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## **Women Entrepreneurs in Manipur**

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#### **Abstract**

*Women are actively participating in the entrepreneurial activities of the society. It helps in improving the economic conditions of the women's in the society and makes them independent. It also helps in improving the economic conditions of both the family and the society. But there are many reasons behind becoming entrepreneurs by women. The paper discusses the reasons and sources of help women entrepreneurs receive while starting the enterprise. Becoming economically independent is the main motive of becoming entrepreneurs that is found in the study. The present study was done among the women entrepreneurs of Imphal East district, Manipur.*

***Key Words: entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, women entrepreneur.***

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### **Introduction**

Women are actively participating in the entrepreneurial activities of the society nowadays. Most of the micro and small scale industries are dominated by women in India. Entrepreneurship is one of the fields that one can show his or her talent and make successful in their life through their leadership. By involving in entrepreneurship, women make themselves economically independent and they no longer need to beg money from their father, husbands or any other head of the household. Economic conditions of both the family and society are also increased. Therefore, improving economic conditions of the women bring changes in the society. But women become entrepreneurs for many reasons. And they also faced lots of problems while starting the enterprise. Even they cannot start the enterprise independently without the support of some others as most of the women are economically dependent. So, the present study was carried out among the women entrepreneurs of Imphal East district, Manipur to find out the reasons of becoming entrepreneurs by women and also try to identify the sources of help they receive while starting the enterprise.

### **Definition of Women Entrepreneurs**

Before defining women entrepreneur, it is necessary to know first what entrepreneur is. Schumpeter defined entrepreneur "as a dynamic agent of change, or the catalyst who transformed increasingly physical, natural and human resources, into corresponding production possibilities." Evens considered entrepreneurs are "persons who initiate, organise, manage and control the affairs of a business unit that combines the factors of production to supply goods and services, whether the business pertains to agriculture, industry, trade or profession." Entrepreneur and entrepreneurship are used interchangeably but the two terms are different. Entrepreneur is the person who undertakes entrepreneurial activities whereas entrepreneurship is the process of undertaking an enterprise. Kirzner defined entrepreneurs as "one who initiates equilibrating changes; bringing in to mutual

adjustment those discordant elements which result from prior market ignorance. To him, the essential feature of entrepreneurship is not so much the ability to perceive new opportunities that others have not yet noticed.” Johnson defined entrepreneurship as “it involves capturing ideas, converting them into products and, or services and then building a venture to take the product to market.” Finally, the Commission of the European Communities defined entrepreneurship “as the mindset and process to create and develop economic activity by blending risk-taking, creativity and/or innovation with sound management, within a new or an existing organization.” Therefore, entrepreneur is the person and entrepreneurship is the process.

Women entrepreneurship is defined by the Government of India, (A National level standing committee on Women Entrepreneurs constituted by the Ministry of Industries, India) “as an enterprise owned and administered by a woman and having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the share capital and has at least 50% women employees”. Kamala Singh defined women entrepreneur as “a confident, innovative and creative women capable of achieving self economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running an enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life”. So, for the present study women entrepreneurs are those who start, organise and maintain enterprise under individual ownership and employed employees for carrying out entrepreneurial activities.

## **Literature Review**

The following reviews were done for the present study:

Rani (1991), in her study “Potential Women Entrepreneurs- A Study,” found that most of the respondents came from middle class families, and they had desire to do something independent as prime motivating factor.

Shalini (1994), in her study on “Women Entrepreneurship: Profile, Problems and Prospects in India: A Review Analysis” found that major motivational factors were to be their own boss, achieving financial stability by caring additional income, to gain prestige, recognition and respect in society.

Chandralekha, Kalyani, and Lavoie (Ed. Kanungo, 1998), found in their study entitled “Microenterprise Management by Women in India,” that supplementing family income and providing good standard of living for children were the main reason for starting their business. To be innovative, to be my own boss and unemployment were the least mentioned reasons for starting a business. Hard work followed by risk-taking was the most important quality for an entrepreneur. In this study the writers mentioned that these women entrepreneurs were self- motivated, besides these some of them were motivated by their family members.

Ghosh, Gupta and Dhar (Ed. Kanungo, 1998), in “Women and Entrepreneurship in India,” found that most of the respondents were high school educated followed by undergraduates. Need for economic independence and self-fulfilment were the main reasons for starting their business. Maintenance of household and acute poverty was the main reason for becoming entrepreneurs by women found in the study done by Bhadra (Ed. Thakur, Anli Kumar and Rahman, 2009), on women entrepreneurship, entitled ‘Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Area: A Case Study of Tribal Women in Kokrajhar District.’

Sorikhaibam and Laishram (2011) in their study “Women Entrepreneurship in Manipur, North-East India” found that the prime factor starting the enterprise was the desire to be independent

followed by earning more money to afford higher standard of living, better status in the society, and some other only to utilize their skill and help in imparting knowledge to others people. Wadhera and Koreth (2012), in their study entitled “Empowering Rural Women: Micro-enterprise through Achievement Motivation” found that most of the women entrepreneurs were below 40 years of age and illiterate and most of the women became entrepreneurs in order to support their family.

From the above review of literature, it has been found that the major reason for starting enterprise and becoming entrepreneurs by women is the desire to do something independent or to be their own boss, need for economic independence and self-fulfilment, to gain prestige, recognition and respect in society, supporting family income and acute poverty, to be innovative, unemployment. Most of the women entrepreneurs are self- motivated, but their family members also motivated them.

## **Objective**

The study has the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic profile of the women entrepreneurs.
2. To find out the reasons for becoming entrepreneur.
3. To identify the sources of help they receive while starting the enterprise.

## **Methodology**

The study used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected from the books, journals and articles. Primary data was collected from the women entrepreneurs of Imphal East district, Manipur who were running an independent enterprise. The universe of the study was the women entrepreneurs of the Imphal East district. 50 women entrepreneurs were selected purposively for the study. Interview method was used to collect primary data from the respondents using interview scheduled. The study is descriptive in nature.

## **Results and Findings**

Results of the socio-economic profile of the respondents show that 42.0% and 40.0% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 30-40 years and above 40 years respectively. And only 18.0% belonged to the age group below 30 years. It shows that most of the women entrepreneurs were above 30 years of age. Half of the respondents were from semi-urban areas followed by 32.0% urban areas. 18.0% of the respondents were from rural areas. So, most of the entrepreneurs were confined in the semi-urban areas. 66.0% of the respondents were educated upto 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> class. 20.0% below 10<sup>th</sup> class and 14.0% above 12<sup>th</sup> class. Most of the respondents i.e. 78.0% of the respondents were married and only 22.0% were unmarried. 90.0% of the respondents belonged to the nuclear family whereas only 10.0% belonged to the joint family. 68.0% of the respondents had 5-8 family members, 22.0% had above 8 family members and only 10.0% had below 5 family members. 32.0% of the respondents' head of the family were in business, 30.0% in cultivation, and 16.0% in government job, and 22.0% in other jobs. 68.0% of the respondents had actual monthly family income of below Rs 15,000-30,000, 22.0% below Rs 15,000 and only 10.0% above Rs 30,000 (Table 1 to 8).

**Table -1: Age**

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 30	9	18.0
30-40	21	42.0
Above 40	20	40.0
Total	50	100.0

**Table-2: Spatial Background**

Spatial Background	Frequency	Percent
Rural	9	18.0
Semi-urban	25	50.0
Urban	16	32.0
Total	50	100.0

**Table-3: Education**

Education	Frequency	Percent
Below 10th	10	20.0
10th-12th	33	66.0
Above 12th	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0

**Table -4: Marital Status**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Unmarried	11	22.0
Married	39	78.0
Total	50	100.0

**Table-5: Types of Family**

Types of Family	Frequency	Percent
Nuclear Family	45	90.0
Joint Family	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

**Table-6: Size of Family**

Size of Family	Frequency	Percent
Below 5	5	10.0
5-8	34	68.0
Above 8	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

**Table-7: Head of Family Occupation**

Head of Family Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Government Job	8	16.0
Business	16	32.0
Cultivation	15	30.0
Others	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

**Table-8: Actual Monthly Family Income**

Actual Monthly Family Income	Frequency	Percent
Below 15,000	11	22.0
15,000-30,000	34	68.0
Above 30,000	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

Regarding reasons for becoming entrepreneurs, more than half of the respondents i.e. 52.0% were became entrepreneurs in order to be economically independent, 20.0% to give employment, 12.0% to earn livelihood, 8.0% each to support family and for other reasons such as to be a leader, to get social recognition, to utilize skills, etc. Some of the respondents explained that they did not want to ask or beg money from their husband all the time whenever she needed. They wanted to be economically independent so that they could expend or buy anything whatever and whenever they want. They also mentioned that economic independence also boosted their self confidence and helped in raising their voice while taking decisions in the family. They opined that people gave more value to the person who was economically and financially sound and independent. And some of the respondents said that there were so many unemployed youth in the society, so, they want to give employment to these people by starting an enterprise. Few of the respondents said that they started enterprise in order to earn livelihood as the financial conditions of the family were very poor. They explained that their husband's or father's income was too low and that small amount of money were not enough to maintain and manage the household necessities or requirement properly, so they

decided to start the enterprise that could help and improve the financial condition of the family. Some other respondents said that through entrepreneurship they could show their skills and talents and get social recognition of their work. They did not want to work under the supervision of any other person. They wanted to be a leader, so they started their own enterprise (Table- 9).

**Table-9: Reason for Becoming Entrepreneur**

Reason for Becoming Entrepreneur	Frequency	Percent
To Be Economically Independent	26	52.0
To Give Employment	10	20.0
To Earn Livelihood	6	12.0
To Support Family	4	8.0
Others	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

Regarding sources of help, most of the respondents i.e. 72.0% received help from family while starting the enterprise, 18.0% from both family and relatives, and only 10.0% from friends. Most of the respondents said that without the help and support of their family members they could not even start their enterprise. Their family members provided all kind of support including arranging finance, finding rented plot, buying machines, transportation, etc. while starting the enterprise. Many married respondents said that without the help of their husband, they could not maintain and organise the enterprise properly. As a woman they faced lots of problems such as dual role problems of maintaining both household and entrepreneurial work. By the help of their family members they could be able to reduce these problems to large extent (Table 10).

**Table -10: Sources of Help**

Sources of Help	Frequency	Percent
Family	36	72.0
Friends	5	10.0
Family and Relatives	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0

## Conclusion

Participation of women in entrepreneurship is necessary for the development of the society. It not only helps in improving their economic conditions, but brings economic improvement of both the family and the society. The study shows that most of the respondents were above 30 years and belonged to the semi-urban areas. Respondents were mainly educated upto 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> class but most of them were married and belonged to the nuclear family and had 5-8 family members. Most of their head of the family were in business and cultivation occupation and had actual monthly family income of Rs 15,000-30,000. Regarding reasons for becoming entrepreneurs, more than half of the

respondents became entrepreneurs in order to be economically independent. Some of the respondents became entrepreneurs to give employment to the unemployment youth. Few of the respondents also became entrepreneurs in order to earn livelihood, to support their family and for other reasons like to be leader and to get social recognitions, to utilise skills, etc. Most of the women entrepreneurs in the study received help from their family members while starting the enterprise. Therefore women entrepreneurs of the present study also have similar reason for becoming entrepreneur with other women entrepreneurs of the previous studies done by different researchers. And it also shows that family plays an important role in supporting and encouraging women to start their enterprise.

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