

Entrepreneurial Environment of Rural Women Entrepreneurs –An Opinion Survey

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“To awake the people it is the women who should be awakened first. Once she is on the move the family moves ...the nation moves”. - Jawaharlal Nehru

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a core element of growth and development for all nations. Women entrepreneurship development is an important part of human resource development. Entrepreneurship amongst women has been a recent concern. The development of women entrepreneurship is extremely low in India, especially in the rural areas. Women entrepreneurship has been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. In this study is made to find out the opinion of rural women entrepreneurs on entrepreneurial environment. The study is based on primary data collected from 87 rural women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore. The statistical tools like Simple percentage analysis, Average score analysis and ANOVA have been used to analyze the data. It can be concluded from the results of the study that inspite of the difficulties the rural women entrepreneurs face due to increased cost of business operations, entrepreneurship has helped them to enhance their business skills and talents.

Key Words: Entrepreneur, MUDRA, Womenpreneur

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the key component of growth and development for all the countries. Today business is built with human capital and women are one of the precious factors. Women owned business enterprises are increasing rapidly. The hidden entrepreneurial talents of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society.

The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their role to the nation's economy is quite visible in India. Women entrepreneurship has been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth.

In this dynamic world, women entrepreneurs have an important role in attaining the global quest for sustained economic development and social progress. In India, though women play a important role in the society, their entrepreneurial ability has not been properly used due

to the lower status of women in the society. in India very few women entrepreneurs only flourishing in their field but the opportunities given for all in same way. So the researcher tries to study the profile of women and their opinion about internal and external opportunities in business environment.

2. Review of literature

*Wim Vizverberg (1988)*¹ has studied a case study in the rural areas of Cote d' Ivoire among self employed small scale entrepreneurs and observed that self employment is an main mode of activity and a significant portion of the labour force in rural areas makes their living through self employment. The study shows that the motive behind starting of a majority of such enterprises is not due to their passion towards entrepreneurship but because the market wage offered is low or the chance of receiving a wage job is remote.

*Chitra K (2006)*² has undertaken an exploratory study on the critical success factors of women entrepreneurs in personal care industry the paper aims to understand and promote the women entrepreneurs in general and particularly the women entrepreneurs in personal care industry. The study assumes the characteristics of both descriptive and exploratory research. Primary data are collected from thirty five women entrepreneurs identified on the basis of convenience. The scope of the study is confined to beauty parlors operating in Coimbatore city. The study shows to light the profile of women entrepreneurs, profile of the unit, factors influencing entrepreneurship, critical success factors and the problems of women entrepreneurs. Further the paper attempts to explore the relationship between select demographic variables with critical success factors and the problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

*Sujata kumari, Vandana Kaushik and Neeta Lodha (2010)*³ in their study on “Problems faced by rural women entrepreneurs of Rajasthan” have examined the problems of women entrepreneurs in the rural areas of Rajasthan with 60 rural women of whom half were engaged in entrepreneurial activity and half were not. Interview schedule was used to collect the data from them. Information on the entrepreneurial problems was collected and analyzed. The results of the study indicated that lack of supportive network, financial and marketing constraints were the major problems for the women entrepreneurs as well as for other women who were willing to start entrepreneurial activity.

In a study on women entrepreneurship development in Kolhapur city by *Prof. Shabana A. Memon (2012)*⁴ 50 women entrepreneurs were surveyed through a questionnaire and an attempt was made to highlight the major issues of rural women and to identify the potentialities of enterprising women who are successful and thereby providing role models for young women entering the field of entrepreneurship for the first time. It is seen from the study that majority of the women entrepreneurs do not get the facilities provided by government, due to lack of awareness and fear of long and complex government procedures.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To Identify the steps taken by government to encourage rural women entrepreneurs
2. To analyze the opinion of rural women entrepreneurs about entrepreneurial environment.

4. Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship is not mere adoption of new activity but it is transformation of a person from traditional to modern India. Entrepreneurship creates self determination, recognition, self esteem and career goal among rural women entrepreneurs .As compared to men women are less motivated to start business concerns due to some unwanted fear, lack of motivation and kind of activities. The governments at the centre and the states have initiated a number of specialized institutions and loan schemes to cater to the needs of women entrepreneurs but they still face many problems.

Hence, this study is conducted to know the opinion of rural women entrepreneurs about entrepreneurial environment and attempt to give remedial measures.

5. Research Methodology

A sample size of 87 rural women entrepreneurs spread over Coimbatore district were selected and were interviewed through a pre structured interview schedule was done in the period of July to December 2017 . The statistical tools like **Simple percentage analysis, Average score analysis and ANOVA** have been used to analyze the data.

6. Steps taken by Government to improve Rural Women Entrepreneurs

Mudra Yojana Scheme

The Mudra Yojana plan enacted by the Government of India is attempt its best to improve the status of women by giving loans and encouraging them to start new business and thereby empowering them by providing a financial safety and security of individual income. A particular sum of money is allotted to be funded to just the women entrepreneurs or the WomenPreneurs, a wise decision implemented by the Government of India. Businesses like Beauty parlours, tailoring shops, tuition centres and various other small ventures are being started by women with this scheme operating in full swing. Groups of women who get together to start joint ventures will also receive loans and funds under this scheme, provided they are eligible according to the predefined terms and conditions. The fact that this loan is collateral free is in fact a big boon to them, for it takes off a huge risk from their backs. The loan procedure is quite simple. The eligible applicants will be verified with a few formalities. The verified women will then receive a Mudra card which they can use to buy the required material to start their business. Women will also receive loans under the Shishu, Kishor and Tarun schemes,

depending on the nature as well as state of establishment of the business. The procedure is same as for the others.

Objectives of MUDRA for Women

All the steps and initiatives proposed and followed by the Government, this by far seems to be the most revolutionary one, causing a storm in the non-urban portions. As the females in India become entrepreneurs, they will find themselves being looked upon with a new found respect. It's with little steps like these that our India will make over from a developing nation to a developed nation. Up to August 2017, They are recipients of 50% of the Rs 3,55,590 crores sanctioned under the scheme to help micro businesses, according to data released by Finance Ministry. Around Rs 1,78,313 crores of loans sanctioned were to women who were self-employed and doing businesses such as bakeries, paper products, food parlours, hair dressing and personal care. Other micro businesses, run by men and women, could include computer assemblers and roadside vendors.

The Rural Small Business Development Centre (RSBDC)

It is set up by the World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises and it is sponsored by NABARD. It works for the benefit of socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and groups. It aims at availing management and technical support to current and prospective micro and small entrepreneurs in rural areas. Since its inception, Rural Small Business Development center has organized several programmes on rural entrepreneurship, skill up graduation workshops, mobile clinics and trainers training programmes, awareness and counseling camps in various villages of Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

NABARD was set up in 1982 to promote integrated rural development. Since then, it has been adopting a multi-pronged, multi-purpose strategy for the promotion of rural business enterprises in the country. Apart from agriculture, it supports small scale industries, cottage and village industries and rural artisans using credit and non-credit approaches. It offers counseling and consultancy services and organizes training and development programmes for rural entrepreneurs.

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)

It has been set up as an apex bank to provide direct/indirect financial assistance under different plans, to meet credit needs of small business organizations. It coordinates the functions of other institutions in similar activities, recommend measures considered necessary for enhancing the productivity of small enterprises in the informal sector; generate more employment opportunities on a sustainable basis, particularly in the rural areas and enhance the competitiveness of the sector in the emerging global environment.

Rural and Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (RWED)

The Rural and Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme aims at promoting a conducive business environment and at building institutional and human capacities that will encourage and support the entrepreneurial initiatives of rural people and women. Rural women entrepreneurship development provides the following services:

- ✓ Creating a business environment that encourages initiatives of rural women entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Enhancing the human and institutional capacities required to foster entrepreneurial dynamism and enhance productivity.
- ✓ Providing training manuals for women entrepreneurs and training them.
- ✓ Rendering any other advisory services.

Mahila Vikas Nidhi

Small Industries Development Bank of India has developed this fund for the entrepreneurial development of women particularly in rural areas. Mahila Vikas Nidhi grants loan to women to start their business in the fields like spinning, weaving, knitting, embroidery products, block printing, handlooms, handicrafts, bamboo products etc.

Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)

TRYSEM is a sub-plan of integrated rural development programmes it gives training to young unemployed men and women for self employment. The trainees get a stipend of Rs.150 per month during training period. In this programme 40% of total seats are reserved for women. About 20 lakh women have been trained since its inception.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

Development of Women and Children in Rural areas is the rural development scheme to support women income generation activities through a group of 15-20 women. The Government of India has launched this women development programme in 1982. The main motto of the programme is to strengthen the economy of rural women by giving loans and assistance to them in order to develop their skills efficiently and to meet their liabilities effectively.

7. Analysis And Interpretation

Simple Percentage Analysis

Percentages are used in making comparison between two or more variables to find the efficiency of each variable and to describe relationships among them. Percentage analysis has been used to summarise the general profile of the respondents.

Personal Data

Table 1 shows the classification of respondents based on their age, education qualification, marital status, monthly income of their family, kind of family structure number of members in the family and age of entering the business

Table No 7.1 Showing Personal data

Age	Frequency	Percent
Less than 20 years	15	17.2
20-30 years	29	33.3
31-40 years	22	25.3
Above 40 years	21	24.1
Educational qualification		
No formal education	4	4.6
School level	49	56.3
Graduate	28	32.2
Post graduate	6	6.9
Marital status		
Married	64	73.6
Un married	22	25.3
Separated	1	1.1
Monthly income of the family		
Less than Rs.10,000	18	20.7
Rs.10,000-Rs.20,000	36	41.4
Rs.20,001 – Rs.30000	13	14.9
Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	17	19.5
Above Rs.40,000	3	3.4
Kind of Family Structure		
Nuclear	78	89.7
Joint	9	10.3
Number of Members in the Family		
1-3	21	24.1
4-6	62	71.3
Above 6	4	4.6
Age of Entering the Business		
Less than 20 years	18	20.7
20-30 years	40	46
31-40 years	18	20.7
Above 40 years	11	12.6
Total	87	100.0

Source: primary data

Interpretation

The above table shows that most (**33.3** per cent) of the respondents are in the age group of 20 to 30 years. 25.3 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 31 to 40 years. 24.1 per cent of the respondents are above 40 years and 17.2 per cent of the respondents are less than 20 years of age.

Majority (**56.3** per cent) of the respondents have school level education. 32.2 per cent of respondents are graduates. 6.9 per cent of respondents are post graduates. 4.6 per cent of the respondents have no formal education.

It can be inferred from the table that majority (**73.6** per cent) of the respondents are married, 25.3 per cent of them are unmarried and 1.1 per cent of the respondents are separated.

Most (**41.4** per cent) of the respondents' monthly family income is between Rs.10, 000 and Rs. 20,000, for 20.7 per cent of the respondents it is less than Rs.10000. 19.5 per cent of respondents have monthly family income of Rs.30, 001 to Rs.40000 and 14.9 per cent of the women entrepreneurs' monthly family income is around Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000. 3.5 per cent of the respondents' monthly family income is more than 40, 000.

(**89.7** per cent) of the respondents live in nuclear family and 10.3 per cent are in joint family.

Majority (**71.3** per cent) of respondents have 4 to 6 members in the family, 24.1 per cent of respondents' consist of 1 to 3 members in their family and 4.6 per cent of the respondents', families have more than 6 members.

Most (**46.0** per cent) of the respondents have entered the business when they were 20 to 30 years of age and 20.7 per cent of respondents were less than 20 years of age when they entered the business. 20.7 per cent of respondents have entered the business at the age of 31 to 40 years. 12.6 per cent of respondents were above 40 years of age when they entered the business.

Average Score Analysis

The Average score analysis is employed to determine the level of agreeability on the entrepreneurial environment of rural women entrepreneurs by different category of respondents.

Women entrepreneurs have been asked to express their opinion on the following statements using 5 point scaling has been used for the entrepreneurs, to say whether they strongly agree/ agree/ neutral/ disagree/ strongly disagree/ to the statement for average score analysis. Value 1 has been assigned to strongly agree, 2 to agree, 3 to neutral, 4 to disagree, 5 to strongly disagree.

S. No.	Statements	Code
1	The overall environment for women entrepreneur is good	S1
2	Family and Social commitments are growing	S2
3	Government support to women entrepreneurs is increasing	S3
4	Cost of running the business is increasing	S4
5	Easy access to finance & credit for women entrepreneurs	S5
6	Business support network is favorable	S6
7	Market is favorable	S7
8	Business and technical skills of women entrepreneurs have improved	S8

Table 7.2 describes the level of agreeability of the respondents on the statements relating to entrepreneurial environment based on 5 point scaling which is measured using average score analysis.

Table No 7.2 showing Average Score Analysis

		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
Age	Less than 20years	1.80	2.00	1.87	1.73	2.53	2.60	2.67	1.60
	21-30years	1.90	1.79	1.41	1.07	2.24	2.97	3.66	1.34
	31-40 years	1.77	1.82	1.50	1.36	2.95	2.82	3.18	1.27
	Above 40years	1.90	1.57	1.52	1.38	2.57	2.19	2.86	1.33
Educational Qualification	No formal education	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	3.50	1.50
	School level	1.88	1.88	1.61	1.45	2.12	2.69	3.08	1.33
	Graduate/ Diploma	1.93	1.82	1.36	1.25	2.82	2.82	3.25	1.36
	Post Graduate	1.50	1.33	2.17	1.00	3.83	2.33	3.33	1.67
Marital status	Married	1.94	1.78	1.47	1.27	2.55	2.84	3.41	1.27
	Unmarried	1.59	1.82	1.73	1.55	2.45	2.23	2.55	1.68
	Separated	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
Monthly income of the family	Less than Rs.10, 000	1.83	1.61	1.56	1.44	3.06	2.33	2.94	1.56
	Rs.10, 001 – Rs.20,000	1.83	1.78	1.42	1.25	1.92	2.78	3.33	1.06
	Rs.20,001 –Rs.30,000	2.00	2.08	1.62	1.46	2.54	2.23	2.69	1.46
	Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.12	3.41	3.12	3.41	1.71
	Above Rs.40,000	2.00	1.67	1.33	2.33	2.33	3.00	3.33	1.67
Number of members in the family	1-3	1.95	1.86	1.62	1.29	2.67	2.67	3.05	1.24
	4-6	1.81	1.74	1.45	1.34	2.45	2.66	3.23	1.40
	Above 6	2.00	2.00	2.50	1.50	3.50	3.00	3.00	1.50

Age of entering the business	Less than 20years	1.67	1.89	1.83	1.61	2.72	2.61	2.78	1.72
	21-30years	1.98	1.90	1.40	1.23	2.42	3.13	3.67	1.27
	31-40 years	1.72	1.61	1.44	1.28	2.89	2.11	2.78	1.33
	Above 40years	1.91	1.45	1.73	1.36	2.18	2.09	2.64	1.18

Source: Computed

From the above table 7.2, it is found those women who are less than 20 years of age, and between 31 and 40 years and who are above 40 years have strongly agreed that the ‘business and technical skill of women entrepreneurs have improved’, respondents in the age group of 21 to 30 years have strongly agreed that the ‘cost of running the business is increasing’.

Respondents who have no formal education have strongly agreed that ‘family and social commitments are growing’, ‘government support to women entrepreneurs is increasing’ and ‘cost of running the business is increasing’ for them. Women entrepreneurs who have school level education have strongly agreed that their ‘business and technical skills have improved. Graduate and post graduate respondents have strongly agreed that ‘cost of running the business is increasing’.

Married women entrepreneurs have strongly agreed that ‘cost of running the business is increasing’ and ‘business and technical skills of women entrepreneurs have improved’. The respondents who are unmarried have agreed that the ‘cost of running the business is increasing’. Separated respondents have strongly agreed that their ‘family and social commitments are growing’, ‘cost of running the business is increasing’ and ‘business and technical skills have improved’.

Women entrepreneurs whose monthly family income is less than Rs.10, 000 and between Rs.20,001 and Rs.40,000 have strongly agreed that ‘cost of running the business is increasing’. The respondents who have Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000 and Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000 as their monthly family income have strongly agreed that their ‘business and technical skills have improved’. Women entrepreneurs having more than Rs.40,000 as their monthly income have strongly agreed that ‘government support to women entrepreneurs is increasing’.

Women entrepreneurs whose family consists of 4 to 6 members and more than 6 members have strongly agreed that ‘cost of running the business is increasing’. Respondents having more than 6 members have strongly agreed that ‘business and technical skills of women entrepreneurs is increasing’.

The women entrepreneurs who have entered the business when they were less than 20 years, between 20 to 30 years and around 31-40 years have agreed that the ‘cost of running the business is increasing’. The respondents whose age of entering the business is above 40 years have strongly agreed that the ‘business and technical skills of women entrepreneurs have improved.

ANOVA

Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents classified into different groups based on the demographic variables such as age, educational qualification, marital status, number of members in the family, monthly family income, and age of entering the business about entrepreneurial environment.

Table No 7.3 showing ANOVA for Opinion score on entrepreneurial environment of rural women entrepreneurs and personal factors

Personal Factors	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Table Value	Significant/ Not Significant
Age	.417	3	.139	.284	2.635	NS
Educational qualification	.202	3	.067	1.37	2.635	NS
Marital status	.220	2	.110	.226	3.026	NS
Number of Family Members	1.415	4	.54	.731	2.402	NS
Monthly family Income	.502	2	.251	.519	3.026	NS
Age of entering the business	1.276	3	.425	.886	2.365	NS

Source: Computed from primary data,

NS – Not Significant

The ANOVA results have shown that the calculated F-ratio value is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Hence there is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents classified into different groups based on the demographic variables such as Age, Educational qualification, Marital status, Number of family members, Monthly family income and Age of entering the business about entrepreneurial environment Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

8. Findings

Percentage Analysis

- 1) Majority (**33** per cent) of the respondents are in the age group of 20 to30 years
- 2) Majority (**56.3** per cent) of the respondents have school level education.
- 3) Majority (**73.6** per cent) of respondents are married
- 4) (**41.4** per cent) of the respondents monthly family income is between Rs 10,000 to Rs. 20,000.
- 5) Majority (**89.7** per cent) of the respondents live in nuclear family.
- 6) (**71.3** per cent) of the respondents have 4 to 6 members in the family.
- 7) (**46.0** per cent) of the respondents have entered the business when they were 20 to 30 years of age.

Average Score Analysis

From the results of average score analysis it is evident that the rural women entrepreneurs have strongly agreed that they face difficulty due to the increased cost of running their business. It can also be found that the business and technical skills of entrepreneurs have improved due to the experience they derive as entrepreneurs.

ANOVA

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents classified into different groups based on the demographic variables such as Age, Educational qualification, Marital status, Number of family members, Monthly family income, Age of entering the business about entrepreneurial environment.

9. Suggestions

- 1) Women should try and upgrade themselves by adapting to the latest technologies and derive maximum benefits.
- 2) Women must be educated and trained constantly to acquire the skills and knowledge in all the functional areas of business management. This can facilitate women to excel in decision making process and develop a good business network
- 3) Government and the society should continuously attempt to inspire, encourage, and motivate women entrepreneurs

10. Conclusion

In the study on entrepreneurial environment of rural women entrepreneurs –an opinion survey the respondents have said that entrepreneurship activities has a major role to play in improving their skills. Women entrepreneurship in India has gained sharp momentum in recent years. But still some rural women entrepreneurs are facing social, financial, personal and marketing problems. In order to overcome these problems women entrepreneurs must be trained properly to meet the multi dimensional challenges in global markets and to be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena.

Government has emerged as a major catalyst by way of providing training incentives and other facilities to women entrepreneurs particularly in rural areas. But this marks only the beginning of an arduous journey ahead for the Indian rural woman entrepreneurs.

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