

Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship Development – A Descriptive Study with special reference to Barpeta District.

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Abstract:

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in formation of capital as well as in acceleration of socio-political benefits. It is the process through which economic development can be achieved in generating various productive activities. Women entrepreneurship is the process where women organize all the factors of production, undertake risks and provide employment to others. It also includes those activities undertaken by women to start a business or any productive activities having the management capacity and to run the business enterprise independently. Empowerment of women is very essential for a nation's progress. Women empowerment can be defined as promoting women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine own choices and their right to influence social change for themselves and others. It is purely based on secondary data. In this paper an attempt has been made to study how entrepreneurship developments among women have led to women empowerment in our country.

Key Words: Women, empowerment, entrepreneurship, development.

I. Introduction:

Entrepreneurship development is very important for now-a-days to accelerate the economic development of a country. It is the process of planning, organizing, operating and assuming the risk of a business venture. It is the ability to take risk independently to make more earnings. Entrepreneurship development is the process of enhancing the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills through structured training programmes. It leads to economic growth and creates new job opportunities, encourages innovation by bringing new ideas, products or services. Women empowerment can be defined as promoting women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices and their right to influence social change for themselves and others. Empowerment of women can be categorized into five main parts- social, educational, economic, political and psychological. Social empowerment refers to the enabling force that strengthens

women's social relations and their position in social structures. Assam is an agrarian economy. Most of the people i.e, nearly 86 per cent people live in rural areas as per 2011 census and female constitute nearly 48.88 per cent. Rural women are mainly engaged in agricultural activities and they are generally not aware of entrepreneurship development. Since most of the women in rural areas are not so much educated and they do not get job opportunities in service sector. Therefore, entrepreneurship developments among women particularly in rural areas are very important.

II. Literature Review:

Bordoloi, A and Machey A in their study have revealed the scenario of women entrepreneurship in Assam with special reference to Tinsukia district.

Borah, J in her study highlighted the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs in Assam.

Shingla, P and Singh M have found the overall impact of entrepreneurial developments on women's status and the extent to which an entrepreneur is empowered.

Shamsul Houque et.al in their study have identified the factors of women entrepreneurship development and also examine the casual relationship between entrepreneurship development and women empowerment.

Das, D in his paper focused on the motivational factors of women entrepreneurship development and major constraints faced by them in Gobardhana Block of Barpeta district.

Objectives of the study:

1. To explore the determining factors of entrepreneurship development of women.
2. To analyze the relation between entrepreneurship development and women empowerment.
3. To focus on the problems faced by women entrepreneurs and to provide some suggestions.

III. Methodology:

The study is mainly based on secondary data. Secondary data are collected from journals, books, newspapers, articles, websites.

About Barpeta District:

Barpeta is one of the socio-economically backward district having a geographical area 3245 sq.km. Total population of the district is 1,693,622 of which male and female were 867,004 and 826,618 respectively as per 2011 census. The growth rate of population is 21.43 per cent according to 2011 census. Average literacy rate of Barpeta district were 63.81 per cent. Sex ratio in Barpeta district were 953 per 1000 male (2011 census).

IV. Result and discussion:

Women can make a significant contribution towards entrepreneurial activities and economic development in terms of creating new jobs and increasing the gross domestic product (GDP). Women entrepreneurs are those who like to take risk of a new business activities. They have the desire to become economically and financially independent and to contribute to family's income. As the women have to dependent on their male counterpart they have to face many difficulties in their life. Through entrepreneurship development, women can become economically empowered. They can take part in decision making process. Their social status also improves. Such women get high position in the society in comparison to normal women. For earning income, most of the women have come forward to take entrepreneurial activities. There is a positive or direct relation between women entrepreneurship development and women empowerment. As the number of women entrepreneurs increases in an economy, the financial condition also improves. It accelerates the economic development of the country. Empowered women become the leader of a family. Thus, entrepreneurship development also helps in creation of women leadership. Those women who become entrepreneurs are actually very sincere and hardworking. Women vendors basically who engaged themselves in selling of vegetables; perform their business effectively like the male vendors. Now a days, the number of women vendors have increased. In this way they have got job opportunities and also to contribute to their family income. Women entrepreneur like Bobita who has a cloth shop in Howly, Barpeta is a source of inspiration for many other women. Initially it was a small business, but now it has expanded into a large business where many people have got job opportunities. Thus, it has been observed that women entrepreneurs not only increasing their own income but also providing employment opportunities to many other people. Many women are now doing the business of bakery i.e, making of cake which is used in celebration of different

programmes. Education can increase women's awareness of their rights, boost their self-esteem and provide them the opportunity to assert their rights. The main economic factors of women entrepreneurship development are freedom of own earnings, bearing family expenditures, providing education for children and to access to resources. Self confidence also increases women entrepreneurs and it helps in acquiring leadership qualities.

Problems of women entrepreneurship development: Following are the problems faced by women entrepreneurs-

1. Lack of professional education: Most of the women are lagging behind in professional education. The education level of women entrepreneurs in rural areas is very low.
2. Lack of proper training: Most of the women do not get training facilities for developing entrepreneurial skills.
3. Lack of marketing facilities: It is another problem faced by women entrepreneurs for which they can not sale their products effectively.
4. Lack of finance: Finance is necessary for entrepreneurial activities. But most of the women get the problems of finance as their own income is very low.
5. Lack of motivation: Most of the womens are suffering from lack of motivation either from ownself or from familyside.
6. Society's attitude: Generally women are risk averters and bear low confidence in starting a new business enterprise as they receive less co-operation from the society.
7. Lack of innovation: New and innovative productive skills are not available in a sufficient way among the women entrepreneurs.
8. Responsibilites towards family: Another important reason for less women entrepreneurship development is due to the dual role played by women. They have to look after their family and also to run a business enterprise.

V. Findings and Suggestions:

Major findings of the study are-

- The determinants of entrepreneurship development among women are to increase self-earnings, contribution towards family income, to access resources, financial independence, to improve social status.
- There exist a positive relation between entrepreneurship development and women empowerment in an economy. As the numbers of

women entrepreneur's increases, women will be empowered to a greater extent.

- Assam being an agro based economy, most of the women live in rural areas and they are not aware about entrepreneurship development.
- Lack of motivation from family side as well as from the society creates hindrances in the women entrepreneurship development.
- Lack of proper credit facilities creates problems among women to start a new business enterprise.

Suggestions:

Following provisions are recommended for the women entrepreneurship development-

- Proper education should be imparted to women and specially to the rural women so that they can be aware about different schemes undertaken by the government for the development of women entrepreneurship
- Training facilities should be provided to the women so that they can become efficient in their business activities.
- Credit facilities should be easily available to women entrepreneurs to start a new business enterprise.
- An NGO for women can provide training in life skills, financial literacy and reproductive health.
- Government should implement proper schemes for the development of women entrepreneurship to improve women empowerment.
- Products /services produced by the women entrepreneurs should be given more preference while purchasing by the various government agencies.
- Some of the important aspects through which women can develop their entrepreneurship skills are handicraft, handloom, dairy farming, food processing and beauty parlour etc.

VI. Conclusion:

The women entrepreneurship development programmes are the effective tools for achieving women empowerment in an economy. An increase in women participation in different entrepreneurial activities will accelerate economic development of a nation. When women become self-reliant from the point of economic and financial aspect, it improves their living standards and also increase the GDP of a nation. Since, there is a direct relation between entrepreneurship development and women empowerment, so more emphasis should be given in this aspect. Government should provide special attention for the women entrepreneurship

development, because more than 48 per cent populations of Assam are women.

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