

Women Entrepreneurs and Their Complications in the Journey of Entrepreneurship –A Study of Assam

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ABSTRACT

Women are hard workers, adventurous, self-determined and are willing to take risks in setting up new enterprises. It is a tradition on the part of women to make efficient management of household affairs but now-a-days women are equally interested in setting up their own business to become independent and self-reliant. When an enterprise is established and controlled by a woman, it not only boosts economic growth, but also has many desirable outcomes. They have become important players in the entrepreneurial landscape. But there are some difficulties faces by an entrepreneur while starting a new activity. Major complications such as poor knowledge and skill, poor support from family, lack of decision making ability, lack of leadership quality, lack of technical qualification and lack of information or advice, competition and so on faced by an entrepreneur while establishing and running a new enterprise are considered as complications in the present study. Complications reported by the respondents were shortage of money, lack of technical knowledge on maintenance of machineries and attachments, lack of coordination among employees, availability of quality raw material and so on.

Key words: Entrepreneur; Complication; Entrepreneurship;

Entrepreneur is a catalytic agent of change, which generates employment opportunities for others. Like male entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs have many functions. They explore the prospects of starting some new enterprise, undertake risks and introduce new innovations. In India, we have a long list of women entrepreneurs. The reasons these women have entered into entrepreneurship may be different. Some might have entered to develop their family business and some of them to be financially independent. There are some women who have started enterprise to bring out their family from the financial crisis. As the reasons are varied, complications faced by the women entrepreneurs are also multi-faced. But irrespective of different complications, women entrepreneurs are efficient risk bearers, innovators and organizers. The fast moving global scenario has brought about major changes in our economy. The competition in the environment is going to limit the employment opportunities thus creating a necessity of self-employment. The self-employment and

the entrepreneurship development opportunities will have to be extended to both the male and female entrepreneurs without any gender discrimination. Thus entrepreneurship development will be a powerful tool in fighting the complication of unemployment.

The emergence of entrepreneurs in a society depends to a great extent on the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factor prevailing in the society. Besides, it is a prerequisite for the development of any nation. Growth of women entrepreneurs can be a vehicle of their socio-economic empowerment. During the last two decades, Indian women have entered the field of entrepreneurship in increasing numbers. With the emergence and growth of their businesses, they have contributed to the Indian economy and society. Women entrepreneurship, women empowerment and nation building are therefore synonymous. In Assam, very few women entrepreneurs are in big enterprises and most of them are mainly concentrated in the Small Scale Industries (SSI) sectors.

In the SSI sectors, the participation of women may be classified into three types –women as the owner of the enterprise, women as manager of the enterprise and women as employees.

Though, there has been a considerable development of women entrepreneurs in Assam in the recent years, but the field of women entrepreneurs is full of different complications like socio-personal, financial, management, marketing complications and complications of infrastructure, raw material and so on. Therefore, women entrepreneurs need to be studied separately as they are recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. Besides it has been observed that number of women entrepreneurs are high in Assam than the national average. Therefore, the growth of women entrepreneurship is very crucial for not only economic growth but also for social up-liftment of the country. It is very essential to identify different complications of women entrepreneurs in their journey of entrepreneurship. Hence, the present investigation is planned to have an insight of “Women Entrepreneurs and their Complications in the Journey of Entrepreneurship –A study of Assam” with following objectives:

- To identify different complications faced by the women entrepreneurs in establishing and managing the micro enterprises.
- To find out the relationship between complications of women entrepreneurs with the selected independent variables.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in the state of Assam. Simple random sampling method was adopted for selection of the districts and proportionate random sampling method was also adopted for selection of the respondents. Women entrepreneurs engaged in the weaving sector were selected finally for this investigation. The total number of sample was 120 which included both registered and unregistered women entrepreneurs.

In this study, “Complication” is operationally defined as different types of difficulties or obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs in establishing and running their micro enterprises. A set of complications of women entrepreneurs were identified by going through different journals, reviews and consulting with

experienced women entrepreneurs working in the related field. In the present investigation, complications were identified and grouped into two categorized as complications related to establishment and complications related to running of the enterprises. Financial complications and socio-personal complications were placed under establishment complications. On the other hand, managerial complications and technical complications were placed under complications related to running of the enterprises. The respondents were asked through close ended questions to mention their complications. It was measured in three point scale as always, sometime and never and scored as 3, 2 and 1 respectively. A structured interview schedule was constructed to the questions relevant to the study. The data was collected through personal interview method. The collected data was coded, tabulated and analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study. The statistical techniques used for analysis of data were mean scores and t- test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For easy interpretation the results and discussion were grouped in the following sub-heads:

Financial complications: The most common complication faced by respondents in establishment of an enterprise was financial complication. In the category of financial complications, seventeen attributes were identified. Among all the complications, getting loan from financial institutions was the major complication faced by women entrepreneurs to start an enterprise engaged in the area of weaving hence ranked I followed by opportunity to meet the bank officials with rank II. The findings also highlighted other complications such as time taken to process loan, high rate of interest, shortage of money to run the enterprise, demand for too many documents, lack of sufficient loan and demand for collateral security ranked as III, IV, V, VI and VII respectively by the same set of respondents who had their enterprises in weaving area. Moreover, other complications such as lack of adequate capital, shortage of money to extend the enterprise, tight repayment schedule and lack of awareness about financial assistance ranked as VIII, IX, X and XI respectively. Lack of cash flow and subsidies, discriminatory attitude by bank officials to women, middle man complications ranked as XII, XIII, XIV and XV respectively. The least

important complications reported by respondents was lack of proper guarantor hence got the lowest rank among all the financial complications in the field of weaving. Similar findings were reported by *Palaniappan (2012)*, *Siddiqui (2012)*, *Seemaprakalpa and Arora (2012)*, *Alamet al.(2012)* and *Ushakiranet al. (2012)*.

It may also be mentioned that organizational membership was found to be low among the respondents. As the review of different literature had reflected that having organizational membership improves the communication skill, leadership traits, mobility and easy earn flow. Therefore, it may be mentioned that these respondents should encourage entering in different organizations, specially SHG as government is widened up the facilities to the members of SHGs on easy terms.

Table 1. Ranking of financial complications faced by women entrepreneurs (N=120)

Weaving Problems	MS	Rank
<i>Lack of</i>		
Opportunity to meet the bank officials	1.82	II
Adequate capital	1.14	VIII
Cash flow	0.73	XII
Subsidies	0.63	XIII
Sufficient amount of loan	1.25	VI
Awareness about financial assistance	0.90	XI
Proper guarantor	0.13	XVI
<i>Demand for</i>		
Too many documents	1.25	VI
Collateral security	1.24	VII
<i>Other Problems</i>		
Getting loan from financial institutions	1.85	I
Time taken to process loan	1.66	III
High rate of interest	1.47	IV
Shortage of money to run the enterprise.	1.28	V
Shortage of money to extend the enterprise.	1.2	IX
Tight repayment schedule	1.07	X
Middle man problem	0.35	XV
Discriminatory attitude by bank officials	0.56	XIV

Socio-personal complications: Data presented in the Table 2 reflected list of complications faced by respondents while establishing their enterprises. It is evident from Table 2 that lack of exposure to training and fear of failure ranked as I and II respectively in the list of socio-personal complications in weaving. Moreover, the findings also reflect that lack of technical knowledge and appreciation from family members got

III and IV rank respectively. Apart from this, some other complications such as lack of family support, formal education ranked as V and VI. Self-confidence and lack of ownership of immovable property equally ranked VII in the list of socio-personal complications. Lack of leadership qualities, decision making ability and lack of ownership of movable property ranked as VIII, IX and X respectively. Complications got the lowest rank of XI was fear of criticism in the field of weaving. Similar findings were reported by *Sugaraj and Slave (2014)*.

Respondents selected for this investigation were facing various socio- personal complications that prevent them from becoming potential entrepreneurs. However, it is a welcome sign that majority of respondents got support from husbands in their enterprises.

Table 2. Ranking of socio-personal complications faced by women entrepreneurs (N=120)

Weaving Problems	MS	Rank
<i>Lack of</i>		
Family support	0.95	V
Appreciation from family members.	1.07	IV
Technical knowledge	1.25	III
Formal education	0.88	VI
Self Confidence	0.82	VII
Decision making ability.	0.69	IX
Leadership qualities.	0.77	VIII
Exposure to training	1.43	I
<i>Ownership of</i>		
Movable property	0.60	X
Immovable property	0.82	VII
<i>Fear of</i>		
Failure	1.28	II
Criticism	0.35	XI

Managerial complications: The data presented in Table 3 highlighted the list of complications faced by respondents while running their enterprises. The data shows that lack of proper coordination among employees ranked I followed by improper planning with II rank. Moreover, other complications faced by entrepreneurs in their path of business were lack of availability of expert man, clear cut objectives, trust among the workers and lack of division of work and ranked as III, IV, V and VI respectively. Complications got lowest rank were lack of managerial ability and skilled worker, absenteeism nature of employees and low labour turnover and ranked as VII, VIII, IX and X on the basis of the mean scores 0.88, 0.84, 0.60 and 0.30 respectively in the field of

weaving. This finding can be supported with the findings of *Ushakiran et al. (2012)*.

Table 3. Ranking of managerial complications faced by women entrepreneurs (N=120)

Weaving Problems	MS	Rank
<i>Lack of</i>		
Clear cut objectives	1.28	IV
Proper planning	1.67	II
Proper coordination	1.77	I
Division of work	1.03	VI
Availability of expert man	1.58	III
Managerial ability	0.88	VII
Trust among the workers	1.07	V
Skilled worker	0.84	VIII
<i>Other Problems</i>		
·Absenteeism nature of employees	0.60	IX
·Low labour turnover	0.30	X

The data in the same Table reveals that the most common complications faced by entrepreneurs were lack of division of work and proper coordination among workers with rank I and II. There are some other complications faced by entrepreneurs to run their enterprises were such as lack of availability of expert man, proper planning and managerial ability ranked III, IV and V respectively. Complications got VI, VII and VIII rank were lack of trust among the workers, skilled worker and clear cut objectives. Absenteeism nature of employees, low labour turnover followed next in the order of IX and X respectively in the list of complications faced by majority of the respondents in the field of food processing and preservation. Similar findings were reported by *Seemaprakalpa and Arora (2012)* and *Masood (2011)*.

Most of women entrepreneurs have low-level management skills might be because of their irregular contact with concerned departments such as DICC, IIE and MSME so they depend on workers to produce varieties products for their enterprise. Lack of coordination among workers it was quite difficult for them to smoothly run their work. Moreover, most of the employees did not work seriously due to their low interest in work which might be due to repetitive nature of work and low wage. Due to non-cooperative attitude among workers they were not stable in an enterprise. Further, skilled labour also did not prefer to stay in the same enterprise for long duration i.e. experienced staff leave the unit and joined elsewhere with higher pay which was a common complication for almost all entrepreneurs.

Technical complications: Technical complication is a barrier for respondents to run their enterprises effectively, without any technical knowledge it is very difficult for anyone to operate their enterprises. It is seen from Table 4 that lack of knowledge about repairing of machinery and maintenance of quality of products ranked I by the respondents engaged in the area of weaving followed by lack of knowledge about new machinery with rank II. Complications got lower rank were lack of knowledge about grading and technical training with ranked III and IV respectively in the enterprise of weaving. Similar findings were found by *Seemaprakalpa and Arora (2012)* and *Ushakiran et al. (2012)*.

It was mentioned that majority of respondents started their enterprises with limited investment and manpower. Without any formal training on use and maintenance of sophisticated machineries, they have to go to outsource for repairing of machineries which incur more expenditure and misuse of their valuable time that is why majority of respondents faced complication due to poor knowledge about repairing of machinery and ranked I in the list of technical problem.

It was also reported that respondents in the sampled area were not fully aware about the agencies/institutions working for entrepreneurship development. For any kind of help relating to machineries complication they had no idea to contact the technical expert. Moreover, the passive participation of entrepreneurs in technical training misguided them to get knowledge regarding latest technology. Due to lack of proper technical training respondents remain in dark about the proper use of new technology that hampered them to flourish the entrepreneurial works of weaving.

Table 4. Ranking of technical complications faced by women entrepreneurs (N=120)

Weaving Problems	MS	Rank
<i>Lack of</i>		
Knowledge about new machinery	1.55	II
Knowledge about repairing of machinery	2.17	I
Knowledge about grading	1.33	III
Knowledge of maintenance of quality products	1.03	I
Technical training	0.69	IV

Relationship between complications of women entrepreneurs with the selected independent variables: It can be observed from Table 5 that there

Table 5. Relationship between financial complications of entrepreneurs with selected independent variables.

Independent variables	r value	t value
Age	0.16	1.68*
Education	0.04	0.40*
Marital status	0.60	7.60**
Mass media exposure.	0.01	0.14*

* Significant at 5% level of significance

** Significant at 1% level of significance

Table 6. Relationship between managerial complications of entrepreneurs with selected independent variables.

Independent variable	r value	t value
Age	0.15	1.61*
Education	0.09	0.91*
Member of organization	0.70	9.70**
Mass media exposure.	0.01	0.10*

* Significant at 5% level of significance

** Significant at 1% level of significance

was no significant relationship between financial complications of entrepreneurs with age, education and mass media exposure. It shows that there was a significant relationship about financial complications with marital status at 1 per cent level of significance.

From the above findings it can be inferred that with marriage, women learn to shoulder the responsibility of their own families and social issues as well, develop maturity in managing families which on the other had teach them the tips of managing their business.

It is revealed from the Table 6 that, there was no

significant relationship between managerial complication of entrepreneurs with age, education and mass media exposure. The findings also reflect a significant relationship about managerial complication with their membership in organization at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that organizational membership provides tremendous opportunity for each entrepreneur to increase their knowledge in different aspects. So it is very necessary for every women to become a member of any organization to update their knowledge regarding entrepreneurship to minimize their managerial complication in the journey of entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION

The growth of women business owners and their needs cannot be overlooked. Moreover, they faced lots of complication while starting and running their business. The main reason of non-availability of finance to women is their inability to provide collateral as they do not have any property on their name. On the other side women have got restricted mobility freedom and have to perform dual role one at family and other at work which hinders the entrepreneurial growth. When suggestions were sought from them, all the respondents suggested that participation in different training programmes organized by promotional agency for their better performance would reduce the intensity and number of difficulties. The findings of this study have implications for entrepreneurs as well as the policymakers who work for the improvement of entrepreneurs.

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