Chapter-VII

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters presented in the study, attempt was made to analyze the women entrepreneurship in Assam along with evaluation of their performances in businesses. In this regards, we discussed the socioeconomic conditions of women entrepreneurs, the growth strategies they adopted, performance of the enterprises, socioeconomic problems that they faced and empowerment of women through entrepreneurship. Kamrup (undivided) district of Assam was selected for the case study and primary data were collected from 112 numbers of women entrepreneurs. Of these sample units, 50% women entrepreneurs were selected purposively from Kamrup (metro) and the rest 50% from Kamrup (rural) district. To evaluate the performance of the women owned businesses, the variables used in the study were as follows: average profit earned in the last three consecutive years from the year of sample survey, annual rate of growth (ROG) of capital between initial year (year of establishment) and the year of sample survey and annual rate of growth of number of employees between initial year and the year of sample survey.

In the introductory chapter, we focused on the conceptual aspects of women entrepreneurs, their business strategy and performance, measurement of performance of enterprises and women empowerment by reviewing number of literatures of different researchers. When a woman or a group of women start, organize and operate a business enterprise they are known as women entrepreneur(s). They initiate the business, undertake the risk, and control and administer all the respective events concerning the business. Fostering entrepreneurship among women is indicative of high growth potential of the economy and also empowerment of women. Review of related literature, a brief introduction of the study area and objectives of the study, methodology used and chapter layout are also presented in the first chapter.

In the second chapter, we attempted to portray the present scenario of women entrepreneurship in India and Assam. Different initiatives taken by government of Assam to encourage entrepreneurship among women also presented in this chapter.
Also the socioeconomic characteristics of women entrepreneurs and motivators and motivating factors for entrepreneurship in the study area were discussed. The socioeconomic profile of women entrepreneurs presented in the chapter included their age, religion, caste, marital status, level of general education and technical education, type of their parental family and husband’s family (if married), occupational background of parental family and husband’s family (if married) and level of education of their parents and husbands. Discussions regarding the motivators and motivational factors for entrepreneurship also included in this chapter and ranking of these persons (motivators) and motivating factors were done in motivation profile.

A brief discussion about the growth strategies that were adopted by them for promotion of their enterprises is presented in the third chapter. The chapter concentrated mainly on the nature of the enterprises and the growth strategy adopted by the sample women entrepreneurs in their businesses. Nature of the enterprises included the information such as nature of activity, locations of enterprises, years of experiences, status and type of employee in the respective businesses, current level of capital, status of registration, nature of ownership and the type of startup fund of the businesses. Again, the growth strategy undertaken by the entrepreneurs identified in the study are sales measures, training and Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) and up-to-date knowledge of the concerned businesses. Detailed discussions on these strategies adopted by the entrepreneurs were carried out in this chapter.

Evaluations of the performance of women led ventures in different contexts are discussed in the fourth chapter. The performance of the women led ventures are measured in terms of three variables such as average profit earned in the last three consecutive years from the year of sample survey, annual rate of growth (ROG) of capital between initial year (year of establishment) and the year of sample survey and annual rate of growth of number of employees between initial year and the year of sample survey. The comparison of performance of different categories of enterprises such as registered and unregistered, with sales promotion measures and without sales promotion measures, participation in EDP or not, with male support and without male support and rural vs. urban were made. Again, the performance of the enterprises was also examined in terms of attitudes of entrepreneurs, size of the firms and age wise classification of the entrepreneurs. Also the performance of the
enterprises in terms of average profit earned in last three consecutive years with respect to different demographic variables such as age, caste, religion, marital status, level of general education, level of technical education, status before entrepreneurship, type of husband’s family, type of parental family, and with respect to growth strategies such as sales promotion measures and EDP or training programme were examined with the help of multiple linear regression analysis.

Fifth chapter presented a pan picture of the socioeconomic problems faced by women entrepreneurs. The problems they faced in the process of entrepreneurship were identified as personal problem, sociocultural problems and startup problems and all these problems were ranked to identify the severity of the problems.

The concept of women empowerment, different aspects of women empowerment and empowerment of women through entrepreneurship were examined in sixth chapter. Some areas of household decision making were identified and decisions taken in these areas (indicators) were tested before and after entrepreneurship. Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was estimated to measure the effect of entrepreneurship on these indicators and tried to find out whether the entrepreneurship empowered the women or not. The attitudes and feelings of women entrepreneurs about themselves after entrepreneurship were also portrayed in this chapter.

This seventh Chapter is the concluding chapter where the summary and findings of preceding chapters are discussed in brief. The chapter also includes some policy implication for fostering entrepreneurship in the state.

7.2 Summary of Findings

Because the first chapter is the introduction of the study, therefore, it has no findings. The second chapter portrays the present scenario of women entrepreneurship in India along with Assam. In case of India, it is observed that the top five states in terms of percentage share in total number of women owned establishments are Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra. Similarly, the top five states in case of the share in number of persons employed in women owned establishments are Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The top five economic activities as per establishments owned by women entrepreneurs are Agriculture, Manufacturing, Trade, Other Services and
Accommodation & food services. In case of number of persons employed in establishments owned by women entrepreneurs, the top five economic activities are Agriculture, Manufacturing, Trade, Education and Other Services. In case of nature of operation of the women owned establishments in India, it was observed that majority of the workers work in perennial establishments followed by seasonal establishments and remaining in casual establishments. In case of sources of finance in women owned enterprises it has been observed that majority of the women owned establishments were self-financed. In case of social group and religion of the women owned establishments, it is found that maximum of the establishments are owned by OBCs, followed by others, i.e., General Category and majority of them were Hindu by religion. Again, in case of state of Assam, we find that manufacturing, retail trade and livestock are the top three women owned establishments where maximum numbers of enterprises are established and majority of persons are employed in these enterprises. Barpeta, Kamrup (metropolitan) and Nagaon are the top three districts where maximum numbers of women owned enterprises are located. Assam is the pioneer state in the North East India to initiate systematic efforts for the development of entrepreneurship. To impart training on entrepreneurship development, North Eastern Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization (NEITCO) and Entrepreneurial Motivation Training Centers (EMTC) was established in 1973. Again, the IIE, Guwahati which was established in 1994 has now emerged as one of the premier Institute in entrepreneurship in the country and has been seriously involved in the entrepreneurship development in the region. Among the other institutions which are working for promotion of entrepreneurship in the NER are North Eastern Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization (NEITCO), Entrepreneurial Motivation Training Centres (EMTC), Small Industries Services Institutes (SISIs), North Eastern Industrial Consultant (NECON), and National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) and other voluntary organizations which are directly involved in promotion of entrepreneurship through training and support programmes. But the major role in the entrepreneurship development in the states of the North East is still played by NEITCO, NECON, NSIC and IIE. The chapter also includes the personal profile, family profile and motivation profile of women entrepreneurs in the study area, where we find that majority of women entrepreneurs are above 40 years of age, i.e., maturity level in age is one of the features of entrepreneurship among women.
Some other features that are observed in women entrepreneurship in the district are such that majority of them belong to general caste and Hindu community. Therefore, we can comment that caste and religion play dominant role in establishment and promotion of women entrepreneurship in the area. In case of attainment of education, majority of women entrepreneurs are below graduate which indicate that women entrepreneurship in the district is characterized by less number of higher educated young women. It is observed that technically educated entrepreneurs (58.04%) are in the field of beauty parlour and tailoring, but the women entrepreneurs in weaving sector are working without any technical education. Majority of women entrepreneurs before entering into entrepreneurship were either students or housewives. Therefore, in the present study, status before entrepreneurship does not matter much while opting for entrepreneurship. In case of parental family, majority of women entrepreneurs are from joint family, whereas in husband family, majority of married women entrepreneurs belong to nuclear family. Therefore, we can comment that in parental family, joint family system encourages more entrepreneurship, whereas in husband family where decision is concentrated in the hands of husband, nuclear family encourages more entrepreneurship. The average number of children per woman entrepreneurs is observed to be two. So, we may comment that ideal family (two children family norm) may be one of the factors for encouragement of entrepreneurship. The occupational backgrounds of the parents of women entrepreneurs are mixed in nature. The study revealed that parents’ occupations hardly have any effect on the promotion of entrepreneurship. Though majority of husbands of women entrepreneurs are in business, but that is not the reason of women being entrepreneurs because it has been observed that in most cases, the husbands of women entrepreneurs are found to work in the same business and we came to know that husbands entered into that business because of their wives. Again, we found that majority of parents of women entrepreneurs are below matriculate, which reveals that in spite of belonging to the family of less educated parents the women have been able to start entrepreneurship. Thus parents’ education did not have any specific impact on their entrepreneurship. On the other hand, in most cases, husbands of women entrepreneurs are highly educated. Therefore, we can associate the fact that with the increase in the level of education of spouses of women entrepreneurs, there has been increase in entrepreneurship among women. Income level of majority of husbands of
women entrepreneurs are below two lakhs, which may be one of the motivating factors for entrepreneurship among women because their spouses were not earning adequate income for their family. To fulfill their ambition, to earn money and to get independence, majority of women were attracted to the field of entrepreneurship. Therefore, they identified ‘self-promotion’ as the prime motivator for entrepreneurship. Majority of them entered into the field of entrepreneurship to fulfill their own ambitions.

Nature of the enterprises and analysis of growth strategy to promote sales and market shares of the women entrepreneurs are the core of analysis Chapter III. The study included in total 11 categories of enterprises, of which most of these are found to be concentrating on traditional businesses such as weaving, parlor business, tailoring etc. A few of them were engaged in non-traditional undertakings such as printing, readymade garments, steel furniture, computer center, etc. The average years of experiences of women entrepreneurs in businesses are found to be 12.63 years. Size of the enterprises in terms of number of employees is quite small and less than 4 number of employees. Though women-run enterprises recruited both male and female workers but number of female workers out numbered male workers and more than 92 per cent of the workers hired by them were observed to be trained. Another feature of the women owned enterprises is that maximum enterprises had capital investment less than 5 lakhs; that is, most of them are operating micro enterprises. The study comprised of both registered and unregistered enterprises. Most of the entrepreneurs, who had not registered their enterprises, thought that it is not neither necessary nor mandatory. That is, they did not face any problem by not registering their units. In case of the registered enterprises also most of them are found to have registered their units after a long period of time of establishing their enterprises. This speaks a lot about the inefficiencies of respective govt. offices in the Government of Assam. Majority of women entrepreneurs started their business from their household savings and personal savings. This indicates, the insignificant role of financial institutions including banks in the encouragement of women entrepreneurship in the study area. Sales promotional measures and participation in training programmes are some of the strategies adopted by women entrepreneurs to promote sales and expand their market shares. Among different sales measures, product diversification and advertisement are the measures commonly used by women entrepreneurs. Majority of women
entrepreneurs are found to be not participating in any kind of training programmes. From this we can conclude that low participation is either due to unawareness of entrepreneurs about the necessities of training programmes or because of inefficiencies of govt. departments in providing such facilities. But those who participated in these training programmes were quite satisfied and got benefitted.

Chapter IV presents a detailed discussion on the performance of the women owned ventures. The findings of performance evaluation of women owned enterprises in the chapter are summarized as follows:

- Among different categories of enterprises, steel furniture enterprises are found to be earning highest profit, whereas weaving witnessed with highest growth rates in capital and number of employees. Therefore, govt. initiatives for development of such enterprises obviously will open up more employment in our economy where unemployment is a major problem.
- Registration did not have any bearing on the performance of the enterprises as observed in the study. Registered enterprises are found to be earning higher profit and witnessing more growth in capital, but growth of employee was higher in unregistered ones.
- Sales promotional measures are quite effective for better performance of the enterprises as firms with sales promotion measures are found to earn higher profit, higher growth rates of capital engagement and labour than that of the firms without having adopted sales promotion measures.
- Comparing the performances of women owned enterprises with male support and without male support, we observed that male support is not a requirement for better performance of the women owned businesses; rather the capital they employed in their enterprises facilitated them for better performance.
- Though sales promotional measures are quite effective in earning higher profit, it became less relevant in the better performance of the enterprises, if these enterprises were endowed with required amount of capital.
- Performance according to size of enterprises (no. of employees) shows that with the increase in the size of the enterprise average profit increased but employment decreased.
• Comparing rural enterprises to urban enterprises, we found that though the urban enterprises are earning higher profit, but growth in capital and number of employment is higher in rural enterprises.
• The attitude of women entrepreneurs about themselves as entrepreneurs and their performance in terms of profit is positively related. But profitability and age of the entrepreneurs are not found to be related in such a way.
• Capital, not the location of the enterprises is important in regards of profit they earned; greater amount of capital always enabled the enterprises better performances.
• Again, age, general education, type of parental family and the sales promotion measures are found to be statistically significant in influencing profitability of enterprises.
• The entrepreneurs’ own opinion in case of the factors that might have affected their entrepreneurial performance were such that though majority of them were neutral on the financial accessibility from the government or MFIs (as most of them were found to use their personal or household savings to start their enterprises), satisfied on accessibility of raw material and technologies, but they were very much dissatisfied on the infrastructural facilities available to them, which may be considered as one of the prime factors in determining entrepreneurial performances of the enterprises.

In chapter V, we tried to find out the different types of problems that the women entrepreneurs faced either in starting or running their enterprises. We examined here personal problems, sociocultural problems, startup problems and home role conflict that the entrepreneurs might have faced in their entrepreneurial life. Out of different personal problems, the women entrepreneur ranked ignorance about schemes, dual role expectation and restricted mobility as the first three important problems experienced by them. They identified low economic credibility, lack of opportunities and role conflicts as the first three sociocultural problems and facilities of getting loan/finance, arrangement of convenient shed and scarcity of skilled labour as the first three important startup problems out of different startup problems. Majority women entrepreneurs agreed that they had dual role (home role conflict) conflicts of which, they identified domestic work, time with family and maintenance of social life as the three major home role conflicts they faced.
Chapter VI presents a picture of the effect of entrepreneurship on empowerment of women. Comparison of composite women empowerment index reveals that overall degree of empowerment of women has improved notably due to entrepreneurial activities. Particularly important activities like decisions making on saving, borrowing and maintenance of family in which women entrepreneurs played their role revealed that there has been drastic change in the level of empowerment. Women now feel more secured in public life; have been able to improve their societal positions along with freedom of expression after becoming entrepreneurs. Majority of women entrepreneurs admitted that they received male support financially, morally and even physically in their businesses.

7.3 Policy Implications

On the basis of our findings and field observations we would like to mention the following in order to encourage entrepreneurship which have direct bearing on the overall welfare of society in general and women entrepreneurs in particular:

- Vocational training need to be extended to women in the area of production process, production management, marketability and profitability;
- Positive attitude towards entrepreneurship need to be inculcated among younger generations, particularly among women, right from the start at the high school level through well-designed courses, regardless of whatever career they pursue;
- There is a need for making special provision of credit to the women run enterprises at local level at an ease; and
- There is a need for setting up of Women Entrepreneur's Guidance Cell all over the state to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs.
- Increase the ability of women to participate in the labour force by ensuring the availability of affordable child care and equal treatment in the work place.
- It is necessary to promote the development of women entrepreneur networks. Co-operation and partnerships between national and international networks can facilitate entrepreneurial endeavors by women in a global economy.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

Women entrepreneurship being one of the tools of women empowerment has great potential in the overall economic development of any nation. Therefore, there is not only a need for programs and policies to be in place for encouragement of
entrepreneurship but also for implementation of area specific strategies which can help to build entrepreneurial culture among the youth. Besides socio-cultural environment, organizational environment have also much to do with the emergence of entrepreneurship in a society. There are many organizations and institutions to provide support to entrepreneurs such as training institutions, small industry development corporations, marketing organizations, consultancy organizations and banks and other financial institutions. In developing economies, work needs to be focused on improving women’s rights in society so that they can have access to education, personal income and the possibility of controlling their own life. It is necessary to create situations to increase the pull incentives to entrepreneurship for women. There is a need to know how the entrepreneurial process takes place and their strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. As low degree of women’s entrepreneurship is directly associated with poor status of women, emphasis must be given to increase the abilities of women to participate in the labour force, to improve their positions in society and to increase their scope to engage themselves in entrepreneurship. More and more targeted initiatives are required from the Government to support existing and would be women entrepreneurs.