

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN DINDIGUL DISTRICT- A CASE STUDY

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Abstracts

The study focuses on women entrepreneurs whose number is steadily on the increase in the global economy. The discussion on the problems and difficulties faced by the women arising out of the fact that she is a woman. In the society where joint families are breaking up, single women don't even have support of the elders. The Central as well as State governments have not come forward to give a helping hand to these women entrepreneurs. What sort of problems they face and what can the society and governments can do to improve their lot is presented in the paper below:

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs, Dindigul district.

Introduction

Women run businesses are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries. The biggest problem or difficulty of a woman entrepreneur is the fact that she is a woman. With joint families breaking up, many women simply don't have the support of elders. Women have been confronted by such dilemmas ever since they started leaving home for the workplace. On the other hand, the attitude of society towards her and the constraints under which she has to work don't tend to be very conducive. They still suffer from male jingoism. These attitudes of reservation create difficulties and problems at all levels, i.e., family support, training, banking, licensing and marketing. Women in rural areas have to suffer still further. They have to face not only resistance or reservation from men but also from their own sex--- elderly women who are rooted in the attitude of inequality. Though the central and state governments have launched many entrepreneurial development programmes especially for women, there is no remarkable or radical sweep in rural areas. Therefore, an attempt has been made to identify the problems faced by women Entrepreneurs and to take suitable remedial measures to overcome their problems.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to highlight the problems faced by the women Entrepreneurs in Dindigul District.

Methodology

The study is mainly based on primary data collected from women entrepreneurs in Dindigul District through an Interview schedule. It is an empirical study based on survey method. The required secondary data were collected from the Government agencies, books, magazines, journals, bulletins and periodicals.

Area of Study

The study is conducted in Dindigul District. Tanneries are thickly situated in this District. The finished and semi-finished leather and other leather products have a good export market. A large number of Chamber Brick units are functioning in this District. Dindigul Lock and Iron Safes are very famous for its quality. Hand loom, Rice milling, Ground nut and Vermicelli are the other type of food based Industries functioning in this District. There is much scope for starting the Leather based units, Lock units, Brick Units and Food based units in this District. The district has a population of 21, 59,775. The sex rate is 998 female per 1000 males.

Period of the Study

The present study covers a period of six months from April 2013 to September 2013.

Sampling Design

Dindigul has around 3589 registered small scale Industrial units as on 31.03.2012 of which there were 332 small scale units run by women. According to the field staffs of the DIC 47 units were defunct and hence there were 315 working unit run by the women in the sample district. Five women entrepreneurs were reluctant to part with information about their units. The remaining 300 units were selected for the study.

Decision Behavior of Entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurs generally wish to run their business for quite a long period and they always aim at their goals. The goal of every businessman is to earn more profit and thereby expand his business. During the course of business they face many problems. The problems faced by the entrepreneurs were identified and categorized into vital variables. These problems were studied through an opinion survey in the study area. The respondents were asked to rank the problems encountered by them according to the order of merit. The order of merit assigned by the respondents was converted into scores by using Garrett's ranking techniques. Garrett suggested this method for converting the ranks into scores when a number of items ranked differed from respondent to respondent. The percent position for each rank was found using the following formula.

$$\text{Per cent position} = 100(R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

Where, R_{ij} = Rank given to i^{th} factor by j^{th} individual.

N_j = number of factors ranked by j^{th} individual.

Findings & Suggestions

Marketing Problems

Table 1 Factors Affecting Marketing and Mean Scores

S.No.	Factor	Garrett's Mean	Score Rank
01	Competition from Small Unit	54.26	II
02	Competition from Large Unit	56.00	I
03	Slackness of demand	48.75	IV
04	Middleman & Tax Problem	51.45	III

Source: Computed data

Marketing is a serious problem encountered by women entrepreneurs. Market competition has become very intense due to the introduction of a

wide variety of products posing a serious threat to the survival of women entrepreneurs. Location disadvantage because of their rural background, they do not have access to get enough orders and market exposure. They do not know how to market their produce. Establishing shops and showrooms is costly. Due to the prevailing social environment, they are unable to move as freely and quickly as male counterparts to distant places to mobilize either resources or markets. Hence they are forced to withhold increase of production on large scale. The factors affecting marketing and the mean scores are depicted in Table 1

The competition prevailing in the market may be managed by conducting frequent surveys and analyses. The latest sales promotion techniques and programmes will lead to expected sales of products. The Government can also take necessary steps to sell at least some of the products through fair price shops.

Financial Problems

Although the problem of finance is a common phenomenon it is acute in the case of women entrepreneurs because getting assistance from financial agencies is a lengthy

Sl.No.	Factor	Garrett's Mean	Score Rank
01	Too Many Formalities	53.63	III
02	Shortage of working capital	50.08	V
03	Shortage of fixed capital	65.15	I
04	High rate of Interest	56.78	II
05	Red tape in government agencies	48.70	VII
06	Meager Assistance from government agencies	51.18	IV
07	Lack of subsidiary	49.93	VI

Source: Computed data

process. The ignorance of banking procedure and the lack of experience in formulating bankable projects are also the constraints of women entrepreneurs. Very few women have property in their names. Banks take a conservative attitude while providing finance to women entrepreneurs since they fear that women are likely to leave their business at any time due to personal reasons like marriage. The factors affecting finance and the

mean scores are presented in Table 2.

Raw Material Problem

Sl.No.	Factor	Garrett's Mean	Score Rank
01	Scarcity of material	52.54	III
02	High cost of material	62.08	I
03	Low quality of material	57.16	II
04	Transport cost of material	50.52	IV
05	Inadequate storage facility	40.61	V

Source: Computed data

The quality of the finished products depends upon the quality of the raw materials and the process involved in production. Raw material is very often considered a limiting factor. Raw material problem may be due to non-availability, shortage, poor quality, and high cost. The factors affecting the raw materials and the

mean scores are shown in Table3

The Government should grant subsidy on the raw materials used by women entrepreneurs. Fair price shops could be organized by the Government to supply at a reasonable price quality raw materials needed by these women entrepreneurs. Thereby the

presence of middlemen can be avoided. This will also pave the way for avoiding the difficulties faced by the entrepreneurs regarding storage of raw materials.

Labour Problems

The process of conversion of raw materials into finished products is carried out with

Sl. No.	Factor	Garrett's Mean	Score Rank
01	Non-availability of skilled labour	51.84	IV
02	Unionization	48.68	V
03	Indiscipline	63.34	II
04	Absenteeism	56.91	III
05	Lack of Specialisation	42.33	VI
06	High wages	67.68	I

Source: Computed data

the help of hired workers. All the respondents engaged two or more hired workers to run their business operations. In the study area they faced a few problems associated with human labour. These are the non-availability of skilled labour, unionization; turn over, absenteeism, lack of specialization and high wages. The factors

affecting labour and the mean scores are given in the Table 4.

The Government must fix the wages or salary of employees. It can also impart entrepreneurship training at various levels (even at the school/college levels) by including it in the curriculum.

Power Supply

Sl. No.	Factor	Garrett's Mean	Score Rank
01	High Cost of Power Supply	65.52	I
02	Uncertainty Power Supply	56.78	II
03	Scarcity Power Supply	46.65	III

Source: Computed data

Without power, production is not possible. Uninterrupted power supply alone can ensure the smooth flow of production. The causes of power supply problems in the study area were identified as high cost, uncertainty and

scarcity of power supply. The causes of power supply problem and the mean scores are depicted in Table 5.

Subsidy can be granted on electricity consumption by these women entrepreneurs at least in the initial period of production. The Government can also take steps to see that these entrepreneurs power without any disturbance.

Entrepreneurial Activities of Women in Dindigul District

- To conduct Industrial Motivation Campaigns in all Panchayat Unions for identifying new entrepreneurs.
- To help the new entrepreneurs in selecting their new projects and issue necessary technical guidance and required other assistance.
- To issue Provisional/Temporary Registration certificates to Proposed SSI units and to issue Permanent Registration certificates to functioning SSI units.

- To identify Rural artisans and issue them Cottage Industries Handicrafts Registration certificate and arrange to get Bank Loan.
- To help the New entrepreneurs in getting clearances from various Departments through Single Window Concept under Chairmanship of District Collector.
- To assist the Entrepreneurs in getting financial Assistance from nationalized banks and Government/Owned Corporations and also arrange to Procure machineries from NSIC through hire purchase Schemes.
- To impart EDP training to Women under WEDP Training Scheme.
- To select eligible unemployed educated youth under PMRY Scheme through Task Force Committee headed by the General Manager, District Industries centre and recommend the application to the service area Banks to sanction and disburse the loan.
- To identify Sick units and help the units for rehabilitation under sick units Revival program.
- To make arrangements for starting new Industrial Cooperative societies.
- To help the entrepreneurs to start new units with a capital investment of rupees one crore and above in each block of this district under New Anna MarumalarchiThittam.
- To assist the entrepreneurs in getting financial assistance through KVIC.
- Issue of Provisional SSI certificate through online with the help of approved browsing centres.
- Export guidance cell is formed to help the exporters in this District

Future schemes

- To help the new entrepreneurs to start new agro based and food processing units with a fixed investment (Land, Building & Machinery) for Rupees Twenty five lakhs and above in each block of this District under New Anna MarumalarchiThittam.
- Implementation of cluster development scheme in this District.
- To help the exporters by giving export guidance through Export Guidance Cell.
- To select eligible unemployed educated youth under PMRY Scheme through Task Force Committee headed by the General Manager, District Industries centre and recommend the application to the service area Banks to sanction and disburse the loan.

Other Suggestions

In order to motivate the women to participate in organising the Government may periodically select successful business ventures and successful women entrepreneurs in every district and honour them with awards.

Business training can be imparted to women entrepreneurs frequently by the Government with the assistance of non-governments and organizations.

A “Government-Entrepreneurs Association” may be formed to offer counselling and to provide consultancy services to solve the problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The present study has been undertaken mainly to help the women entrepreneurs to take their policy decisions for the wellbeing of their business. This study has brought to light certain problems faced by the women entrepreneurial respondents in Dindigul District. The suggestions presented in this study based on the experience of the researcher will help solving many problems presently faced by women entrepreneurs.

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