

## **“The Rural Women Entrepreneurial Edge”**

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**Abstract:** *Women entrepreneurs may do things differently. A rural woman encounters many constraints in the transformation process. Genders issues tend to regard the rural areas tend to be more traditional and is a stronger hindrance to potential female entrepreneurs than urban areas. Self-esteem and managerial skills being lower, access to external financial resources more difficult than in urban areas, assistance to technical and financial constraints should be developed to meet the needs of rural women. Active part in entrepreneurial restructuring, developing own ventures, expansion of existing businesses needs to be designed. This study is an attempt to create an awareness of the necessities of rural women entrepreneurs and overcome the barriers to uplift entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. The methodology employed is based on primary and secondary data in the area of Dhemaji, Sibsagar, Dharmanagar, Agartala, Siliguri and Guwahati City. The researcher is in the view to have more suggestion which would result beneficial to the rural women entrepreneurs in expanding their business also boost new entrepreneurship.*

**Keywords:** *women, entrepreneurship, rural area and entrepreneurial growth.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Acceleration to rural development process is entrepreneurship. Defining it is not an easy tasking as many words similar the meaning of entrepreneurship with innovation, risk taking and even owning and managing small business.

A person creating new combinations of production factors in new market and new organizational forms is known as an entrepreneur. He is also termed as a person who is willing to take risks by exploiting market opportunities and operates a business on own. Entrepreneurship is most important for the rural area as it is necessary to bear in mind the entrepreneurial skills to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. The technological and organizational edge by entering into markets is risk-taking for entrepreneurs. A well-developed ability to recognise unexploited market opportunities as a stabilising force limits rural entrepreneurship in operating a business. The possibility of entrepreneurial behaviour by women who have lack of knowledge as per entrepreneurial base in rural area face lot of challenges in the new started business.

Entrepreneurship needs nothing new from a global perspective. The adoption of new forms of business, technologies and goods not previously available at a location is considered to be a prime mover in development of nations, regions and communities by providing identity to the women promoting entrepreneurship development.

This study attempts to know the possibilities of rural entrepreneurship to women who seek to take a stand for their existence and also create awareness to those sectors where women entrepreneurship is taken as misguidance by male dominance. The researcher further steps to put forward suggestion for the benefit of rural women entrepreneurs and boost the womankind to uplift their existence than sharing dominance.

### **Objectives**

A study is been conducted and the objectives of the study are:

- 1) To study the necessity of entrepreneurship in rural area for women.
- 2) To study the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs.
- 3) To study the ways of overcoming the barriers of rural entrepreneurship for women.

### **II. Methodology**

The methodologies employed in determining the data are based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data is been collected from the nearby area of Dharmanagar, Jowai, Siliguri, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Nagaland Kolkata, Shillong, Agartala, Silchar and Guwahati City. The methods implemented for collecting primary data were observation, telephonic communication, interview and distribution of electronic questionnaire in the cities mentioned. Secondary data is based on journals, magazines, newspapers and web. A cover letter

explaining the purpose of the research and assurance of confidentiality of the respondents’ identity accompanied each questionnaire.

### **Findings**

As per the first objective the necessity of entrepreneurship in rural area for women:

- 1) Economic growth is being regarded by 31% of the total respondents as highest necessity of entrepreneurship in rural area for women.
- 2) 22% of the total respondents are in the view that standard of living as a necessity of entrepreneurship in rural area for women.
- 3) Increase in literacy rate is agreed as a necessity of rural entrepreneurship of women by 17% of the total respondents.
- 4) Social interaction as a necessity of women entrepreneurship in rural sectors is regarded by 11% of the total respondents.
- 5) Financial independence is regarded by 9% of the total respondents as a necessity of entrepreneurship in rural area for women.
- 6) 7% of the total respondents agree that decision making capacity is a necessity of entrepreneurship in rural area for women.
- 7) Social security, enhancement of awareness of equal rights and identity from dominance by male as a necessity of entrepreneurship in rural area for women is being regarded by 3% of the total respondents.

As per the second objective the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs are:

- 1) Inequality in rights and gender differences is being regarded by 29% of the total respondents as the barrier to entrepreneurship to rural women.
- 2) Education, transport and communication is in the view of 25% of the total respondents as the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs.
- 3) 17% of the total respondents regarded limited financial activities and high tax rate respondents as the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs.
- 4) Superstitious belief is being regarded by 11% of the total respondents as challenges to rural women entrepreneurs.
- 5) Business development services, growth of mall sophistication of goods and lack of knowledge in business related area as a challenge to rural women entrepreneurs by 10% of the total respondents.
- 6) 8% of the total respondents are in the view that lack of infrastructure is the cause of problem to rural women.

As per the third objective the ways of overcoming the barriers of rural entrepreneurship for women are:

1. Government activities is being regarded by 41% of the total respondent as the ways of overcoming the barriers of rural entrepreneurship for women.
  - a) Social security scheme by 21%.
  - b) Decision making policy for women by 14%.
  - c) Provision of marketing and sales assistance by 6%.
2. Education, infrastructure, linkage between rural and urban area, training for occupational health and safety is being regarded by 28% of the total respondent as the ways of overcoming the women’s faced challenges of rural entrepreneurship.
3. 22% of the total respondents view that counselling related to support gender sensitivity, superstition, equality in rights and family priority help to remove the barrier for women entrepreneurs in rural areas.
4. Encourage employer organisation to reach rural area, coordination among business development service provider and promote green and eco friendliness as way to success in rural women entrepreneurs by 95 of the total respondents.

### **Analysis**

Entrepreneurial orientation to rural development takes entrepreneurship as the main force to economic growth and development because the other related factors of development will be a waste to hard work in setting up a trend growth of nation. The acceptance of entrepreneurship as a developmental force will lead the advancement of rural enterprises. Environment enabling entrepreneurship is thus needed to suffice the development of rural area. The existence of such an environment largely depends on literacy, infrastructure, social interaction and most importantly financial and social security. Gender analysis leads to discriminatory practices that perpetuate systemic barriers and do not respond to women entrepreneurs’ needs. Inequalities in rights no matter in economic, civil or family are a source of discrimination against women controlling over resources that are crucial to starting an enterprise. Rural women are often unaware of their rights and here is when education comes into play. Proper education related to awareness of rights and gender equality needs to be

imparted for the betterment of rural women. These will led to better understanding of the situations demand resulting to which the standard of living will raise and also the economy of our nation will improve.

Economic vitality of a country is a necessary for social vitality. Other important factors such as education, health, social services, housing, transport facilities, flow of information, communication and so on, cannot be developed in the long run. It is important to stress that rural entrepreneurship in its substance does not differ from entrepreneurship in urban areas. Entrepreneurship in rural areas is a unique blend of resources that can be achieved by widening the base of a business to include all the non-agricultural uses.

Superstition on the other hand plays a definite role discouraging women entrepreneurship. Many beliefs which holds no practicality is been powered on women community only to deprive them from going out in the society and paralyse them from having any existence of their own and be dominated by a certain précised area. Social norms and attitudes affect the laws and regulations of a women’s free living.

Underdeveloped infrastructure in rural area in context to transport, electricity, clean water limits women’s access to resources needed for starting up an enterprise. Healthcare, and reproductive and care work adds on to challenges for rural women entrepreneurs.

Unavailable business development services because a barrier for entrepreneurship as low population density do not attract these service providers. Therefore women are to rely on friends and family for management decisions and other business support.

Feminized markets like handicrafts, agricultural, livestock products, with no legal registration and regular workforce, inadequate operating capital to cover employees’ social protection and health benefits add to further challenges. Scale of operation, lack of transportation limits their capacity to achieve growth and build sustainable livelihoods. Decision-making power is also not available as the spouse may not identify themselves as business owners. This discourages and de motivates the women entrepreneurs to grow professionally, be innovative or demonstrate entrepreneurial attitudes.

Government here can play a major role in overcoming the challenges faced by the rural women entrepreneurs. Policies, rules and regulation related to social security, decisions making assistance and women marketing and sales assistance by business providers will ne very much helpful to the rural women in understanding and acquiring knowledge related to marketing, business, accounting and so on.

Education and training related to marketing techniques, lessons of health care, child care and personality development as business women will empower them as good entrepreneurs. Access to market opportunities with particular focus on domestic niche markets suitable for women will be a step in rural women entrepreneurial help. Silk production, weaving and so on may be advantageous. Linkages between urban and rural areas women entrepreneurs’ would help the flow of information and connectivity to markets by knowing new target area where the rural women entrepreneurs would be beneficial to the urban women entrepreneurs.

### **III. Suggestion**

The growth of women entrepreneurs requires acceleration because entrepreneurial development is impossible without the participation of women. A congenial environment is needed to enable a woman to participate actively in entrepreneurial activities. The supportive roles in promoting the rural women entrepreneur in North East India to be played are:

1. Promoting of gender equality to overcome discrimination of role play in family and community in rural area.
2. Women empowerment to devise and diversify vocational training, building confidence and encouraging their changing needs and skills.
3. Education to the rural women about new marketing and business tactics.
4. Infrastructural development by the government to increase the possibility for business service provider and industrial sector to enhance the entrepreneurship of women
5. Micro finance assistance by government to rural women in larger scale.
6. Training on gender sensitive issue
7. Marketing assistance by marketing the products produced by women entrepreneurs of rural areas.
8. Conduction of trade fairs specifically to advertise the work of rural women entrepreneurs.

### **IV. Conclusion**

The growth of women business owners and their needs cannot be overlooked. Women entrepreneurs have increasingly played an important role in spurring job creation and economic development. They still continue to face challenges in accessing capital to expunge into the marketplace and from further expanding their enterprises.

A critical need to women businesses is to access to capital. And so the government must put forward a pressure in providing financial assistance to them. High tax rate also is a demoralising factor. The minimisation of tax to the initial income of the new starters would boost the level of entrepreneurship.

Education and infrastructural development must also be taken into consideration as a high factor for revolution to entrepreneurship. No matter work is being subjected still some more needs to be initiated. Concluding the scenario of growth of entrepreneurship of women in rural area is a critical concern and the more priority is imparted the speedy will be the start for new edges of market which would high the economy of the nation.

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