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## **“Women Entrepreneur: A Catalyst Approach toward Atam Nirbhar Bharat”**

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### **Abstract**

*Women entrepreneur can be defined to promote women's sense of self –worth their ability to establish their own choices, and their right to persuade social change for themselves and others. It's so important for women self- esteem and also for societies. Empowering women is to give women the right. Women can have equal right to participate in education, society, economy and politically. Women can involve in society as they are glad to choose their religious, language, work & other activities. This paper focus on women are stepping toward their own start up by initiating through small business either individual or collectively with others by using the business opportunities offered by the environment. It shows the journey of women from 3k's (kitchen, kids, knitting) to 3E's (Electronics, energy, engineering). This paper also present the challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs, various opportunities available for them. There are so many national and international agencies that support the women to achieve the vision to become Atam Nirbhar.*

**Key Words: Women entrepreneurship, challenges, supportive agencies**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Women entrepreneurs may be defined as a woman or a group of women who initiate, organise and run a business concern. Women entrepreneurs are those women who think of a business enterprise, initiate it, organise and combine factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risks and handle economic uncertainty involved in running it. Government of India – “A woman entrepreneur is defined as an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women.” In short, women entrepreneurs are those women who think of a business enterprise, initiate it, organise and combine factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risks and handle economic uncertainty involved in running it. World over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the entrepreneurial ventures are run by woman entrepreneurs. Due to economic progress, better access to education, urbanization, spread of liberal and democratic culture and recognition by society, there has been a spurt in woman entrepreneurship in India. Special incentives and drives have been created in India to bolster the growth of women entrepreneurs. Schemes like Startup India and Standup also make special case to promote entrepreneurial drive among women. Closer to home, Indian woman Entrepreneur, Kiran Muzumdar Shaw, Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon Limited, received various coveted corporate award and civilian awards like Padma Shri (1989) and Padma Bhushan (2005) for her remarkable contribution to health and medicine industry. Other famous Indian Women entrepreneurs include personalities like Vandana Luthra, Ekta Kapoor, Naina Lal Kidwai and so on.*



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**Some common features of women entrepreneurs found in India are listed below:**

### **WOMEN SELF RELIANT-NEED AND FACTORS**

In modern days, particularly in India, there is a great need for women entrepreneurs. Several factors are responsible for compelling the women members of the family to set up their own ventures.

**These factors suggesting their need can be broadly classified into two groups:**

- I) Motivational factors or needs and
- II) Facilitating factors or needs.

**The following are the motivational needs for which modern women are motivated to become entrepreneurs:**

#### **1) Economic Necessity:**

In business, the entry of women is relatively a new phenomenon. Because of the break-up of the joint family system and the need for additional income for maintaining the living standards in the face of inflation or rising prices, women have started entering the most competitive world of business. Thus, because of the economic necessity, women have begun entering business field for earning some income and increasing their family income in modern days of inflation.

#### **2) Desire for High Achievement:**

Another motive force compelling women to enter business world is their strong desire for high achievement in their life. In modern days, though women are educated, they are not able to find jobs in the market place or they may not be able to go out of their homes for working somewhere else because of family problems.

Therefore, a woman is tempted strongly by a desire to achieve something high and valuable and prove herself as an asset and not a liability to the family. This is the strongest motivating force for a woman to become an entrepreneurs.

#### **3) Independence:**

Another strong motive force compelling a woman to become an entrepreneur is to lead an independent life with self-confidence and self-respect. The ownership and control of a successful business provides a woman entrepreneur a prestigious status, personal reputation and a sense of independence in the society.

#### **4) Government Encouragement:**

The Government and non-government bodies have started giving increasing attention and encouragement to women's economic conditions through self-employment and business ventures. They have formulated various policies and programmes and introduced various incentive

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schemes to promote women entrepreneurs in the country. Such encouragement and incentive schemes have induced women to undertake business mentors.

### **5) Education:**

Women have been taking up various kinds of technical, vocational, industrial, commercial and specialised education so as to qualify themselves to be self-employed in some kind of trade, occupation, vocation or business. Facilities are also being provided to women in areas where they can grow and blossom as persons in their own right. Women have proved in modern days that they are no less than men in efficiency, hard work or intelligence or even they can surpass men in several fields.

### **6) Model Role:**

Women, like men, are also desirous of contributing their might to the economic development of their country. Similarly, our women in India would like to play a key role model. They have already entered other fields like politics, education, social field, administration, etc. Now they have started entering the business field where they can also show their importance as in other fields.

### **7) Family Occupation:**

Family occupation is an important factor motivating a woman member to participate in the family business, along with her husband and other members of the family. There is a great need for women to undertake economic activity or business of the family and support their families in family occupation or family business so as to reduce the expenses of the family business and increase its income.

### **8) Employment Generation:**

Another influencing factor that motivates women to become entrepreneurs is the creation of employment opportunities. Women entrepreneurs generally take up labour intensive small scale and village industries or handicrafts and they have high potential in employment generation. Therefore, they serve as a solution to the widespread problem of women unemployment to some extent.

### **9) Self Identity and Social Status:**

Women desire to enjoy some social status and recognition in the society. Women entering business can achieve such a position of self-identity and recognition of social status because they come in contact with high level officers, ministers, authorities, and others holding high positions.

### **10) Growing Awareness:**

With the spread of education and the growing awareness among women, the women entrepreneurs have been increasing, not only in the kitchen extension activities i.e. the 3 Ps viz. pickles, powder (masala) and papad or the traditional cottage industries, such as toy-making, basket-making etc. as they require less technical know-how, but they are entering also into engineering, electronics and



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many other industries which require high level technical skill. Thus, women entrepreneurs are found in such technical industries as T.V. capacitor, electronic ancillaries, and small foundries.

Thus, in modern days, women do not want to stay within the four walls of a house but they want to become, like their male, counterparts, achievement-oriented, career-minded and economically independent so that they would be able to provide costly high level medical and technical education to their children and, lead a high standard of living in their life.

Facilitating needs are the needs for providing various facilities for the successful working of the women enterprises.

**These are given below:**

**1) Adequate Financial Facilities:**

Finance is the life-blood of any business, whether it is run by men entrepreneurs or women entrepreneurs. The Government has set up industrial estates for women. It should therefore provide the required financial facilities to the women entrepreneurs so as to motivate them to start their business or industry in such estates.

Several financial schemes like Mahila Udyam Nidhi, Marketing Development Fund etc., have been set up only for women entrepreneurs. In addition, banks and development finance institutions also provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs. Women will be tempted to start their own business ventures when such facilities are easily available to them.

**2) Innovative Thinking:**

Innovative thinking in women motivate them to become entrepreneurs. Women who have entrepreneurial talent and who have innovative thinking are naturally induced to take up small business or industry to convert their innovating and talent into a position of entrepreneurship instead of employment.

**3) Support and Cooperation of the Family:**

Another important factor that induces women to take up entrepreneurship is the full co-operation and encouragement of the family members, particularly, husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law, grown-up sons and daughters and other members, if any. In a modern educated family, women members generally enjoy more liberty and economic freedom. So naturally, they will be anxious to have their own source of income from their business.

**4) Availability of Experienced and Skilled Women:**

Women entrepreneurs would be able to provide experienced and skilled people to family occupations. Therefore, women will be motivated to become entrepreneurs.



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## 5) Development Programmes:

The Central and State Governments have started several development and training programmes particularly for women so as to enable them to become entrepreneurs. Such training and development programmes provide all types of facilities to women to start their business independently.

### ROLE AND IMPORTANCE-WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In this dynamic world, women entrepreneurs are a significant part of the global expedition for sustained economic development and social progress. Due to the growing industrialization, urbanization, social legislation and along with the spread of higher education and awareness, the emergence of Women owned businesses are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries. In former days, for Women there were 3 Ks- Kitchen, Kids, Knitting, then came 3 Ps- Powder, Pap pad, Pickles and now at present there are 4 Es- Electricity, Electronics, Energy, Engineering. Indian women had undergone a long way and are becoming increasingly visible and successful in all spheres and have shifted from kitchen to higher level of professional activities. Women entrepreneurs are fast becoming a force to reckon with in the business world and are not only involved in business for survival but to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities. Educated Women is contributing to a great extent to the social transformation and in the future, will be seen that more women venturing into areas traditionally dominated by men. Today's women are taking more and more professional and technical degrees to cope up with market need and are flourishing as designers, interior decorators, exporters, publishers, garment manufacturers and still exploring new avenues of economic participation. It is perhaps for these reasons that Government Bodies, NGO's, Social Scientists, Researchers and International Agencies have started showing interest in the issues related to entrepreneurship among women in India.

### SUPPORTIVE MEASURES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Once the government on its part realized the need for empowerment of women, it started coming out with a number of schemes, to provide for greater access to capital, so that they could startup units. Some institutions like National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE) assess women in starting-up, identifying good investment opportunities and raising capital more easily. Commercial banks also have women entrepreneur sections, where financial assistance is provided. In fact, schemes under the IDBI bank called 'Mahila Udyam Nidhi' and 'Mahila Vikas Nidhi' help women entrepreneurs with equity assistance. Established in the early 1990s, 'Ashriya Mahila Kosh' trains and provides orientation programmes for women. With their help, women have been able to triple their income.

The Norwegian Agency for International Development was established in 1983 to help educated men and women to start-up businesses in electronics, computers, manufacturing, printing, readymade garments, etc. Arvind, a scheme started by the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) provides loans to women to participate in agriculture. The Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was launched in 1980s by the rural development to support women's income generation activities. They provided economic assistance to develop



skills and meet their liabilities. The government of Tamil Nadu established the Tamil Nadu Co-operation for Development of Women Limited for the development and empowerment of women. It is a nodal agency for implementing various projects. A number of organizations today have started playing critical roles in empowering women and developing women entrepreneurs. This includes FICCI's Ladies Organization (FLO's), NAYE, etc. There are also organizations such as Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka (AWEK), Women Association of Maharashtra (WEMA), Self-employed Women's Institution (SEWA), Ahmedabad, etc. The Indian Council of Women Entrepreneurs (ICWE) is also trying to promote entrepreneurship among women. SEWA has its own bank which provides loans to women (like vegetable vendors, flower vendors, etc.) from rural areas. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh governments have promoted industrial estates especially among women entrepreneurs. In fact, the Association of Lady Entrepreneurs in Andhra Pradesh (ALEAP) is an organization that promotes entrepreneurship in both rural and urban areas. On the outskirts of Chennai, a biotechnology park was set up to promote women entrepreneurs in the Siruseri area along the IT highway.

### **BASIC PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS-WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The greatest problem faced by women entrepreneurs is that they are women. We are living in a male dominated society where women are treated as 'abalas'. They have to face several economic and social problems. Usually they will not get any support or co-operation from various financial institutions, male entrepreneurs or even from their families. They have to face resistance not only from men but also from elderly women who are ingrained with this attitude of inequality. Women entrepreneurs have to face two types of problems viz., general problems of entrepreneurs and problems specific to women entrepreneurs.

**The following are the important problems faced by women entrepreneurs:**

#### **1. Financial Constraints:**

Finance is the life blood of every business. Both long term and short term funds are required for business. For obtaining loans and advances from financial institutions, they have to provide collateral securities. But, usually women do not have property in their names and this hinders them from obtaining external sources of funds.

The banks also consider women as less credit worthy and discourage women borrowers on the belief that they can at any time leave their business and become housewives again. Under these circumstances, women entrepreneurs are bound to rely on their savings and loans from friends and relatives. The quantity of such funds are often negligible leading to the failure of women enterprises.

#### **2. Over Dependence on Intermediaries:**

Women entrepreneurs have to depend largely on intermediaries for the distribution of their products. These intermediaries take a major portion of their profits. It may be possible for the women entrepreneurs to eliminate the middlemen, but it requires additional investment of capital



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and a lot of travel. Women entrepreneurs find it difficult to capture market and popularise their products.

### **3. Stiff Competition:**

Women entrepreneurs have to face stiff competition for the products from the organised industries and male entrepreneurs. They do not have organisational set up to spend a lot of money for canvassing and advertisement. The society has a feeling that the products manufactured by women are inferior in quality on account of the fact that they are manufactured by women themselves. These factors will lead to the liquidation of women enterprises.

### **4. Scarcity of Raw Materials:**

Scarcity of raw materials is yet another important problem faced by the women entrepreneurs. The price of raw materials is very high and women entrepreneurs usually get the raw materials at minimum discount. The failure of many women co-operatives engaged in basket making in 1971 is an example of how the scarcity of raw materials affects entrepreneurship.

### **5. High Cost of Production:**

Another problem faced by women entrepreneurs is the high cost of production. The government grants and subsidies help them tide over this difficulty, but these grants and subsidies are available only at the initial stages of its setting up. For expansion and diversification activities these assistances will be negligible.

### **6. Limited Mobility:**

Unlike men, women mobility in India is highly limited due to various reasons. Physically they are not fit enough to travel a lot. A woman running an enterprise independently and alone is often looked upon with suspicion. The humiliating attitude of officials towards women compels them to give up the idea of starting an enterprise.

### **7. Family Ties:**

The family responsibilities also hinder the development of women entrepreneurship. In India, it is mainly a woman's duty to look after the children and other members of the family. Man plays a secondary role in these matters. In the case of married women, they have to make a fine balance between their business and family.

Their success greatly depends on the support given by the family. Occupational backgrounds of families and educational level of husbands have a direct bearing on the development of women entrepreneurship.

### **8. Lack of Education:**

In India around 60% of women are still illiterate. Illiteracy is the root cause of socio-economic problems. Due to lack of education, women are ignorant of business technology and market. It also

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reduces the achievement motivation among women. Thus, lack of education creates problems for women in the setting up and running of business enterprises.

### **9. Social Attitudes:**

This is one of the most important stumbling block in the path of women entrepreneurship. The constitution provides equality for both men and women, but there is widespread discrimination against women. In a male dominated society, women are not treated as equals to men. Women have the potential but they lack adequate training.

There is a common belief that skill imparted to a girl is lost when she gets married. Therefore, girls continue to be helpers in agriculture and handicrafts and the rigid social attitudes prevent them from becoming successful and independent entrepreneurs.

### **10. Male Dominated Society:**

Male chauvinism is still the order of the day in India. The constitution of India speaks of equality between sexes. But, in practice women are treated as 'abalas'. Women suffer from male reservations about their roles, abilities and capacities. In short, women are not treated as equal to men. This is the main barrier to women's entry into business.

### **11. Low Need for Achievement:**

The pre-requisites for success in entrepreneurship are the need for achievement, independence and autonomy. But in India the common Indian woman is happy to bask in the glory of their parents, husband, children etc. They have preconceived notions about their role in life. This inhibits them from achievements and independence.

In addition to the above difficulties, lack of infrastructural facilities, shortage of power, difficulty in obtaining licenses from various control boards and a number of other socio-economic problems stand as hurdles to the women entrepreneurs.

### ***Solutions to the Problems of Women Entrepreneurs:***

From the above discussion, it is clear that women entrepreneurs have to face a number of problems.

### **In order to overcome these difficulties, the following remedial measures can be adopted:**

#### **1. Separate Finance Divisions:**

Separate finance divisions can be opened by various financial institutions and banks for providing easy and ready finance to the women entrepreneurs. Through these divisions they can provide finance at concessional rates to women entrepreneurs. In order to avoid the humiliating attitude of the offices, these divisions may be under the control and management of women officers.



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## **2. Supply of Raw Materials:**

Women entrepreneurs must be given priority over other entrepreneurs in the supply of controlled and scarce raw materials. If possible, the government of local authorities must give tax exemptions to the supply of raw materials to the women entrepreneurs. The Government must make adequate steps to supply the raw materials at the minimum price.

## **3. Co-Operative Women's Marketing Societies:**

Marketing of products is one of the major problems faced by women entrepreneurs. In order to overcome this difficulty, they can start co-operative societies. These societies can collect the products manufactured by the women entrepreneurs and sell them at competitive prices by eliminating middle men. A chain of societies can be started all over the state/country for wider distribution of products.

## **4. Education and Social Change:**

It is necessary to make people aware of entrepreneurship development, various products, their marketing facilities, competition etc. The negative attitude of the society towards women should be changed.

## **5. Training:**

The modern concept of entrepreneurship is that 'entrepreneurs are not born but made.' By giving proper training we can develop the inborn talents of an individual and make him an entrepreneur. For this, the governmental agencies and financial institutions can set up separate divisions for giving training to women entrepreneurs. The training scheme of the syllabus should be so designed that women can take full advantage of the training facilities.

## **6. Family Background:**

There should be a sound family background for the development of women entrepreneurs. Elders, particularly mothers, should be aware of the potential of girls and their role in the society. Parents in the initial stage, and husbands in the later stage should support women for doing the entrepreneurial activities successfully.

## **7. Support from the Society:**

Necessary steps should be taken to make the society aware of the role of women in its economic and social development. There must be a change in the negative attitude of the society towards women entrepreneurs. The society shall provide encouraging support to women who take up entrepreneurial activities.

## **8. Support from the Government:**

Both Central and State Governments should give priority to women entrepreneurs for starting new ventures. The governments must give infrastructural facilities, raw materials, tax exemptions and

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concessions to them. The government can also give special grants and subsidies to the women entrepreneurs.

Women have to play a vital role in the economic development. They have the potential and will to establish and manage business enterprises. For this, they need encouragement and support from the members of their family, the government and the society at large.

## CONCLUSION

It is good to learn that Government of India enacted laws to guarantee the women to have equal rights of participation in political process, education and employments. The implementation shows that only a small sizable number of women from urban middle class have benefitted from the government sponsored development activities. Just enacting laws is not sufficient, but sustainable plans are to be done to effectively provide entrepreneurial related awareness, training, and skill development programmes to the aspiring women entrepreneurs. At the next level, it is a must that women entrepreneurs ought to be equipped with entrepreneurial traits and skills which can facilitate them to meet changes in trends and understand the challenges of global markets, and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena.

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