

Strength, Weakness, Opportunity And Threat (SWOT) Analysis Of Women Entrepreneurship With Reference To Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship among women is an important avenue through which women can overcome their subordination within the family and the society as a whole. Therefore, development of entrepreneurship among women has received special attention of the policy makers. In this direction, a special character in the seventh plan has converted the integration of women in economic development. The new industrial policy has stressed the need for conducting special EDPs for women. Besides this, today, a network of institution exists in the country to promote women entrepreneurship. The commercial banks and the financial institutions are an integral part of this network. Many organizations/institutions and associations promote and develop women entrepreneurship by providing financial assistance at concessional rates of interest and also organize industrial fairs and exhibitions. Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDPs) for women create entrepreneurial awareness among them.

Besides organizing short-term EDPs for women, continuous training in all management areas should be given to them. Separate industrial estates may be set up for women entrepreneurs to create altogether a special environment. At the national level and state level, there is a need to set up Women Industrial Development Bank in the existing banks and financial institutions, and it is advisable to start a separate cell called "Women Entrepreneurs Guidance Cell" to promote and guide the women entrepreneurs. Karnataka State Financial Corporation, a premier money lending institution in Karnataka, already makes such an attempt. More and more research is to be conducted to identify the problems, which are being faced by them. Organizing the implant visit of successful women entrepreneurs may encourage the new entrants. Besides this, to promote and develop the rural women entrepreneurship, efforts shall be made to get the active involvements of Mahila Samajs or Women's organization by launching village adoption schemes. In recent years, there has been a heightened global awareness regarding the contribution, which women can make for the process of economic development, although it is still in the growth stage, there is unquestionably a business revolution in the works across the nation and women are a major part of it. The efforts are on to uplift the social and economic status of women. The development of women as a entrepreneurs will generate multifaceted socio- economic benefits for the country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the Socio-economic background of women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu.
2. To analyze the major strengths and weaknesses of women entrepreneurs and the environmental opportunities and threats which promote entrepreneurship.
3. To suggest a framework for the promotion of women entrepreneurship in Coimbatore district.

METHODOLOGY

A Questionnaire was prepared covering the Socio-economic profile, the motivational factors, the functional areas of management, opinions of entrepreneurs on their strength, weakness, opportunities and threats and also the various problems faced by them. A SWOT analysis was made to find out the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of women entrepreneurs. For useful conclusions to be drawn, it was thought that the following criteria should be strictly adhered to for including enterprises in the sample for this study.

1. There should be equity participation by the woman entrepreneur in the capital structure of the enterprise.

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2. The woman entrepreneur should play a major role in the management of the enterprise.
3. The total investment in the enterprise should be more than ₹ 50,000/-
4. The enterprise should have employed a minimum of two employees.
5. The enterprise should have been in operation before since 199.1

When these criteria were applied, a total of about 200 women enterprises could be located. In view of constraints of time and money, a sample of 100 units constituting 50 per cent of the total lists were selected for this study. These 100 enterprises constituted of 30 entrepreneurs belonging to the manufacturing group, 36 to the trading group and the remaining 34 to the service group.

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following table 1 shows that the detailed profile of the respondents taken for the study.

Table 1 : Profile Of The Respondents

Particulars		Manufacturing		Trading		Service		Overall	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Income	Less than 50000	7	23.33	12	33.33	6	17.65	25	25.00
	50000- 100000	8	26.67	11	30.56	8	23.53	27	27.00
	100000- 200000	5	16.67	7	19.44	12	35.29	24	24.00
	200000-400000	4	13.33	3	8.33	6	17.65	13	13.00
	400000-600000	4	13.33	1	2.78	2	5.88	7	7.00
	Above 600000	2	6.67	1	2.78	2	5.88	7	7.00
Age	Below 20	--	--	2	5.56	--	--	2	2.00
	20-29	2	6.67	4	11.11	6	17.65	12	12.00
	30-39	20	66.67	21	58.33	22	64.71	63	63.00
	40-49	5	16.67	6	16.67	4	11.76	15	15.00
	50-59	3	10.00	2	5.56	2	5.88	7	7.00
	60 & Above	--	--	1	2.78	--	--	1	1.00
Educational qualification	Level than Matric.	1	3.33	7	19.44	1	2.94	9	9.00
	Matriculation	3	10.00	8	22.22	2	5.88	13	13.00
	Intermediate	5	16.67	7	19.44	4	11.76	16	16.00
	Graduate	16	53.33	12	33.33	13	38.24	41	41.00
	Post graduate	5	16.67	2	5.56	14	41.81	21	21.00
Marital Status	Unmarried	1	3.33	4	11.11	5	14.71	10	10.00
	Married	26	86.67	29	80.56	25	73.53	80	80.00
	Separated	1	3.33	--	--	2	5.88	3	3.00
	Widowed	2	6.67	3	8.33	2	5.88	7	7.00

The analysis showed that 25 per cent of the entrepreneur's families had an annual income below ₹ 50,000 while 27 per cent had an annual income between ₹ 50,000 and ₹ 1, 00,000. 24 per cent had an annual income between 1, 00,000 to 2,00,000 respectively. Only 11 per cent had an annual income above ₹ 4, 00,000. Sector wise, it was seen that 33 per cent of the respondents were having family incomes above ₹ 2, 00,000 per annum in the manufacturing sector, while only 16 per cent in trading and 23 per cent in service belonged to this group. In income below ₹ 50,000, there was 33 per cent from trading, 23 per cent from manufacturing and only 17 per cent from service sector. The Table 1 also depicted the present age of women Entrepreneurs surveyed in Coimbatore. It was seen that 63 per cent of the women Entrepreneurs were in the age group of 30 to 39 years. This was followed by 15 per cent of the women Entrepreneurs in the age group of 20 to 29 years. The % of women entrepreneurs in the age group of less than 20 years was 2 per cent and above 60 years was 1 per cent which were considered very insignificant. It is to be noted that education, entrepreneurship and development are inter-related issues. Education is known to be the best means of developing a person's resource fullness, which encompasses different dimensions of entrepreneurship. Thus formal educational is always considered important for a career. Hence, it was proposed in this study to ascertain the educational level of the women entrepreneurs. It is to be noted that education, entrepreneurship and development are inter-related. Hence, it was proposed in this study to ascertain the educational level of the women entrepreneurs. It was seen from the above

table that 90 per cent of the Entrepreneurs were married women, who had taken to Entrepreneurship despite their family responsibilities. 10 per cent of the women were unmarried and 7 per cent were widows and 3 per cent were separated.

STRENGTH OF ENTREPRENEURS

In the course of running of the enterprise, entrepreneurs would have come across or identified a lot of strengths. Hence, it was thought appropriate to ask the entrepreneurs the applicability of various strengths generally identified. These significant strengths were listed out and the women entrepreneurs were asked to indicate the extent of applicability in their case as strongly applicable, applicable, partly applicable & not applicable.

These were given weights 3, 2, 1 & 0 and the weighted score was calculated for each strength. The weighted score of each strength for all the entrepreneurs of a sector divided by the number of entrepreneurs in the sector gave the average score per entrepreneur per sector likewise; overall average score of all the sectors put together was also calculated. All the four average scores per entrepreneur per strength were tabulated in the Table 2. The higher the averages score for strength, the higher it was regarded on the list of strengths that were required for the successful running of an enterprise. The maximum average score that any strength could receive was '3' and minimum '0'.

Table 2 : Average Score Per Entrepreneur In Respect Of Strength

Items of strength	Manufacturing		Trading		Service		Overall	
	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank
Contacts	1.66	6	1.67	8	1.53	8	1.62	8
Commitment & dedication	2.47	1	2.58	1	2.73	1	2.60	1
Family support	2.13	3	2.14	3	2.00	5	2.09	3
Systematic & Planned	2.23	2	2.25	2	2.23	2	2.24	2
More Qualitative	2.23	2	1.83	6	2.18	4	2.07	4
Easy loans	0.90	9	1.25	9	1.35	9	1.18	10
Employee attitude	1.86	5	2.02	4	1.94	6	1.95	6
Grace & Charm	1.57	7	1.75	7	1.71	7	1.68	7
Intuition	1.87	4	1.97	5	2.18	3	2.01	5
Thrifty	1.30	8	2.02	4	1.32	10	1.57	9
Total	1.82		1.95		1.92		1.90	

It is observed from Table 2 that the commitment and dedication to the enterprise was ranked as the major strength required for the success of an enterprise with an overall average score of 2.60. The woman entrepreneur on returning home plays the role of the wife or the mother and caters to the needs of the family at home. She has to be very planned with her time and her life as it was doubly important to the woman at her work recognizing this, women entrepreneurs were also proud of the systematic and planned way in which they undertook their enterprises (II rank-Average score 2.24). To cope with both these duties, a woman had to have some support from her family. A small scale unit started by any member of the family tends to become a family unit, especially when it was a sole proprietary concern. Women entrepreneurs had thus accorded family support as their third important strength with an average score of 2.09 (III rank-Average score - 2.09). Women believed that products produced by them were more qualitative and better which led to their success (IV rank-Average score - 2.07). Intuition was believed to be a strength (V rank-Average score - 2.01). But they did not solely go by it and always thought of supporting it by some concrete analysis. Women entrepreneurs felt that being humane in their approach to their employees, they were able to patronize their support in the activities of the organization (VI rank Average score-1.95).

WEAKNESS OF ENTREPRENEURS

Some perceived weaknesses of women (which plague the society) were put to the women entrepreneurs and they were asked to respond as to the extent of applicability of these weaknesses to them.

Table 3 : Average Score Per Entrepreneur In Respect Of Weakness

Items of weakness	Manufacturing		Trading		Service		Overall	
	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank
Lack of in depth Knowledge	0.70	7	0.97	3	0.50	6	0.73	7
No Idea of Business	0.33	9	0.53	6	0.41	7	0.43	8
Lending names & Lack of Mobility	0.37	8	0.44	7	0.27	8	0.36	9
Second place to home	0.93	4	0.97	3	0.62	5	0.84	5
Conscious of Society's attitude	1.23	2	1.25	1	0.85	3	1.11	2
No Calculated risks	1.10	3	0.67	5	1.09	2	0.94	3
Idea generation	1.27	1	1.17	2	1.26	1	1.23	1
Less due to lack of interaction	0.80	5	0.97	3	0.85	3	0.89	4
Considerate and not firm	0.80	5	0.97	3	0.85	3	0.89	4
Cannot handle Crisis well	0.73	6	0.86	4	0.74	4	0.78	6
Total	0.83		0.89		0.73		0.82	

Women entrepreneurs expressed that their concern for future before taking any decisions (I rank-Average score-1.23). Their concern for their home was also important (II Rank-Average score-1.11). They were conscious about society's attitude towards them as the society expected them to behave in a certain fashion (III Rank-Average score-0.94) Women were confined to their homes from centuries and their presence outside the home was still regarded with skepticism. They had no public places where they could meet some other like-minded people, unless they belonged to some organization and all women's organizations were frowned upon. Hence, idea generation for a woman was less due to lack of interaction (IV Rank-Average score-0.89). Mobility is very important when running an enterprise as contacts with either the suppliers (or) customers are essential. Women not used to regular traveling might find it a hindrance and hence, would not be able to handle the business single handedly (V Rank-Average score-0.84). This might be one of the differences brought about by education and urbanization in women. Surprisingly, women, in spite of their lack of experience, felt that they could handle crisis management situations and take fast decisions along with systematic organizers (VI Rang-Average score-0.78). Women agreed that they did not have an in depth knowledge in their area (VII Rank-Average score-0.73) but they did not believe that they had no idea of business (VIII Rank-Average score-0.43).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

The various opportunities that were available to women were listed and the women entrepreneurs were asked to rank the importance of the opportunity to their entrepreneurial career by assigning whether it was of great importance. The more the score, the more importance was the opportunity on the average for the entrepreneur in her activity. Women perceived education as their major opportunity. (I Rank-Average score-2.41) Conductive atmosphere at home was also ranked high which enabled her to be educated further (II Rank-Average score-2.40). Being part of a household with liberal views on women and active help and participation of family members in the enterprise were also considered important opportunities (III Rank-Average score-2.32). Being part of a well-to-do family and being born and brought up in an urban area came next (IV + V Rank-Average score-2.24). Only after all the basic necessities at home were fulfilled for the women do the necessities and opportunities for entrepreneurship come into picture. The next opportunities that were acknowledged were product and line related. Skill in potential field that was again related to technical education or entrepreneurship development programmes were important (VI Rank-Average score-2.08). An inspiration drawn from interaction with other entrepreneurs was an opportunity which motivated them further (VII Rang-Average score-1.97). Assured captive market only became an opportunity after decision on an entrepreneurial career was decided upon (VIII Rang Average score-1.67). Entrepreneurial Development agencies were an opportunity available only to a few and also even without that opportunity, entrepreneurship might develop in the long run, but at a very slow pace (IX Rank-Average score-0.86).

Table 4: Average Score Per Entrepreneur in Respect of Each Opportunity

Items of Opportunities	Manufacturing		Trading		Service		Overall	
	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank
Urban area	2.33	3	1.86	7	2.24	3	2.13	5
Liberal views	2.33	3	2.28	3	2.35	2	2.32	3
Good education	2.60	1	1.97	5	2.71	1	2.41	1
Well to do family	2.53	2	2.03	4	2.21	4	2.24	4
Conductive atmosphere	2.60	1	2.42	2	2.21	4	2.40	2
Interaction with their entrepreneurs	1.83	6	1.94	6	2.21	4	1.97	7
Entrepreneurial developing agencies	0.80	8	0.69	10	1.09	6	0.86	9
Assured captive market	1.63	7	1.75	9	1.62	5	1.67	8
Skill in potential field	2.07	5	1.83	8	2.35	2	2.08	6
Help of family members	2.20	4	2.50	1	2.24	3	2.32	3
Total	2.90		1.93		2.11		2.04	

THREAT TO ENTREPRENEURS

The threats that were normally associated with women entrepreneurs were listed out and the women entrepreneurs were asked to indicate whether these individual threats were Great threat, Average threat, lesser threat (or) No threat to them and their enterprise.

Table 5 : Average Score Per Entrepreneur In Respect Of Each Threat

Items of Opportunities	Manufacturing		Trading		Service		Overall	
	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank
Shifting place	0.57	4	0.58	7	0.76	3	0.64	4
Giving up due to family obligation	0.50	6	0.81	2	0.68	4	0.67	3
Non acceptance of managerial abilities	0.20	10	0.14	9	0.15	10	0.16	10
Government non-acceptance	0.33	7	0.11	10	0.26	9	0.23	9
Shortage of capital	0.77	3	0.67	6	0.47	6	0.63	5
Community non acceptance of women	0.27	9	0.39	8	0.29	8	0.32	8
Obsolescence of product technology	0.57	4	0.69	5	0.47	6	0.58	6
Big unit competition	1.30	1	0.81	2	0.79	2	0.95	2
Less demand and small unit competition	1.20	2	1.14	1	1.12	1	1.15	1
Lack of zeal of enthusiasm	0.33	7	0.72	4	0.50	5	0.53	7
Total	0.83		0.89		0.73		0.82	

Women entrepreneurs' major threat, like those of any small enterprise, was competition. It was less demand due to mushrooming of similar units (I Rank-Average score-1.15) and competition from bigger industrial units with economic scale of production (II Rank-Average score-0.95). These were the threats generally faced by all entrepreneurs and they became major threats for the survival of an enterprise. Necessity of giving up the enterprise due to family obligations or requirements and necessity of shifting from the place of establishment on account of spouse's career advancement were the next important threats (III Rank + IV Rank-Average score -0.67 and 0.64). These were threats connected with being women, which were limitations to women entrepreneurship. Shortage of additional own capital to invest as required by the enterprise and threat of obsolescence of product (or) product technology were also important threats to any business as they were to women entrepreneurs (V Rank + VI Rank-Average score-0.63+0.58).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Out of 100 respondents, 27 per cent of the sample respondents were in the income group between ₹ 50,000 - 1 lakh. 25 per cent of the sample respondents were in the less than ₹ 50,000 income group. 24 per cent of the sample respondents were in the income group between ₹1 - 2 lakhs. Only 6 per cent of the sample respondents were in the above ₹ 6 lakhs group.
2. 1 per cent of the sample respondents were Graduates, 21 per cent of the sample respondents were postgraduates. Only 9 per cent of the sample respondents had less than metric qualification.
3. In strength, the entrepreneurs' commitment and dedication occupies a first rank. Systematic, planned and more qualitative -both are occupied as a sound rank and other factors like family support, employee attitude, intuition occupies the successive ranks. Early loans availability occupies at 9th rank.
4. In weakness of the entrepreneurs, no calculated risk, this occupies a first rank in manufacturing and trading. Conscious of society meeting and lack of mobility are the other major problems of entrepreneurs.
5. In opportunity concept, conducive atmosphere, good education stands tall with the first rank. Well to do family, this occupies a second rank. Liberal views and urban area both occupy third position. Assumed capital market and entrepreneurial developing agencies occupy a seventh and eighth rank position.
6. In threat concept of entrepreneur, big unit competition occupies a first rank. Less demand, small unit competition occupies a second position; shortage of capital and obsolescence of product technology occupies a third and fourth place. Community non-acceptance of women occupies a ninth rank.

SUGGESTIONS

The Government has to come forward to help women entrepreneurs up by way of creating awareness concessions, separate industrial estate, trainees and financial institutions support. This will go a long way in enhancing the women entrepreneur in our country. In an innovative way, so as to make economic surplus by engaging himself in efficiently exploiting the Environment. The programmes of various women organizations and Institutions are to be reviewed and reinforced every now and then to suit the ever-changing scenario of women entrepreneurial development activities. Some of the suggested strategies include special assistance and incentives from the government, continuous trainees in all management areas, to set up Women Industrial Development Bank (WIDB) at the national and state level etc. All these efforts are for the upliftment of the social and economic status of rural women. Adequate furnace and other facilities should be made available easily to the rural entrepreneur, and a nodal institution should be setup in rural areas to assist rural entrepreneurs to establish and run a Business unit. Banks and Financial Institutions also should help the women entrepreneur, who is well qualified and the loans should be disbursed under one to save time, energy and money. Government support and assistance should be fully implemented and should reach the needy easily and in time.

CONCLUSION

Different women had different attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The growth profitability and survival of the enterprise depended on this attitude or view towards entrepreneurship. Opportunities to women for development from their subordinate status and their individual strengths give them confidence to become entrepreneurial. Business satisfaction and perceived success of the business reduce to some extent, the level of work-home role conflict a women faces. Women set limits for themselves. Their scale of operations were to a level where they could meet the finances by themselves and also to a level at which the work- home role conflict was at levels compatible to them. To conclude, women entrepreneurs, in spite of their travails and hardships, are a satisfied and confident lot in society and a model for other women.

(Contd. On Page 51)

will ultimately determine the future of the Indian economy from the options like ugly, good or excellent. If India is able to sustain around 8-9% economic growth rate despite high levels of corruption and mismanagement in all sectors and at all levels, then imagine how prosperous India could have been had it managed its economy, corporate and social sector effectively and efficiently. The mantra is managing India. India needs effective management and quick quality decision making in all sectors and not political embedded economics/policies which are bringing more prosperity to the only privileged people who are already in the lap of luxury.

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