



## **Entrepreneurship for Women Empowerment- a Few Feasible Avenues**

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### **Abstract :**

*Traditionally women were expected to take up only household work and this was considered essential for the very endurance of the institution of the family. Even women accepted it as their fate and adjusted accordingly. The new Indian woman wants to retain her instinctive love for the home, the children and the family, and to combine this with her determination to play a vital role in the socio-economic structure of modern India. During the later half of the 20th century, the role of women in society changed drastically. Today, women have been actively participating in almost all economic activities and successfully proving that they can be more than a match to men in every walk of life.*

*Of late, the entry of women folk into business outside the domestic front is gaining increased significance in our country. Such an avenue bestows both economic and social status on these women. In fact, we find growing number of women entrepreneurs in modern highly technological, manufacturing and service business units. Increased opportunities in the business field have considerably drawn out women from the shell of family and household, which hitherto constituted their world. The income thus earned has provided them with a certain measure of economic independence and boosted their self-esteem, besides augmenting significantly household earnings. The present paper tries to discuss the various issues that lead enterprising women to take up entrepreneurship as a vehicle for their empowerment and throws light on the opportunities which can be grabbed by them to be the successful businesswomen.*

**Keywords:** *Women entrepreneurs, Self-reliance, Social status, Day care, Dress designing, Beauty therapy.*

### **Introduction**

The family is the most enduring institution man has even invented. It is the foundation of love, affection, and security, which plays a vital role in the emotional, physical and intellectual development of its members. The functions of a family particularly love and security cannot be provided by any other body. Earlier, the joint families in India have provided economic, social and emotional support to its members. The joint family has started fragmenting due to westernization, industrialization, and urbanization. Consequently, the family as a unit is undergoing a swift change and the degree of change varies from society to society (Paul Chowdhury, 1994). This depends upon how the social values are and the impact of these changes on the family system.

Traditionally women were expected to take up only household work and this was considered essential for the very endurance of the institution of the family. Even women accepted it as their fate and adjusted accordingly. This, however, did not confer upon them any status except some verbal references of respect and gratitude (Uma Joshi, 1994). For centuries, Indian women's role has been domestic, while their husbands assumed the responsibility of the breadwinner and protector of the family.

### **Entrepreneurship for Women Empowerment - Causes and Opportunities.**

The status of woman in India is somewhat different from that of the developed countries of the west. In all ages, woman did not have an independent existence of her own. She existed for man and always played a second fiddle role to

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him. Women in traditional societies are still confined to the four walls of their home, their children, household chores and family rituals. Though, woman is an equal partner of man's life in society, she is not an equal partner in economic sphere. Participation of women in economic activities was very much limited in the country. However, during the later half of the 20th century, the role of women in society changed drastically. Today, women have been actively participating in almost all economic activities and successfully proving that they can be more than a match to men in every walk of life. In fact, they have been contributing significantly in modern business and commercial world in their own way. Women have at last been recognised as a target group for the promotion of economic self-reliance (Shakila Azim, 2013). Women are rational in their approach, careful in handling situations and want to do things as good as possible. For assuring equality, dignity, justice, prosperity and stability, the contribution of women has, therefore, be viewed in a wider perspective.

Of late, the entry of women folk into business outside the domestic front is gaining increased significance in our country. Such an avenue bestows both economic and social status on these women (Deepa Mathur, 1992). The changes are taking place in the fast moving society in rapid strides. Women are no longer restricted to traditional economic activities where, formerly their household skills were the basis. In fact, we find growing number of women entrepreneurs in modern highly technological, manufacturing and service business units. Businesswomen today have become an integral part of modern and modernized industrial society. Increased opportunities in the business field have considerably drawn out women from the shell of family and household, which hitherto constituted their world (Kushbhoo and Benita Verma, 2013). The income thus earned has provided them with a certain measure of independence and boosted their self-esteem, besides augmenting significantly household earnings. When women are equipped with economic independence, they will be able to take firm decision against their oppression in family and society. Further, they seek to derive emotional and psychological contentment, and a sense of creative fulfillment. Thus, their

education, skills and time are optimally used (Jyothi Induprathap Yadav and Suhas Shankar Rao Jadhav, 2012).

### **Various opportunities for pursuing entrepreneurship**

A woman entrepreneur is one who owns and controls an enterprise in which she has a financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and who gives at least 51 per cent of generated in the enterprise to women. For women who do not want to take up a full-time or part-time career working for an employer, there are many options for working part-time or full-time as self-employed. A woman can choose one of the many ideas to work on her own or even in co-operation with one or more friends. In most cases, it has been seen that one achieves success when the project permits one to work part-time and the investment must also be low. Here are a few ideas, which could be employed by the women entrepreneurs to suit the personal circumstances, and build up a useful and successful career around them.

#### **Starting a Day Care Centre**

The anguish of working parents - for their inability to provide the requisite emotional support to the growing young children in the absence of elders at home in most of the nuclear families - drives them to hunt for sweet and loving day care centres for their tiny tots. A day care centre/child care centre providing day care service is often maintained by women entrepreneurs designed to take care of the young children of urban working mothers of limited income families. It offers a variety of activities designed to promote the physical, emotional, mental and social growth of children. Such centres prepare young children to go to pre-primary schools by promoting their cognitive development and socialization (Brahmanandam, 2013). It is agreed that the children of working women/ mothers belonging to independent families have to be taken care of especially in their formative years and the only way to provide them day care with pre-school education is to put them in day care centres. Even though the paid day care cannot become a perfect substitute for maternal care, it is the only tangible alternative for the working mothers in the urban nuclear families.



Running a day care centre does not require much capital, one can easily venture into it and earn a decent income. Of late, it is emerging as the most lucrative business in cities as more and more women living in independent families pursue employment. Even a housewife who is willing and prepared to make best use of her free time can start a day care centre. She can run a successful business right in her home without disrupting her family life. This way, she can have the best of both worlds: a happy home and fulfilled professional life. All she has to do is to stock up a lot of toys, pushcarts, rocking horses, charts, pictures, story books, blocks, tricycles and other play materials and place them in the living room, and she is in business.

Day care centres enable dual earner parents belonging to nuclear families to continue on their jobs and to supplement their family income. This would provide them more disposable income and enhance their standard of living. The most common problem faced by a working mother in a nuclear family in entering the work force is household responsibility. Apart from managing the house and professional front, what worries most working mothers is bringing up their children. The day care centres take the load off the shoulders of working mothers by taking care of their young children when they are at work place. Such centres give a breather to overburdened non-working mothers too. Sending young children to a day care centre helps non-working mothers relax and have time to take care of their special interest, since they need a diversion from the routing household chores.

Day care is a significant generator of employment for women in cities. Day care centres provide an opportunity for unemployed urban women to be employed and earn income in supporting their families. They can work as teachers and ayahs at the centres. Such centres also enable the mothers in dual earner families to continue on their jobs and to support their family income. This would provide more disposable income for such dual earner parents and enhance their standard of living.

### **Establishing a Dress Designing Centre**

Although most of the women in the urban areas are trained in the field of sewing clothes, till date,

dress designing field is dominated by the men folk only. However, a small number of ladies do this business activity at their residence only. Some of them get contracts from readymade garment shop for the supply of skirts, blouses, nities, shorts and shirts, etc. As India is a populous country, there is a huge demand for the readymade garments within the country itself. Moreover, the Indian readymade garments have international markets. Another point to be noted that women normally feel shy while giving measurement to the men dress makers for getting their cloths stitched. They always prefer to go to lady dress designers only due to social stigma. Hence, there is a vast scope for the women in urban areas to start this lucrative business in a big way and to earn handsome income on a regular basis.

### **Owning a Beauty therapy Parlor**

A beauty therapy parlor is a small friendly, home-based salon situated in the urban areas to serve the aesthetic needs of the women folk. Most of such parlors have fully-qualified and experienced beauticians specialized in beauty therapy. An overwhelming majority of the beauty therapy parlors meant for ladies are owned and managed by the women entrepreneurs. They provide an extensive range of treatments using medically advanced products. These contain natural essential oils and other herbal products to give the best results to those who undergo such treatment. Beauticians being experienced, acquiring vast knowledge in beauty therapy, successfully treat their clients giving delightedness for their clientele.

Most of the services rendered by beauty therapy parlors include advanced haircuts, permanent scar removing, hair dyeing, facials, face bleach, face threading, mehendi, shaping eyebrows and many other beauty treatments. Some beauty therapy parlors have also become professional producers of talented beauticians. They teach young girls/ women and provide them with Govt. Certificates, so as to make them successful beauticians and earn handsomely as employees or to open their own beauty therapy parlors and make a living. In metros, beauty therapists render their valuable services even to royal families, film actresses, and top cadre women entrepreneurs.



## Conclusion

Businesswomen have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in the western countries. It is worth noting that women entrepreneurship is yet to gain momentum in Indian context. Their participation in business is, however, on the increase. Today we find women in different types of businesses, traditional as well as non-traditional. The challenge and adventure to do something innovative, liking for business and an urge in them to attain economic independence are the main reasons why women pursue business as their career. Today there is greater awakening among women, both rural and urban to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. Given an opportunity, they will deliver brilliant results. Educating women is absolutely essential in straightening their personality. The need of the hour is to bring the young educated and skilled women into the entrepreneurial stream through proper guidance, motivation and training. Towards this end, an integrated approach is necessary for making the movement of women entrepreneurship a great success. For this purpose, both government and non-government agencies have to play a role of paramount importance.

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