ABSTRACT

The concept of entrepreneurship and its theory have evolved over more than two centuries. However, in the long transition during which a society evolved from tribalism to self-sustained economic growth, the closely woven political, social and economic strands of the social fabric changed their pattern and their relationships. So also, the concept of entrepreneurship in plural and socially stratified societies like India is more difficult and intriguing. However, in this work an attempt is made to brief out the ideas and philosophies of various authorities on the vital and dynamic concept like entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship plays an eminent role in creating an avenue for employability for rural communities, providing self-employment for those who have started a business of their own thereby enhancing the economic status of the rural sector as well. Entrepreneurship has transformed many entrepreneurs into successful business persons and generated income for rural communities. Entrepreneurs in rural area have transformed their vicinity into trading hubs thus enabling them to become urbanized areas. Conducting a literature review is a vital component of the research process. Familiarity with the previous research and theory in the area of the study would help in conceptualizing the problem, conducting the study and interpreting the findings. The literature studies that have been conducted reveal the impact of entrepreneurial activities in India as well as other countries. In the literature review, the term “entrepreneurship” has been used in different senses by researchers from India and other countries. This chapter will be covering the historical events and the research on entrepreneurial development activities both abroad and in India.

Socio-cultural factors such as social norms, family values, networks and social value of entrepreneurship, play a key role in nurturing the entrepreneurial ecosystem. A historical and sociological understanding of certain communities in India, which have been traditionally engaged in business, confirms the role of social factors that encourage entrepreneurship. Important success factors include the
pragmatic use of social and family network as well as ‘web of interdependence’ that continuously facilitates the development of entrepreneurial ecosystem at the community level.

Globalization and liberalization of markets encouraged women to come forward to become entrepreneurs and start new industries. Cultural mixes, challenges that women face in their lives, have changed throughout the world. In this regard both state and central governments have taken initiatives in developing women entrepreneurs in India. However, the need for more women entrepreneurs has to be studied separately for two main reasons. The first reason is that women’s entrepreneurship in an important untapped source of economic growth. The second reason is that the women entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others. They can provide different solutions to management, organization, and business problems. Empirical studies show that women contribute significantly to the running of family business mostly in the form of unpaid effort and skills (India Together News, 2008).

Singh, (2008), identifies the reasons & influencing factors behind entry of women in entrepreneurship. He explained the characteristics of their businesses in Indian context and also obstacles & challenges. He mentioned the obstacles in the growth of women entrepreneurship were mainly due to lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs, social un-acceptance as women entrepreneurs, family responsibility, gender discrimination, missing network, low priority given by bankers to provide loan to women entrepreneurs. He suggested the remedial measures like promoting micro enterprises, unlocking institutional frame work, projecting & pulling to grow & support the winners etc. The study advocates ensuring synergy among women related ministry, economic ministry & social & welfare development ministry of the Government of India.

The study adopted both descriptive and exploratory research methods. Data extraction from women entrepreneurs in the utility services business is collected through a structured questionnaire and personal interview method. For the purpose of survey, women entrepreneurs are met in person and the need for study was explained to them. On certain occasions, SHG groups were also involved in such
businesses, but they have not been included in the study. The references were taken from women associations, banks, training centers, district revenue office, block development cell, and utility service providers associations. The sample is collected from the entire city, by notifying the prominent places in the city. The equal distribution is not ensured and location importance or priority is not given. The time, cost and proximity to the topic is considered while collecting the data. Modern utility cum health care services centres like Spa, ultra modern saloons are exempted from the study. In similar way franchisee pre- schools, nursery schools and day care centers are exempted due to influence of brand and corporate image and the present study is conducted with the following objectives.

- To identify the barriers of women entrepreneurs in utility service businesses.
- To study the factors motivating the women, to start a business.
- To find out the success factors of women entrepreneurs.
- To assess the relationship between demographical variables of women and barriers and success factors of women entrepreneurs.

The result of the study reveals that,

1. Work experience status of women entrepreneurs: Women entrepreneurs who have work experience relevant to the nature of business is recorded at 33.7 percent. This indicates that work experience motivates women to go for entrepreneurship. Another 28 percent are engaged in entrepreneurship without any work experience.

2. Entrepreneurial intention of the women in utility services industry: The reasons for starting business are financial empowerment at 24.5 percent, 37 percent to gain business knowledge, 20.3 percent wanted to be employed and thereby be engaged. On the other hand the least important reasons quoted by the firms are Employment Avenues to choose the entrepreneurship. Whatever may be the reason quoted the regular engagement of business is ensured and it is the indicator of success of business.
3. Entrepreneurial climate: entrepreneurial climate indicated by women are recorded as very good and positive support from the family and suppliers with the highest mean score value of 4.47, good support from the customers with the mean value of 4.22, support from government agencies with the mean score of 3.74 and finally support from banks is recorded at 3.69. This indicates that the role of banks in utility services promotion by providing loans for establishment and for working capital is poor, when compared to other supportive and climate measures.

4. Entrepreneurial Gaps: entrepreneurial gaps identified during the sample survey among women in utility services sector are broadly classified into two types. On the basis of the mean value, it is noted that the primary gaps for entrepreneurship in utility services sector among the respondents are Low level of risk tolerance and risk taking attitude with the mean score of 4.80, Lack of marketing and negotiating skills with the mean score of 4.71, Inadequate financial resources with the mean score of 4.63, fear of failure with the mean score of 4.52 and finally Lack of resources, support and training with the mean score of 4.47. It indicates that the women in society and especially in utility services sector face gaps with resources and risk tolerance attitude. It can be overcome by giving them training and development on the managerial skills and resource management techniques.

5. Level of awareness on supportive measures to entrepreneurship: level of awareness on supportive measures offered to women by the government through different schemes is very low among the women in utility services sector. The awareness on various schemes needs to be spread among the entrepreneurs for the effective utilization and developing the number of ventures in the years to come.

6. Motivating Factors of women entrepreneurship in utility services sector: Motivating factors of women in utility services sector are recorded as improved business knowledge with the mean score of 4.22, wide opportunities for growth and development with the mean score of 4.03, Availability of right location with the mean score of 4.11, Availability and
accessibility of technical knowhow with the mean score of 4.19, Accessibility to the supplier and customer place with the mean score of 4.15, Government Support with the mean score of 4.38, Encouraging business environment with the mean score of 4.34, Changing attitude of the society towards women entrepreneurship with the mean score of 4.33, national social recognition with the mean score of 4.03 and Improved support from NGO’s, Academic institutions with the mean score of 4.38 among the sample.

7. Success Factors of Women in utility services industry : the success factor of women in utility services entrepreneurship are knowledge acquisition with the mean score of 4.50, competitive scanning ability improvement with the mean score of 4.56, proactive searching behaviour with the mean score of 3.84, innovative behaviour with the mean score of 4.25, collective action with the mean score of 4.63, growth of new venturing with the mean score of 4.52 and finally newness value of new venture is identified with passion with the mean score of 4.67 among the sample respondents.

A prerequisite for nurturing Entrepreneurship is the creation of a favorable business environment. This goal is at the heart of India’s economic liberalization initiatives. The key parameters of a conducive business environment include smooth flow of information; ease of starting a business and obtaining various clearances and permits; ease of filling taxes; an efficient legal system; enabling legislations and regulations; absence of corruption; and world-class infrastructure facilities. All these may be possible in phased manner and help women to venture into entrepreneurship and give financial empowerment to the family and in the society at large. This can help both the family and economy.

KEYWORDS:

Empowerment – Utility Services – Standard of Living – Financial Status – Socio Economic Condition