

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

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EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN ECONOMIES

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Abstract

Women from an important segment of the labor force and the economic role-played by them cannot be isolated from the frame work of development. The role of women as business owners is gradually increasing all over the world. Women entrepreneurship development is the instrument of women empowerment. Empowerment leads to self-fulfillment and women become aware of where they are going, what their position is in the society, their status; existence and rights; and women are becoming more empowered, personally and economically through business ownership. Thus, the present study is initiated on empowering women through entrepreneurship development (ED) in emerging economies. The research is based on desk study. Moreover, the recommendation would be helpful to the practitioners, researchers, planners, policy makers and academicians, who are involved in the concerned area. Further, the present study also tries to contribute to this literature by empowering women through ED in emerging economies.

Keywords: *Empowerment; Entrepreneurship Development (ED); and Economies*

Introduction

One of the key factors in determining the success of development is the status and position of women in the society. This means that the neglect of women in the development process of any country constitutes a human resource waste. In this premise, it will be a disservice for any country to ignore its women population in its development efforts. The task before any government, therefore, should be that of moving steadily and firmly in the direction of economic development by involving women. Development is dynamic and therefore assumes a continuous transformation process and a movement towards better and improved conditions, locally and internationally.

Globally, women's empowerment has recently gained considerable importance as an area for policy and policy interventions in most of the organizations of the world. They have recognized the benefits of the empowerment, which can be achieved through effective participation of women. Women's education, technical progress etc. have profoundly changed this traditional society. Women perceive more and more clearly that if they really want empowerment and to contribute to the welfare of their family and society, the most effective way is to go out of home and earn money. During the last two decades employment opportunities gradually shrank and it became increasingly hard for men and women especially for less educated women to get acceptable jobs. Sooner or later, therefore, their entry into self-business leads to economic empowerment.

Objectives

The study has the following objectives

- ❖ To understand the philosophy and concept of women empowerment and ED
- ❖ To establish the linkage between women empowerment and ED in emerging economies
- ❖ To identify the impact of ED on women empowerment

Reviews

Faleye (1999) stated that women's development is not nearly about reducing poverty by increasing productivity, but also about women's liberation and empowerment. True development means the development in the three categories of a woman. These are: (1) Individual; (2) Social; and (3) Economic development.

(Rodney, 1972). Individual development means increased skills and capability, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being. Increasing capacity connects social development, while economic development is determined by the increased capacity of the members of a society in dealing with their environment. This emphasis means that development at the individual stage includes both the social and economic categories of development.

Analysis and Findings

Empowerment

Empowerment is associated with the daily essentials. It spends out from the daily life to the state power. That is, every part of human being concerns with empowerment from security to getting access, to research, to meet demands, to political decision-making process. Empowerment has to be perceived and realized as a whole in critical process that includes social, psychological, economic and political empowerment. Empowerment is one of the key concepts of this study. The origin of the concept is found in the ideas of the Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire. The shift in development theory during the 1980s away from the assumptions of top-down change towards an alternative development model as its root, a concept of empowerment as a form of development change was brought about by local problem solving efforts and techniques. Though the term empowerment has no fixed definition, yet it is frequently used to describe a process where in the powerless or disempowered gain greater share of control over resources and decision making and since women are generally the most disempowered members of the oppressed classes, empowerment has been described as nurturing, liberating, energizing the un-affluent and the unpowerful (Barkat, Abul, Khuda, Barkat & Rhaman, 1994).

According to UNDP (1994) empowerment is a process which enables individuals or groups to change balances of power in social, economic and political relations in society. It refers to many different activities including but not confined to awareness of the societal forces with people and to action, which change power relationships. One of the most important instruments for empowering women is to allow them dual access to and control

over productive resources such as land, capital, technology, credit as well as marketing outlets, information, education, training etc. without any discrimination (GOB, 1994). Empowerment redistributes power from the powerful to the powerless. It is more than participation in decision making, it must also include the process that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions (Prasad & Sahay, 2000). Empowerment must involve undoing negative social construction, so that people come to see themselves as having the capacity and the right to act and influence decisions (Rowlands, 1997).

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is one of the most promising research fields in management over the last decades. The academic enthusiasm has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of research effort being devoted to the subject. This increased attention can be justified for approval of creation of employment opportunities for developed as well as developing nations. In addition economists and development planners are inclined to believe that entrepreneurship, a key tool in economic development process can be developed or its growth can be accelerated by initiating appropriate training program as well as imparting education. The entrepreneurial capability of a person consists of qualities of life: (i) The ability to sense opportunities and mobilise resources for attaining success in their pursuits; (ii) The ability to make competent plans, make prompt and sound decisions; (iii) The capability to take calculated moderate risks and initiative new ventures; (iv) Being innovative, imaginative and prepared to sacrifice; (v) Intelligent and hardworking; and (vi) Having managerial ability to generate profit (Rahman, 1981). Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a critical factor in economic development. Schumpeter viewed entrepreneurship as the major conducive factor to economic growth (Schumpeter, 1934).

Hagen (1962) described that entrepreneurship is creating opportunities for investment and production, establishing an organisation capable of introducing new production process, accumulation of capital, collection of raw materials, innovation of new production techniques and new products, searching for new sources of raw materials and above all the selection of an efficient manager to run the day affairs of the organization.

Entrepreneurship Development ED refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. ED aims to enlarge the base of entrepreneurs in order to hasten the pace at which new ventures are created. This accelerates employment generation and economic development. ED focuses on the individual who wishes to start or expand a business. To develop entrepreneurship in a country requires comprehensive effort that covers various activities right from the stimulation to its long-term survival. The scheme of such a comprehensive intervention effort is suggested by Dr. M.M.P.Akouri, Former Executive Director of National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) Delhi, in the form of entrepreneurship development cycle. The cycle identified three groups of activities concerning ED. They are (1) Stimulating activities: It comprises

entrepreneurial education, provision of entrepreneurial opportunities and guidance in selecting industries, supply of techno-economic information, are needed to help emergence of entrepreneurship in the society. The support ensures a good supply of entrepreneurs to start a new venture and developed potentiality to succeed in a venture. (2) Supporting activities: It refers to those which enable the entrepreneurs in setting up and running the enterprise successfully. They help in mobilizing resources and assistance. They include arranging finance, providing land, shed, power and other utilities, supply of capital machinery, scarce raw materials, offering management consultancy, help marketing products etc. (3) Sustaining activities: It includes the challenge of actual operation. Many enterprises starting well, meet immature death subsequently because of some problems. Such cases are many and they are particularly more significant in the field of small enterprises.

Empowerment of Women Through Entrepreneurship

Instrument of women empowerment is selfemployment or entrepreneurship. Why women are choosing self-employment or entrepreneurship? One study revealed that autonomy was rated high as a means to obtain personal freedom. This level of autonomy provides the opportunities to: (1) Able to make their own decisions:-decision making indicates the choice which is the basis of empowerment. (2) Able to do preferable work-work in non:- traditional fields implies opening to more powerful networks, which leads directly to the empowerment. (3) Attain financial independence:- financial independence is a major contributing factor in the empowerment of women. The following are the impact of ED on Empowerment.

1. Self-confidence of Women Increased self-confidence through entrepreneurship development gave the women a prosperous future.
2. Economic Solvency The most important changes come through increase in income, which not only upgrades the individual's life but also increases her standard of living, brining economics solvency within the family. The increase in her income is also an increase in the family income and as such it provides family members to a better life style, including education for the children and improvement of family health.
3. Capital Building Their (Women) economic success enables women to expand their business, procure new machinery, tools, accessories and relevant necessities. Modernization of the work-place, introduction of new technology for increase production, increase of labourers, along with the increase in purchasing power, upgrades their status both socially and economically.
4. Role of Status Some aspects of household decision making are reported to have changed as a result of women's contribution in family income. Most of the men now consult with their wives in important family matters. Their power of decision making has increased because they have money. Since women retain control over earnings, women can easily lend small and big amounts to business and others

without asking for their husbands' permission. Since women perceive that their bargaining power within the family has increased as an indirect outcome of participating in the business. Women's status has changed in the family and society gradually.

Policy Implications

To promote empowerment through entrepreneurship among women. The following policy implications are recommended.

1. Education policy should be designed, so as to expand the economic opportunities for women.
2. Poverty eradication program will specially address the needs and the problems of women at extreme level.
3. To encourage women entrepreneurship all banks and financial institutions should be asked to provide one fifth of their investment for women owned enterprises.
4. Special training course should be offered for women entrepreneurs to improve skills.
5. Interest free consumption credit for vulnerable women should be provided by the Government, Banks, financial institutions and wealthy individuals.
6. Special assistance is to be provided to specially disadvantaged groups like women in extreme poverty, destitute women, women in conflict situations, women affected by natural calamities, women in less developed regions, the disabled widows, elderly women, single women in difficult circumstances, women heading households, those displaced from employment, migrants, women who are victim of material violence, deserted women and prostitutes etc.

Conclusion

Empowerment is about being able to grow. As women grow their management skills they also must embrace areas of strategic planning and develop visions of growth. Empowerment of women leads to economic independence, the opportunity to have control over their lives self reliance, self-determination, and a way to achieve for themselves. Empowerment through self-employment is also related to women's ability to gain control over economic resources and to participate more fully in the process of building wealth. Empowerments lead to selffulfilment to know where women are going. As their business grow, one of the biggest challenges for women entrepreneurs is learning to "let go" internal business operations - to move from "doing to managing" and from "management to leadership". Women are becoming more personally and economically empowered through business ownership or entrepreneurship development.

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