3. CHAPTER :- History of Women Entrepreneurship

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3.1 Entrepreneurship during pre-independence & post-independence

Indian Economy in the ancient period consisted of isolated and economically self-sustaining villages and towns, which were mainly the centers of administration, trade and commerce. The villages had a simple division of labour and population had two main sectors. Farmers cultivated the soil and tended the cattle. Artisans, on the other hand, were providing services and essential manufactures to the villages. They consisted of weavers, goldsmiths, carpenters, potters, oil-pressers, washermans, cobblers, barbers etc. known as 'Balutedars', (1) they were the people doing the entrepreneurial work in the ancient society. All these occupations were hereditary and used to pass on from one generation to the next. Entrepreneurship among women was also there in the ancient period, as they used to work at home and help the male members.

At that time agriculture was the basic activity which provided occupation to the majority of the population and it was known as 'industrialized' economy and was also known as a leading exporter of various products, like cotton and silk fabrics, cotton clothes, artistic
wares and products like paper, cinnamon, opium, indigo etc. The economic occupations were almost hereditary and were determined by the birth of a man in a particular family. The occupation used to pass on from one generation to another. Naturally, the business was undertaken on family level and the family was itself a school, giving training to the young generation.

The picture of Indian Economy in the ancient times, which looks attractive, lost its glitter as the times passed. In the medieval days the Indian society and economy became very weak, as at that time firstly Mughals ruled and then British ruled our country and they cruelly finished our glorious craftsmanship. Entrepreneurship as today we can define it clearly, was not very developed in the ancient or medieval period. The manufacture, trading and other business activities were undertaken in traditional and 'Castelike' system where families specialized in a particular activity for generations. The British rule in India became the cause of changes in socio-economic conditions. The entrepreneurial activities before 1857 were mainly confined to the British businessmen and trading firms, participation of Indian people was negligible.

The period after 1857 witnessed slow growth of Indian entrepreneurship. Like the period of the early nineteenth century, this period was also dominated by the British firms. The end of the previous century and the early decades of the twentieth century saw the change in the situation. The Nationalist Movement started under the leadership of
Indian National Congress and the World War I were mainly responsible for this change. A number of factories for the manufacture of textiles, hosiery, pencils, cutlery, flour and oil mills, matches, ice-factories, glass and many other articles came into existence.

After the independence, the development of entrepreneurship got stimulation. The policies of the Government, which were discriminating against the Indian entrepreneurs were changed. The Government started making efforts in providing the infrastructure required for entrepreneurial development. The independent government declared its industrial policies for the growth of entrepreneurship, in the post independence period.

Without doubt, independence brought the promise of actual freedom and equality. And in the years following freedom tremendous changes were felt in the status of women in Indian society. The status of women is intimately connected with their economic position which, in turn, depends upon rights, roles and opportunities for their participation in economic activities. The scope of women's career has expanded and it is no longer limited only to household chores but much more of it women have crossed all barriers and have entered into almost every field. They are now employed in law, medicine, film industry, public service, fine arts, sports, teaching, literature, army, air force, police and entrepreneurship the so called 'masculine jobs'.(2)
3.2 Spatial Studies

In one of the Vedic literatures, the Satpatha Brahmin, there are several derogatory observations against women. She was regarded as intellectually inferior to man. She was characterized as more emotional and less rational by nature than man. She was described as one falling victim to external appearances and lacking ability to balance her mind and appreciate truth.(3)

The 3rd Guru of Sikhs shri Amardasji also fought for the supremacy of women. He was the first person to take cause of women up lift and said in his verses that women 'Who gives birth to kings and nobles why should she being neglected' They should be given proper regard and respect in the society.

In India, from the very beginning, women have been managers of the kitchen and have solely dominated the area of household activities. So deep has been the impact of this, that the general attitude of the people about women entrepreneurs is that they are makers of pickles, papads, masalas, and other household goods, but as time passed today non-traditional enterprises are easily managed by women and are done so excellently with them as the decision makers. They are flourishing well as leading consultants, publishers, exporters of machinery, manufacturers of electric goods, exporters of garments, designers, interior decorators and the like.

Over the last few decades while women have come forward to establish their own enterprises, their numbers, remain few and far
between. The entrepreneurial world is still male dominated. In
developed countries women tend to perform secretarial or low level
managerial jobs in the corporate sector—indeed less than 5% of senior
management positions are held by women in the U.S.A. In developing
countries such as India, even in the small-scale sector, less than 7% of
the enterprises have been set up by women. But probably what
noteworthy is that women have plunged into the field of
entrepreneurship and have been found effective in emerging social,
economical role. Women had been managers since long, from the time
the concept of living in a family emerged. She had been an
entrepreneur within the four walls where she was innovative in terms of
budgeting with the limited income resources, using the waste material
for making some useful products. With the changing role that women
accepted even the past decade, the role of entrepreneurship amongst
women has gained considerable importance.

Self-employment has always not been a long-term goal for
women. Sometimes it happened accidentally depending on the
situation. Women especially in the countries where they are fast
changing their role needed a little 'pull' and 'push' as at times they are
not aware of their own strengths and resources and wanted their
husband or family members to decide the way for them.

Women do not get proper opportunities for education in our
country; their literacy rate is also low. This is due to the fact that they
have dual responsibility i.e., changing the home as well as managing
the work outside. Hence a woman plays a significant role in the society.
They bring up their children to become the future citizens of India. Though women have the entrepreneurial ability, they cannot break the old traditions, duties and responsibilities to start an industry.

The woman entrepreneur is regarded as a person who accepts a challenging role to fulfill her personality needs and to become economically independent by making suitable adjustments in both family and social life. She is constantly on the look out for new and innovative ways, which lead to strong economic participation. Her practical ability, knowledge and shrewdness in business, and a pushing desire to do something positive are among the reasons for women to run organized industries and take up challenging ventures.(4)

Indian History reveals that there have been several women like Razia Sultan, Khatun Biby Begum, Nur jahan from Uttar Pradesh. Laxmi Bai from Jhansi (Bundelkhand) and Rani Padmini, who have successfully ruled their Kingdom. In modern India also several women leaders and administrators like Sarojini Naidu. Padmja Naidu, Indira Gandhi, sucheta Kriplani, Durgabai Deshmukh and Vijay Laxmi Pandit from Uttar Pradesh. who have succeeded in their statesmanship. In fact the martyrdom of the Queen of Jhansi forms a glorious chapter in Indian History.(5)

It is of great pleasure that women have dominated political atmosphere and ruling in five states as Jayalalita in Madras, Rabri Devi in Bihar, Sheela Dixit in Delhi, Uma Bharti in Madhya Pradesh & Vasundhara Raje in Rajasthan. They have proved better, sincere and honest administrators. All these prove that Indian women are in no way inferior to men in all walks of life and they can be as good entrepreneurs as men in the country.
3.3 Ethical studies

Status of the women has always been a fascinating subject for students of human society, academicians and development workers. The present status of women cannot be understood without reference to the predecessor form of Indian womenhood from which it evolved and the process by which it grew. Women's current status is to a large extent, the product of the past socio-economic configuration in which Indian womenhood was defined. Due to androcentric biases women's contribution to history is hardly recorded and there is a need to reconstruct women's history.

In the Vedic period, the woman was allotted the domestic sphere of life and was subordinate to man in the patriarchal familial system. Her intellectual faculty was fully developed, yet she was looked down as inferior to man in intelligence. With the passage of time the status of women deteriorated, but on the other hand, history also records that women in the vedic age have played an important part in religious and social functions. The position of wife was an honored one as no religious ceremony could be performed by the husband alone. Unfortunately, due to social economical and political changes of the latter centuries women lost their position in education and other fields. Economically women became completely dependent on men.

Since 1970s a global concerns for ameliorating the working ambience of women and raising their standard of living has been
expressed in many ways. The United Nations proclamation of the
International Women's Year (1975) followed by the International
Women's Decade (1975-1985) has been greatly responsible for raising
questions around Women invisibility at a global level. The United
Nations Conference on the "Status of women" held in Kenya in 1985
emphasized that the development of society requires the full
participation by all sections of population and women in particular.(6)

During the last two decades, various studies have been
undertaken to identify and articulate the real issues confronting women
in their multiple role. A number of working groups, task forces and
national conferences were organized to discuss the issues of women. In
addition, a Women Welfare Development Bureau was set up to
intensify efforts and measures needed for ensuring participation of
women in national development.

Gandhi ji was one of the world's greatest visionaries who
practiced what he preached. His concept of freedom was not limited to
freedom from foreign rule alone but his vision was to liberate society
from various bondages imposed by outsiders as well as by ourselves.
He wrote as early as in 1918 in his Journal Young India, "Woman is the
companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the
right to participate in minute details of activities of man and has the
same right to freedom and liberty. By sheer custom even the most
ignorant and worthless man have been enjoying superiority over
women which they do not deserve and ought not to have".(7)
In India since its independence, the government decided to follow the path of state sponsored and planned economic development. This does not have any role to play rather these will be assisted, guided and regulated by the state in various ways, so that their activities can result in economic transformation along the lines considered appropriate and desirable by the state. The idea behind this was that the persons who have no financial resources or managerial background could be induced to take to small industries and thus small industries could be effective tools for widening the entrepreneurial base in the country. However, no comprehensive studies has been conducted about women entrepreneurship at the state level especially in the Bundelkhand Region.
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