

Management Training Needs of Women Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT Entrepreneurial talents and capabilities are latent in all communities but their translation to innovative action depends on appropriate stimuli and environment and these stimuli can be generated through training. Training women for entrepreneurial and managerial capabilities should be conceived as one of the most important factors for accelerating growth. Efforts are being made along these lines, however they are limited only to bring changes quantitatively but not qualitatively. Hence appropriate training and interventions are needed to bring qualitative changes in the situation. An attempt was made in this study to examine the quality of micro-enterprise management by women in socio-cultural milieu and to project the management training needs of women entrepreneurs. Keeping in view the findings of the study, perceptions of women entrepreneurs and insights of experienced trainers - confidence building, competence, connections and capital are projected as essential management training needs.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a more suitable profession for women than regular employment in public and private sectors since they have to fulfill dual roles. Women have been taking increasing interest in recent years in income generating activities, self employment and entrepreneurship. This is seen in respect of all kinds of women both in urban and rural areas. Women are taking up both traditional activities (knitting, pickle making, toy making, jam and jelly) and also non-traditional activities (like computer training, catering services, beauty parlour, gym etc.). It is clear that more and more women are coming forward to set up enterprises. Generally, women who initiate a micro-enterprise do it because of the factors which limit their capacity to start large ventures - low levels of self-confidence, little access to technical information, poor local market conditions, regulatory barriers and no access to capital. On the other hand, for some micro enterprises offers a meaningful source of income and satisfaction.

Women who try to enter an industry, either in managerial or in entrepreneurial role are generally exposed to various environmental constraints. Starting and operating business involves considerable risk and effort on the part of the entrepreneur, particularly in the light of highest failure rate. Perhaps, this rate is even higher in the case of women entrepreneurs who

have to face not only the usual business problems but also their family problems. This not only limits the scope of their contribution to the industrialization process, but also undermines the productive utilization of an available human resource, that is most needed in our country. Development as entrepreneurs is a recently discovered phenomenon for women for which they need motivation, training and family support.

Realizing the need for training, government started introducing several programmes. Critical evaluation of the existing governmental and non-governmental efforts indicate that training and technical assistance offered are not geared to suit the individual needs. They are only "capsule" inputs focusing vested interests of individual trainers and considering the training as an "end" in itself (Ramachandran, 1993).

The studies conducted by Kale (1990); Kirve and Kanitkar (1993), revealed that training approach is an important one for helping women in non-traditional high skill, male dominated activities and also to build confidence among women to meet the specific needs. Intensified effort has to be taken to assess the social attitude, mentality, needs and abilities of the women and to impart training. Flexible training programme and interest based skill training can push the women towards entrepreneurial activities. Training to develop good managerial skills is useful and essential to women (Padmavati, 2002 and Sathyasundaram, 2004).

In this context an attempt has been made to examine the quality of micro-enterprise management by women in socio-cultural milieu and to project the management training needs of women entrepreneurs.

METHODS

A sample of 100 women entrepreneurs was selected for the present study from Kadapa district of Rayalaseema region to analyse the process and styles of management. For in-depth analysis, 50 women entrepreneurs from this 100 sample were taken. The sample was selected using non-random opportunity sampling technique as the list of women entrepreneurs available with the business development organizations did not tally to a great extent with the existing women entrepreneurs.

In this research, interview and case study techniques were employed and the data was collected using the following tools,

- Interview schedule: to collect socio, economic, demographic profiles of women entrepreneurs.
- Interview schedule: for in-depth analysis of women entrepreneurs.
- Entrepreneurial personality questionnaire (Dina Lavoie, 1994): to evaluate the entrepreneur and non-entrepreneur personality of the women entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurial management questionnaire (Dina Lavoie, 1994): to evaluate the management styles of women entrepreneurs.

Socio-demographic, economic, managerial and entrepreneurial profiles of women entrepreneurs were prepared to project the efficacy of micro-enterprise management in women. Management training needs as perceived by the women entrepreneurs were also collected to design appropriate entrepreneurial interventions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An indepth analysis of socio-economic demographic, entrepreneurial personality and management profiles of women entrepreneurs was made to project the significant management training needs of the sample. This is made keeping in view of the perceptions of women entrepreneurs themselves on training needs and experienced trainers concerned with women entrepreneurship development.

Socio-economic and demography profile of women entrepreneurs was prepared to project their characteristics and presented in Table1. Most of the women entrepreneurs (54%) belonged to the age group of 36 and above followed by the age groups of 26-35 (28%) and 16-25 (18%) in that order. Hisrich and Brush(1986) described the typical women entrepreneur to be about 35 years of age when she starts her first business venture. It appears women think of business idea in their thirties due to economic pressure/demand and more leisure time as their children are growing. Half (51%) of the women interviewed, belonged to the low income level. Thirty eight and 11 per cent belonged to the middle and high income strata respectively. The data indicate that economic need is the essential triggering factor for the women to enter into entrepreneurship. On the other hand women with small families enter into entrepreneurship compared to those with large families who are generally depending on wage employment. Immediate gratification is the driving force for the women with large families to decide on the strategy for economic development.

Fifty per cent of women entrepreneurs had education less than S.S.C., 18 per cent were illiterates, 13 per cent had education upto SSC

Table 1: Socio-demographic-economic profile

Socio-demographic characteristics	Respondents (n) 100	
	n	%
<i>Age</i>		
16-25 yrs.	18	18
26-35 yrs.	28	28
36 and above yrs.	54	54
<i>Education</i>		
Illiterates	18	18
Less than SSC	50	50
SSC	13	13
Intermediate	7	7
Degree and more	12	12
<i>Marital status</i>		
Unmarried	8	8
Married	76	76
Widow	10	10
Divorcee/Separated	6	6
<i>No. of children</i>		
None	18	18
1	12	12
2	37	37
3	20	20
4	7	7
5 and above	6	6
<i>Income</i>		
Rs. 500-2500	51	51
Rs.2501-5000	38	38
Rs.5001-7000	11	11

and the remaining 19 per cent had college education. The data indicates that majority of the women entering into business are with low or no education. Educational status does not influence women in seeking entrepreneurship (Rani, 1992). This trend may lead to less realization of the need for appropriate pre-entrepreneurial interventions. Majority (76%) of the women entrepreneurs were married and only low per cent of them were unmarried (8%), widows (10%) and divorces/separated (6%). Married were experiencing freedom and receiving support directly and/or indirectly to start and manage their enterprises. Further parents were expressing that economic independence through entrepreneurship is a barrier in fixing their marriage alliances. Single women households experiencing several problems like low/no support from both family as well as financial agencies.

Majority (60%) of the respondents had fewer than two children, which included 18 percent had no children, 12 percent were single parent, and 37 percent of the women entrepreneurs had two children. Only 40 percent of women entrepreneurs had more than two children. It is clear from the data that more women with small families enter entrepreneurship compared to those with large families. Chandralekha (1994) also expressed that fewer number of children means less responsibility and more free time which must be a facilitating factor for women to take up entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial personality of the women entrepreneurs was assessed using simple questionnaire. The questions on entrepreneurial personality characteristics include initiation, risk taking, sociability, leadership independence etc. The data collected reveals that entrepreneurial personality traits range from low average to high average and thus concluding that women entrepreneurs possessed only average personality profile. Several factors like socio, economic demographic and cultural might be responsible for the existing average entrepreneurial personality profile.

Management styles of women entrepreneurs was also analyzed using another questionnaire contained questions on four entrepreneurial management skills i.e., producer, administrator, integrator and entrepreneur. It was observed that they have average production skills and average entrepreneurial skills. This entrepreneurial skills include preoccupied by external system, by change, by creativity and by new demands.

Administration skills are found to be low. Integration skills are found to be very good, that is personnel skills, communication skills, negotiation skills, co-ordination skills etc. Integration skills are identified as one's concern to establish, maintain and sustain effective relationships with others. This is found to be important for those whose aim in life requires sacrifices and an avoidance of inter-personal conflicts in order to succeed.

In-depth analysis of 50 cases revealed that out of 50 cases, 15 cases were effectively managing (EME) their micro-enterprises in terms of profit, personal satisfaction etc., and the remaining are merely surviving in their enterprises. Different management styles were exhibited by these two groups of entrepreneurs.

The mere Surviving Entrepreneurs (SE) have average production skills, low administration skills, high average integration skills and average entrepreneur skills. When compared with effectively managing entrepreneurs (EME), both have equal production/service skills, EME have low average administration skills i.e. in setting up internal system, to be able to control, analyse the results, to plan for strategies, to set up norms and expectations, which is low in SE. SE have good integration skills, i.e. people skills, communication skills, negotiation skills, co-ordination skills compared to EME. But both have average entrepreneurial skills. Appropriate education training in entrepreneurship skills are necessary for women.

Management process of 50 women entrepreneurs was studied in respect of their planning, execution and controlling the activities of enterprise using their case study profiles. Most of the women entrepreneurs (56 per cent) belonged to service sector, twenty and twenty four per cent of women entrepreneurs belonged to production and business sectors respectively. This supports the argument that women would tend to initiate business in sectors which are generally accepted as being "appropriate" for women.

Twenty six per cent of female entrepreneurs received skill oriented business training; the remaining seventy four per cent didn't receive any business training. Only eighteen per cent of women entrepreneurs have business experience and the remaining eighty two per cent of them stated that they did not have any business experience before embarking on the business. It appears that most women gain their first

management experience in their own business. From among the eighteen per cent of women entrepreneurs only eight per cent had formal experience compared to 10 per cent who received informal experience by assisting/participating/observing parents/siblings working for the enterprise.

As shown in table 2 fifty two per cent of women entrepreneurs invested only below Rs.1000/- for their enterprises while 30 per cent invested Rs.1000/- to Rs.5000/- and only 18 per cent invested more than Rs.5000/-. This supports the fact that limited access to finance is the factor that works against the economic progress of women. Legally the property that is to be converted for the business is not often either inherited or belonged to the wife. So the freedom that is enjoyed in converting such assets into cash is naturally very limited. One factor found among women was that they would not go for large investment (Job, 1996).

Table 2: Investment invested by women entrepreneurs

Investment	Respondents (n) 50	
	n	%
Rs. 101 - 1000	26	52
Rs. 1001 - 5000	15	30
Rs. > 5000	9	18

Most of the women entrepreneurs (66%) are aware of the support systems helping women entrepreneurs mostly the banks, and thirty four per cent of entrepreneurs are not aware of the support systems helping women entrepreneurs. This need emphasis for orienting them with various incentives and assistance provided by the government and financial institutions and ways of accessing them.

Twenty six per cent of women entrepreneurs are utilizing the services of support systems such as banks, governmental schemes and women groups and seventy four per cent of women entrepreneurs are constrained to use them. The procedures of bank loans, the delay and the running about involved discourages many a women from borrowing from banks. As the assistance from some government services and women groups is meager, they are borrowing from the relatives and money lenders at high rate of interest.

Sixty eight per cent of women entrepreneurs took only below 1 month time for planning the business and thirty two per cent of women entrepreneurs took more than one month time for planning the business. Skill in planning is

influenced by factors like entrepreneurial personality traits, formal managerial training etc., In the absence of formal training, the quality of planning will be affected.

Number of hours devoted for business is one of the important factor in business, (Table 3). Fourteen per cent of women entrepreneurs are devoting only 1-3 hours per day for business whereas fifty six per cent and thirty per cent of women entrepreneurs are devoting 4-6 hours and more than 6 hours per day respectively. When taken the number of hours devoted for family by these entrepreneurs, thirty six per cent of women entrepreneurs are devoting 1-3 hours per day for household work in the family and this group is mostly the married women who have grown up children, and getting help from the children in household chores. Sixty four per cent of women are spending more than 4 hours per day for household work. It is evident that women are devoting more or less as much as time for both family and business. Women differ from men with respect to the conflicting demands of business and family. Married women entrepreneurs typically find that their husbands expect them to continue with their household duties despite the demands of their businesses and they rarely assist in running of houses.

Table 3: Number of hours devoted for business.

No. of hours	Respondents (n) 50	
	n	%
1 - 3 hrs.	7	14
4 - 6 hrs.	28	56
7 - 9 hrs.	11	22
9 hrs.	4	8

Only 12% of women entrepreneurs employed the workers and 88% didn't hire any employees. Since they are micro-enterprises, they didn't feel the need for hiring the employees.

Most of the women entrepreneurs (94%) didn't want to extend their business to other towns and cities. The reasons were that it may affect their families, that with their small business it is almost impossible to expand, few expressed, that they are satisfied with what they are and some entrepreneurs didn't think about it at all. And it is also partly because the markets for the types of products and services these business offer tend to be primarily local in scope and partly because women entrepreneurs lack the vision and the strategic and operating abilities needed for expanding into large sized enterprises. The

female entrepreneurs are seen as having limited vision and as thinking in terms of the short run.

The problems expressed by the women entrepreneurs in utilizing the existing training inputs of support systems.

- Men are the participants in most of the training programmes.
- In mixed groups, women hesitate to ask questions and tend to defer to the men who end up dominating discussions. This is not conducive to learning.
- Issues pertaining to women cannot be addressed in mixed group situations.
- Women traditionally think they need verification from others; they are not brought up to look at business start up as an option.
- Women face socio-cultural economic constraints to participate in the relevant trainings.

Experienced trainers of Entrepreneurship Development Programme choose to share the following insights.

- With entrepreneurs no generic training plan can work. The design of set training format had to be individualized each time.
- You cannot separate the business and the person.
- Pay attention to the individual.
- Up front evaluation upon intake can be a key to success.
- Flexible programme delivery created more effective results.

Keeping in view the findings of the study, perceptions of women entrepreneurs and insights of experienced trainers, the following management training needs are projected :

- Confidence building : belief in one's own abilities and capacity to succeed.
- Competence : having the skill to do the job well.
- Connections : building very business contacts, networking with support systems and co-entrepreneurs.
- Capital : access to finance.

In order to meet the above said entrepreneurial management training needs, the following points need to be kept in mind while designing the entrepreneurship management training programme.

1. Gender specific training is more essential to suit socio-economic-demographic conditions.
2. Holistic approach is needed to look at the whole individual in a business perspective in the socio-cultural milieu.

3. The product must fit the need through bottom-up approach.
4. Some women need tremendous amount of non-technical support also.
5. Some women need pre-entrepreneurial training first.
6. Total personal support and awareness is needed - counseling, stress coping skills, public speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

What women need for enterprise management is little training, finance, co-operation and encouragement in the sphere of activities, at all levels - home, the society and the government.

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