

## Empowering Women through E-Ship in India: A Pragmatic Study of Challenges

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### Abstract

Women empowerment is an ongoing phenomenon in India since independence and has taken various steps to do so. Time passed on and issues have taken new shape and definition. Today, challenges are still there before women but their name and configuration is different. The present study is an attempt to identify and study the potential issues before women entrepreneurship. The study found four major issues viz. socio-cultural issues, economic issues, interpersonal issues and family issues which are the major constraints to women empowerment and specifically to women entrepreneurship. Further each of the challenge has various variables into it which gives more detail about the threat. The study at the conclusion concluded that these issues are diluting its intensity as the positive efforts have been taken by individuals and the government at large. Also in the near future women will be free from all their obstacles at home, at society and at the nation at large.

**Keywords:** Women empowerment, Women entrepreneurship, Issues of women entrepreneurship

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### Introduction

The literal meaning of empower is to enable or to authorize. Empowerment means to develop an environment in which one can able to take his or her own decisions to become liberate for own decisions and actions. Empowerment covers political, social economic and cultural aspects in broad. Women empowerment concerns with taking all these aspects in their day to day life. Empowerment means there is no differentiation in society in the name of gender. Females should be treated as similar to men. They have no need to prove themselves on every step of life. They should be considers as equal and important part of society by default. Women empowerment after such a long time of human existence provides a dual nature of human and hunger of power which men can not be overcome after such long journey of civilization. It is a well considered fact that people who contributed in economy of family as well as economy of country are more important in our society. They considered as a main part of society. Society considers them as a leader and the entire decision making powers are always given to the person having higher and strong economic background. Not only in family but also in society this pattern followed. In the beginning for the betterment and smooth working of society work had divided into outside and inside work. Female are given the responsibilities of household works and males are given

the responsibilities of earnings. By the passage of time this arrangement reflected as strength and weakness of two parallel pillars of society which causes imbalance of society. With the time women feel the need of their empowerment and stared for earnings. Pattern of society forced them to become entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is the concept process of designing launching running new business it is considered as the most important factor contributing to the development of society so the women chooses this concept for making the very strong.

Empowerment literally means “enable or authorize”. Empowerment includes control over resources (physical, human, intellectual and financial) and over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes) (Baltiwala, 1994). When we talk of empowerment of women, it entails political, social, economic and cultural aspects. Translating this into practical lives means conditions wherein women are able to participate and have access and control of resources and opportunities in all these areas of life. An idealistic approach is to make laws that promote gender equality, setup institutions to implement these laws and most important, spread awareness and education about them so that the just and fair conditions are created for all. Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience (Hashemi Schuler & Riley, 1996).

The concept of e-ship is taken as a constructive and progressive idea for business world. According to Scott (1986) entrepreneurship is an effort of converting concepts into practical work through efficient use of intellectual and physical assets. Hence, entrepreneurship is considered as a vital element for

globalization and for creating diverse opportunities for future potential performers (Mitra, 2002). Entrepreneurship is not just restricted to specific gender. Due to multi-faceted economic pressures women also have turned up for money making activities including starting ventures to run their families and for the survival in the society (Marlow, 2002). According to the study conducted by Gem report (2007) more than 200 million women have got the opportunity to be employed in industries of various sectors. Among them almost half of them are employed in developing economies. It shows a great emergence of women empowerment across the world and also establishes an equal platform for gender equality.

India is a land of mother and motherhood, she always seen and praise as a crop grower who takes care and looks after the family through resources earned by male member of the family. She never thought of doing and moving out from the home for earning livelihood for her family. This is one of the biggest reasons why women are treating as weaker and depended part of the society in India. So, for women, entrepreneurship is not a new concept but certainly keeps woman hesitant to be among start ups due to societal and community trends and pressures. Many other factors do influence to keep woman away to be potential entrepreneurs especially in developing countries like India (Hisrich, 1999). But, 21<sup>st</sup> century is an evidence of India's efforts and mechanism of bringing gender equality and women empowerment through proactive actions. This paper tries to identify these all efforts and concept of e-ship for women in India. Paper identify the factors which are major issues for women empowerment.

### Literature Review

Women in India are cursed with many difficulties some among them are socio-cultural difficulties, economic difficulties, interpersonal difficulties, family difficulties etc. Society is continually fighting with these issues and arranging resources to revamp their situation. Studies across the world revealed that government has made significant arrangements for establishing government sponsored business network to help them out. But women feel that this effort should be more comprehensive in nature and structure to fulfill the complete need of women (Wharton & Brunetto, 2007).

According to Bandura (1997) self-efficacy is a variable which has influential aroma on one's entrepreneurial behavior. He propounded that society needs to inculcate self-efficacy and inner confidence among women to prepare their attitude to be a business woman. Apart from the challenges before them government has to make optimistic efforts and decisions to redefine women's participation. Adding to this, Subbulakshmi (2010) stressed that ambitious approach of women gives them a positive attitude to

learn more about the business. This spirit helps them out from the nervousness of failure.

Further, various studies have identified other relevant issues of women entrepreneurship. Study highlighted that moral of young women is comparatively lower than middle aged women. But, through sequential consultancy, training and development may increase interest and confidence. The major cause of demotivating thinking is stereotyped image of women in society and at home. Therefore, women need proper training to shape their behavior and attitude for business. It is also found that trained women are more efficient in handling business problems, proactive in decision making and more confident in running business than untrained women (Ganesan, Kaur & Maheshwari, 2002).

Roomi *et. al.* (2009) added some more issues in women E-ship in their study. Along with the resources available to them still women are finding themselves comparatively less competent and less eligible. The reason is so far from usual issues, now the challenges are in the form of lack of business training opportunities, absence of networking abilities, lack of marketing skills and family commitments. These business centered issues are very challenging in 21<sup>st</sup> century and has significant impact over thoughts of women entrepreneurship in India.

According to Shah (2013), women have proved their interpersonal skills for starting and managing business efficiently. Government should take women entrepreneurship as national priority to increase their participation in economic activities. However, the study also found that women in India still not supported and accepted as independent entity. Author also suggested series of recommendations to the government to support women entrepreneurship and enabling favorable environment.

Various state governments also formulated various exclusive schemes for supporting and promoting women as an entrepreneur. Government of Karnataka in its industrial policy 2014-19 declares a special provision for women entrepreneurship and also celebrates women entrepreneurship day on 19<sup>th</sup> November. The policy aimed at providing an extra cousin to women for fresh startups give a special thrust for their effort. To increase women entrepreneurship in state government incorporate various key points including declaration of industrial area only for women, reservation of plots/sheds in the industrial area for upto 5%, exclusive cluster for women in textile, gems & jewelry, introduction of entrepreneurship development program exclusively for prospective women entrepreneurs.

According to the OECD report 2014, it was estimated that post at senior level in industries and owned businesses were near about 24% (women occupancy). Though, the pace of women participation in global leadership varies across the countries the

overall development of this section is appreciable globally. Progress in the European Union was limited (European Commission, 2014) with just below 3% of CEOs being female, and 17.8% of the board members. Progress was more significant in the United Kingdom as per January 2014, 20% of all directors of Companies in the FTSE 100 were female, up from 12.5% in 2010; the proportion of executive directors was 7% up from 5.5% in 2010 (Cranfield, 2014).

### Methodology

A descriptive research design was used to find the impact of women empowerment through E-ship. Sample size of 100 was finalized out of the 200 responses received to test. It is an attempt to investigate the potential factors responsible for lower participation of women in entrepreneurship in India. All the responses have been collected from male and female entrepreneurs. This is because in society males have been overseeing the ability of women, therefore they have been considered as important target respondents on this issue. For collecting responses a structured questionnaire has been developed in a way cover probable aspects of the research consideration. In the present study convenient sample has taken from the different regions of India including Indore, Nagpur, and Nasik. Developed questionnaire was tested over the 5 % of total sample and made the changes accordingly before its implementation. Responses to each statement followed five-point Likert's scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Descriptive statistics and factor analysis have been used for data analysis.

### Analysis and Discussion

Since the colonization of nations on earth women have been treating in different-different spheres. But, majority of time went in struggling from society, culture, religion, ethnicity and many more. Previous decades have come as an enlighten phase for women in society and the nation at large. Various steps have been taken to evoke the meaning of empowered women in society and nation. Giving space is to highly blessed and gifted entity to redefine the world with their ability, thoughts, emotions and care. One among the several steps is women empowerment through women entrepreneurship. The concept behind this thought seeded from the phenomenon of the society that earning member of the household possess power of decision making and participating in other internal as well as external affairs.

**Table 1: Factors influencing Women Entrepreneurship**

	Items	Factor Load	Total Factor Load	Factor
1	Social Status	0.553	2.977	Socio-Cultural Issues
2	Social Rituals	0.696		
3	Cultural Bounding	0.630		
4	Social Myths	0.661		
5	Religion Beliefs	0.427		
6	Low Income	0.711	2.681	Economic Issues
7	Lifestyle	0.488		
8	Limited Resources	0.620		
9	Lack of Opportunities	0.343		
10	Inflation	0.519	2.217	Interpersonal Issues
11	Leadership Intelligence	0.527		
12	Knowledge	0.673		
13	Education	0.606		
14	EQ & IQ	0.411		
15	Family Structure	0.425	2.077	Family Issues
16	Work Life Balance	0.678		
17	Family Commitments	0.664		
18	Husband & Family Support	0.310		

Following are the key challenges experienced and faced by women in India:

1. **Socio-cultural** restriction always played a prominent role as a pitfall in the growth of women entrepreneurship in India. It comprises different types of issues viz. status in society, social ritual, cultural bounding, religion need, myths, and so on. These issues were very deeply rooted in the society and causes great struggle. Women who constitute half of the population and are the significant part of the society and the nation as well were overseen for long time. Discriminating social policies made this group under developed mentally, physically and socially. Charumathi (1997) investigated why women entrepreneurship in India not achieving significant (expected) growth rate after putting lots of effort in this field. Author found that women are still weak at interpersonal skills, not able to handle business dynamics, less confident etc. Author also revealed various shortcomings in behavioral front, untouched to technology, unfit to play male role.

2. **Economic Issues** had been a good friend of country like India. No one could get far from this problem. But with the changing time economic issues have been resolved by the country but women still find it a biggest challenge before them. Women in India are the sufferer since country's independence and the nation engaged in lowering down the intensity of this

biggest issue. Economic challenge comprises low income, limited opportunity, growing economic need, unemployment, lifestyle and many more. According to Masood (2011) found that society's male domination attitude fueled this problem a lot. Gradually it transformed into a biggest challenge before the nation. Author also found that due to the government effort the scenario has been changing and there is an economic parity among the gender.

**3. Interpersonal Issues** has a great significance on one's ability and mindset of doing something. If intrinsic issues are unmatched and unsatisfied it is difficult to perform any job. These issues include knowledge, confidence, education, EQ & IQ, leadership intelligence, self confidence etc. Babalola (2009) revealed in their study that despite of industrial, educational, financial development in the country women entrepreneurship is found to be less impressive due to various intrinsic reasons. They were found less confident to capitalize their psychological capital outside the home. Study uncovers the fact that if women use their self-efficacy may have better locus of control & optimistic entrepreneurial behavior.

**4. Family issues** again a serious threat to women entrepreneurship in India. Women have been treating as home manager since long back and society couldn't dare to see them as business manager. Even if they tried to prove themselves ever it was difficult for them to balance their participation and performance at home and work place. Many women have left their dream behind the home responsibilities. Various issues have been encountered as family structure (joint & nuclear), work life balance, family commitments, husband support, status etc. The significant impact is observed over women entrepreneurship and their performance are support from husband to take initiative of own venture and balance performance, support from full family to accept her as working woman, family culture is equally important factor which affect ownership attitude among women (Thattil & Prasad, 2010).

## Conclusion

Government's efforts have made significant changes in the perception of people about women entrepreneurship in India. Gradually, the concept has been well adopted and accepted by the society and the nation at large. Families have understood the importance of women's role in running business while simultaneously running the home successfully. Women are happily accepted at workplace and in corporate world. From the past two decades women status has come across different societal, economical and colonial changes. In the light of above discussion study concludes that women entrepreneurship in India has taken as a phenomenal idea to provide new dimensions to business growth and practices. Traditional pitfalls have been shorted out by eliminating stereotyped thoughts of society and technologically upgrading

social norms. Reforms in education, income, living standard, family type, culture have given an equitable status to the women in India. At the end the study highlights major hurdles/challenges before women entrepreneurship in India which are still standing in the environment and erecting day by day. These are named as socio-cultural issues, economic issues, interpersonal issues and family issues.

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