSLC	8 (16%)
HSLC	15 (30%)
HS	16 (32%)
Graduate	11 (22%)
Post Graduate	-

Marital Status	No. of entrepreneurs
Married	38 (76%)
Unmarried	12 (24%)

It is observed that majority of women started their enterprise at the age range of 25 – 45. They had qualification and perhaps could get some other job. But they selected entrepreneurship as career. This reflects the changing attitude of women entrepreneurship. As regards educational qualification it is observed that 8

(16%) women entrepreneurs were below HSLC and 15 (30%) were HSLC. It is observed that 11 (22%) were graduates and none of them were postgraduate. It is observed that out of 50 entrepreneurs as many as 38 (76%) women were married.

TABLE: ANNUAL INCOME OF THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Annual Income	No. of Entrepreneurs
Below Rs. 50,000	2 (4%)
Rs. 50,000 – 70,000	8 (16%)
Rs. 70,000 – 90,000	12 (24%)
Rs. 90,000 – 1,20,000	18 (36%)
Rs. 1,20,000 – 1,40,000	7 (14%)
Rs. 1,40,000 and above	3 (6%)

It is observed from the table that the total annual income of 2 (4%) women entrepreneurs was below Rs. 50,000. The annual income of 12 (24%) women entrepreneurs were within the range of Rs. 70,000 – 90,000, 18 (36%)

women entrepreneurs have annual income in between 90,000 – 1,20,000 and only 3 women entrepreneurs had annual income which exceeds Rs. 1,40,000.

TABLE: EMPLOYMENT GENERATED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR

Persons	No. of Employment
Self	50
Family	27
Wages	75
Total	152

The above table shows that women entrepreneur got gainful employment in the units established by them; besides generated employment for a number of persons.

The total number of employment generated in 50 units is 152 persons.

TABLE: SUPPORT RECEIVED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Support Received	No. of Entrepreneurs
Parents	10 (20%)
Husband	15 (30%)
Friends / Relatives	-
Financial Institutions	20 (40%)
Training Institute	05 (10%)

The table reveals that the 10 women entrepreneurs received guidance from training institutes and the

number of women entrepreneurs received supports from parents and husbands stood at 10 and 15 respectively.

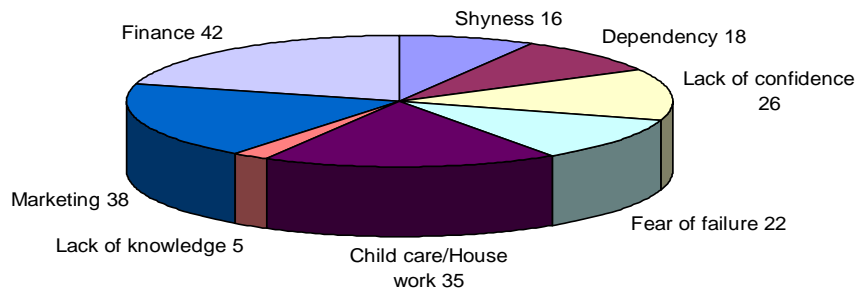
TABLE: PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WHILE SETTING UP THEIR ENTERPRISE

Problems	No. of Entrepreneurs
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Shyness	16 (32%)
Dependency	18 (36%)
Lack of confidence	26 (52%)
Fear of failure	22 (44%)
Child care/ House work	35 (70%)
Lack of knowledge	5 (10%)
Marketing	38 (76%)
Finance	42 (84%)

Majority of women entrepreneurs considered entrepreneurship as secondary to their home and family (70%). They gave maximum importance to their husband and children and their relationship with them.

Women entrepreneurs (84%) reported that finance was a major problem. Marketing (76%) was the next problem faced by them.



A. Measures for promotion of women entrepreneurship

In view of the problems cited above, it is necessary to adopt some measures for development of entrepreneurship among women. Following recommendations have been made for the development of women entrepreneurship in Assam:

- The banks can play an important role by lending money to women entrepreneurs.
- Banks, Government agencies etc. should launch awareness and publicity campaigns about schemes available for women.
- The Government can also help women in marketing their products through its outlets at various levels.
- The family members can also be involved in the business with a view to sharing the burden of entrepreneurial work.
- Training also plays a significant positive role in promoting women entrepreneurs.
- Training organizations should provide them support by constant monitoring and follow-ups.

V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above discussion and suggestions it is hoped that women entrepreneurship has a bright future. The women entrepreneurs must have to take up the challenges of the new economic policy. A nation or region can only be developed if its women are

given ample opportunities. Developing entrepreneurship among women will be the right approach for empowerment of women.

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