

A PROFILE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN REGION IN TAMILNADU

Dr. S. Renuga Devi

Reader and Head, SNR Sons College, Coimbatore

and

N. Bharathi

Lecturer, Karpagam University, Echanari, Coimbatore

ABSTRACT

A significant increase in the number of women who prefer business as a career is a present trend. The special characteristics of women like looking at business problems contextually and viewing the issues wholly rather than its parts are also the requirements of a competitive world. In spite of this, women entrepreneurs are prone to problems in their work culture. Such problems faced by them are the subject of the present study.

INTRODUCTION

Women constitute around half of the total world population; it is so in India also. The Indian traditional set-up made a distinction between “men’s” work and “women’s” work, particularly that of women with family responsibility. It curtailed the employment opportunities for women in conventional and unconventional fields of economic activity. In spite of this the number of women looking after business as a career has increased significantly over the past ten years. Technology changes, globalization and intensification of competition have made the business world complex and dynamic. These factors underline the importance of systemic thinking such as would provide a framework for viewing the whole picture and interrelationships. The feminine propensity to look at business problems contextually and to concentrate on the whole of an issue rather than its parts is needed more today as the preferable mode.

Business women can bring valuable innovation and creativity to entrepreneurship because they weigh more variables, consider more alternatives and outcomes, pay attention to more points of view and see more ways of doing something. Moreover, as competition increases, today's entrepreneurs must be able to alter plans quickly and frequently. Women's innate mental flexibility, their vision for long term planning and the ability to tolerate ambiguity and changes better than men are valuable assets for every venture. So also their capacity to negotiate which weighs more when it comes to dealing with prospective investors, suppliers and customers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mc Atavey and Jean Mary of Lynn University (1982) conducted a survey on "Factors that contribute to women launching their own business and satisfaction level of entrepreneurs". It was conducted among women entrepreneurs in Florida to assess their level of satisfaction on different factors like fulfilment of life-long goal, balancing family and work, managing people and adjustment with the clients. The collected data was subjected to ANOVA and Regression analyses and it was concluded that women preferred being entrepreneurs for the flexibility that it offered in terms of working hours and balancing family and work.

Ayadurai, Selvakumar and Sohail M.Sadiq (1987) carried out a case study on "the profile of women entrepreneurs in war-torn area" in the North-East of Sri Lanka by examining the demographic profile of Tamil women entrepreneurs who were obliged to become entrepreneurs as a result of the war. The study examined five main areas – their characteristics, factors that spurred them into entrepreneurship, their challenges, the measure of their success and their demographic profile. The study revealed that the majority of them were in business for the first time as they had lost their husbands in the war and they saw business as a means to an end and their success in the venture meant making a balance between family and work.

A study on "attributes of women business owners and their equity financing strategy" was carried out by Carter, Nancy, Brush, Candida, Greence Patrica, Gatewood, Elizabeth and Hart Myra (2004). They explored the factors associated with the use of equity capital in firms led by women and also the influence of human and social capital on the likelihood of obtaining equity funding, access to funding resources, bootstrapping techniques and

development of financial strategies. Data was collected from 235 US women business owners. It was concluded that only graduate education significantly influenced the use of equity finance. Social capital had no direct effect on increasing likelihood of using equity funding.

Orser Barbara J, Riding Allen L and Manley Kathryn (2005) carried out a study on “Women entrepreneurs and Financial Capital” with a view to examining gender differences among the Canadian small and medium enterprise owners seeking external financing including commercial debt, leasing, supplier financing and equity capital after accounting for size and industry sector. The study also examined the potential gender differences in owners’ strategic choices and financiers’ evaluative responses. It was found out that male entrepreneurs sought all types of external financing except for equity capital.

A study on “the role of support on the perception of success for women entrepreneurs” was carried out by Pollard, Rollanda P., and Farrington (2006) to determine the strength of the relationship between women’s perception of success and the actual support and success achieved in their environment. The study concluded that women’s perception of support appeared to have a greater effect on their success in entrepreneurial ventures than actual support.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the changed scenario, there is growing awareness among women that entrepreneurship opens up a new field for them and they could cherish the profession as one which gave them independence and self support. In order to succeed in their venture of entrepreneurship, they must recognize the advantages that they have and the unique challenges that they have to face compared to their male counterparts. Awareness of the problems they face enables them to exploit their strengths and unique differences as advantages. Such awareness could also help prospective women entrepreneurs to venture into business.

It is with these considerations in view that we have attempted through the present study a profile of women entrepreneurs in the western region of Tamil Nadu.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To study the socio economic background of the women entrepreneurs.
- ✓ To analyze the multitude of factors that led them to become entrepreneurs and their level of satisfaction.
- ✓ To assess the problems faced by the women entrepreneurs.
- ✓ To offer suggestions on the basis of the present study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The paper studies the situation of women entrepreneurs in the Western Region (Coimbatore, Erode, Ooty and Tirupur) of Tamilnadu. It covers 100 active women entrepreneurs in and around the Western Region using the simple random sampling method. The study relied on primary data collected with the help of a questionnaire consisting of personal and other factors that determine the extent of an entrepreneur's satisfaction and perception of problems. The questionnaire was distributed directly among the respondents by explaining the purpose of the study. In order to maintain accuracy, the respondents in different places of the Western region and engaged in various entrepreneurship activities were selected. The data was statistically analysed in order to ensure accuracy as the data obtained had been random based on age, gender and other parameters. The results of the analysis are presented in table 1.

Statistical Tools

In order to determine the parameters that influence the satisfaction and problem perception of women entrepreneurs, it is important to reduce the relevant parameters so that there is a limited set representing the whole set. For the purpose, chi-square and factor analysis are used.

Table 1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF INVESTORS

Variable	Profile	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Less than 20 years	4	4.0
	20-30 years	19	19.0
	30-40 years	49	49.0
	Above 40 years	28	28.0
Educational Qualification	Up to HSC	24	24.0
	Degree	38	38.0
	Diploma	6	6.0
	Professional	32	32.0
Annual Income	Below Rs.1,00,000	9	9.0
	Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.2,00,000	32	32.0
	Rs.2,00,000 to 4,00,000	37	37.0
	Above Rs.4,00,000	22	22.0
Experience	Below 5 years	28	28.0
	6-10 years	35	35.0
	10-15 years	25	25.0
	15 & above	12	12.0
Martial Status	Married	80	80.0
	Unmarried	20	20.0
Nature of Family	Business Background	60	60.0
	Non-Business Background	40	40.0
Family Member	Up to 2	8	8.0
	3-5	77	77.0
	5 & above	15	15.0

Source: Primary Data

- I. It can be observed from table 1 that 4% of the respondents are below 20 years of age, 19% of the respondents are of 20-30 years of age, 49% 30-40 years and 28% above 40 years.

- II. It will be seen from the table that 24% of the respondents belong to the category of HSC, 38% of the respondents are of the Degree level, 6% of the respondents are Diploma holders and the remaining 32% are professionals.
- III. As revealed by the table, 80% of the respondents are married and 20% of the respondents are unmarried.
- IV. As far as the distribution of annual income is concerned, majority of the respondents, that is 37%, earn an annual income of Rs.2, 00,001 to Rs.3,00,000, 32% of the respondents have annual income ranging from Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.2,00,000, 22% an income above Rs.3,00,000 and remaining 9% an income below Rs.1,00,000.
- V. Regarding the experience of respondents, 35% of the respondents have 6-10 years of experience, 28% have below 5 years, 25% of the respondents have 11-15 years and the remaining 12% have above 15 years of experience.
- VI. Also shown by the table, majority (60%) of the respondents have a business background and the remaining 40% of the respondents have a non-business background.
- VII. Out of 100 respondents, 77% of the respondents are having 3-5 members in their families, 15% of the respondents have above 5 members and the remaining 8% of the respondents are having not more than 2 members.

STUDY ANALYSIS

To assess the level of satisfaction of women entrepreneurs with reference to the motivational factors in their careers, 5 variables were identified. These were assistance given by financial institutions, help extended by women's association, infrastructural facilities provided by the government, financial assistance provided by the government and marketing assistance provided by the government. Each item was rated on a 5 point scale consisting of ratings as highly satisfied -5, satisfied -4, undecided -3, dissatisfied -2 and highly dissatisfied -1. In order to convert the qualitative information into quantitative information, the respondents were classified on the basis of the motivational scores as shown in the following table.

Table 2 Motivational Score

Level of Motivational Score	No. of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Less	38	38.00
Medium	36	36.00
High	26	26.00
Total	100	100

Source: Survey Data

The above table indicates that 38% of the women entrepreneurs have low score, 36% of them have medium score and the remaining 26% have high score.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

Table 3 presents the extent of variation in the level of satisfaction derived by women entrepreneurs from the assistance provided by a financial institution on the basis of their motivational scores.

Table 3 Assistance Provided by Financial Institutions

Satisfaction Score	No. of Entrepreneurs	Level of Satisfaction		
		Low	Medium	High
Strongly Agree	32	13 (34.21%)	16 (42.11%)	9 (23.68%)
Agree	42	9 (39.13%)	7 (30.43%)	7 (30.44%)
Neutral	14	8 (34.78%)	10 (43.48%)	5 (21.74%)
Disagree	7	5 (55.56%)	2 (22.22%)	2 (22.22%)
Strongly Disagree	5	3 (42.86%)	1 (14.29%)	3 (42.85)
Total	100	38	36	26

Source: Survey Data

The above table indicates that 42 respondents agreed that the assistance provided by the financial institutions motivated them to become entrepreneurs, 32 of them strongly agreed, 14 were neutral, 7 disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed. The table also shows that among those with low motivational scores, 5 respondents disagreed on the motivational factor in the assistance provided by the financial institutions and 3 of them strongly disagreed. In the

category of respondents with a high score, 9 respondents strongly agreed and 7 respondents agreed that they were attracted by the assistance provided by the financial institutions.

Thus a larger number of respondents with high motivational score strongly agreed and fewer respondents with low motivational score strongly disagreed as to the factor that motivated them.

HELP EXTENDED BY WOMEN ASSOCIATIONS AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The extent of satisfaction derived by the respondents from the help extended by a women's association is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4 Women's Association and level of Satisfaction

Satisfaction Score	No. of Entrepreneurs	Level of Satisfaction		
		Low	Medium	High
Strongly Agree	17	3 (21.43%)	9 (64.29%)	2 (14.28)
Agree	31	8 (33.33%)	12 (50%)	4 (16.67)
Neutral	39	13 (36.11%)	18 (50%)	5 (13.89%)
Disagree	10	4 (21.05%)	6 (31.58%)	9 (47.37%)
Strongly Disagree	3	4 (57.14%)	1 (14.29%)	2 (28.57%)
Total	100	38	36	26

Source: *Survey Data*

As shown by the above table, 39 respondents were neutral as to the motivational factor provided by the help extended by women's associations, 31 respondents agreed, 17 strongly agreed, 10 disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed. As regards respondents with low motivational score only 4 strongly disagreed while 9 respondents in the "high" category agreed that the help extended by the women associates acted as a motivational factor.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The extent of variation in the level of satisfaction derived by women entrepreneurs from assistance provided by the government is shown in table 5.

Table 5 Government's Assistant and level of satisfaction

Satisfaction Score	No. of Entrepreneurs	Level of Satisfaction		
		Low	Medium	High
Strongly Agree	62	7 (35%)	9 (45%)	4 (20%)
Agree	28	14 (41.18%)	11 (32.35)	9 (26.47%)
Neutral	5	8 (32%)	10 (40%)	7 (28%)
Disagree	3	5 (41.67%)	2 (16.67%)	5 (41.66%)
Strongly Disagree	2	4 (44.44%)	4 (44.44%)	1 (11.12%)
Total	100	38	36	26

Source: *Survey Data*

The number of women entrepreneurs who strongly agreed as to the motivational factor constituted by government assistance is higher than the other respondents with different levels of satisfaction. Only 9 entrepreneurs in the category of respondents with low motivational score disagreed and strongly disagreed about the motivational factor and 13 respondents agreed and strongly agreed in the category of high motivational score.

Thus on government assistance acting as a motivation factor majority of the respondents with a high motivational score agreed and strongly agreed.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE AND LEVEL OF PREFERENCE

The extent of variation in the level of satisfaction derived by the respondents from the marketing assistance provided to them is presented in table 6.

Table 6 Marketing Assistant and level of satisfaction

Satisfaction Score	No. of Entrepreneurs	Level of Satisfaction		
		Low	Medium	High
Strongly Agree	23	9 (52.94%)	5 (29.41%)	3 (17.65%)
Agree	58	17 (38.64%)	19 (43.18%)	8 (18.18%)
Neutral	11	7 (36.84%)	6 (31.58%)	6 (31.58%)
Disagree	4	3 (33.33%)	2 (22.22%)	4 (44.45%)
Strongly Disagree	4	2 (18.18%)	4 (36.36%)	5 (45.46%)
Total	100	38	36	26

Source: *Survey Data*

The above table reveals that 42 respondents agreed that the marketing assistance available motivated them to become entrepreneurs, 39 respondents strongly agreed, 10 were neutral, 5 disagreed and the remaining 4 strongly disagreed. Fewest of the respondents strongly disagreed as to the motivational role of marketing assistance in the category of respondents with low score while a majority disagreed in the category of respondents with high motivational score.

The conclusion is that the marketing assistance that is provided may not attract women entrepreneurs.

INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITY AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The extent of satisfaction derived by the respondents from the infrastructural facilities is shown in table 7.

Table 7 Transporting facility and level of preference

Satisfaction Score	No. of Entrepreneurs	Level of Preference		
		Low	Medium	High
Strongly Agree	12	7 (30.44%)	8 (34.28%)	8 (34.78%)
Agree	52	12 (42.86%)	9 (32.14%)	7 (25%)
Neutral	17	8 (44.44%)	6 (33.33%)	4 (22.23%)
Disagree	6	9 (42.86%)	7 (33.33%)	5 (23.81%)
Strongly Disagree	13	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)
Total	100	38	36	26

Source: *Survey Data*

It will be seen that majority of the respondents (52) agreed that infrastructural facilities available motivated them to become entrepreneurs. Only the least number of respondents (21) in the category of low motivational score strongly disagreed as to the motivational effect of infrastructural facilities and a majority strongly agreed that infrastructural facilities motivated them in the category of respondents with high motivational score.

The inference is that the majority of the entrepreneurs in the category of respondents with high motivational score have strongly agreed as to the motivational role of infrastructural facilities.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

In order to find out the significance of the influence of motivational factors for the sample on the basis of the level of satisfaction derived by them, null hypotheses were formulated that these factors do not significantly influence the satisfaction derived by the entrepreneurs. The null hypotheses were tested with the help of chi-square test and the result is presented in table 8.

Table 8 Factors influence the satisfaction derived by the entrepreneurs

Factors	Calculated Value	Table Value	Significance
Granting loans by financial institutions	4.555	15.5	Not Significant
Helps by women's Association	17.62	15.5	Significant
Assistant provided by the Government	4.845	15.5	Not Significant
Marketing Assistance	8.109	15.5	Not Significant
Infrastructural facility	4.471	15.5	Not Significant

The above table indicates that the help extended by the women's association concerned has significantly influenced the level of satisfaction derived by the entrepreneurs.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

The problems faced by the respondents are identified for the purpose of the analysis and are shown in the following table:

Table 9 Barriers of Women Entrepreneurs

SI. NO	Variables
X ₁	Lack of education Qualification
X ₂	Lack of role models
X ₃	Inadequate family support
X ₄	Lack of business skill
X ₅	Absence of sufficient management experience
X ₆	Low need of achievement
X ₇	Low self esteem
X ₈	Insufficient financial Institutions
X ₉	Inadequate supply of capital

Factor analysis is a data reduction statistical technique that allows simplifying the correlations among a number of selected problems faced by the respondents. Exploratory factor analysis is used in order to identify constructs and investigate relationships among key interval scaled questions regarding reasons for identifying barriers by 100 women entrepreneurs. The analysis consists of the following steps:

- ✓ The correlation matrices were computed. It revealed that there is enough co-relationship to permit factor analysis.
- ✓ Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measures of sampling Adequacy (MSA) for individual variance was studied to test the adequacy of sampling.

The overall significance of correlation matrices was tested with Barlett Test of Sphericity providing support for the validity of the factor analysis of the data. The results are given in the following table:

Table 10 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.696
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	45.389
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

The above table revealed that the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant and that the Kaiser-Mayer –Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is greater than 0.6. Therefore, it is appropriate to proceed with the factor analysis.

After the standards indicated that the data are suitable for factor analysis, Principal Components Analysis was employed for extracting the data, which allowed determination of the factors underlying the relationship between the 9 variables. The Total Variable Explained suggested that it extracts three factor accounts for 46.842 percent of the variance of relationship between variables.

There are only three factors, each having Eigen value exceeding 1 for barriers. The Eigen values for three factors were 1.533, 1.350, and 1.332 respectively as per table 11. The percentage of total variance is used as an index to determine how well the total factor solution accounts for what the variables together represent. The index for the present solution accounts for 46.842 percent of the total variations for identifying barriers to women entrepreneurs. It is a pretty good extraction as it can economize on the number of factors (from nine it has reduced to three factors) while we have lost 53.158 percent information content for factors in identifying the barriers. The percentage of variance explained by factors one to three is 17.039, 15.000 and 14.803 respectively as in table 11.

Table 11 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.533	17.039	17.039	1.533	17.039	17.039	1.512	16.799	16.799
2	1.350	15.000	32.039	1.350	15.000	32.039	1.354	15.047	31.846
3	1.332	14.803	46.842	1.332	14.803	46.842	1.350	14.996	46.842
4	0.982	10.909	57.751						
5	0.963	10.704	68.455						
6	0.874	9.716	78.171						
7	0.778	8.648	86.819						
8	0.640	7.116	93.935						
9	0.546	6.065	100.00						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Large communalities indicate that a large range of variance has been accounted for by the factor solution. Varimax related factor analytical results are shown in table 12.

Table 12 NAME OF THE FACTORS

Naming of Factors	Name of the Dimensions	Label Loading	Name of the Problems	Factor
F1	Lack of Entrepreneurship quality	X ₂	Lack of role models	0.632
		X ₄	Lack of Business Skill	0.717
		X ₆	Low need of achievement	0.677
F2	Inadequate facilities and lack of experience	X ₃	Inadequate family support	0.698
		X ₅	Absence of sufficient management experience	0.679
		X ₉	Inadequate supply of capital	0.745
F3	Lack of personal qualities and inadequate financial institutions	X ₁	Lack of educational qualification	0.690
		X ₇	Low self esteem	0.673
		X ₈	Insufficient financial Institutions	0.640

The three dimensions shown in table 11 have been discussed below:

Factor 1:

Lack of entrepreneurship quality: It is named as lack of entrepreneurship quality which includes lack of role models, lack of business skill and low need of achievement.

Factor 2:

Inadequate facilities and lack of experience: It can be called inadequate support facilities and experience covering inadequate family support, absence of management experience and insufficient supply of capital.

Factor 3:

Lack of personal qualities and inadequate support of financial institutions: It can be termed lack of personal qualities and inadequate support of financial institutions and includes lack of educational qualification, low esteem and insufficient support of financial institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study brings to light the role of women's associations in motivating women entrepreneurs and shows that measures would need to be concentrated more on provision of finance, training in administration and business skills and on the area of self esteem.

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