

Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Rural Women on Bamboo Handicrafts in Tripura, North-East India

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurship development is an essential part of human resource development. Any strategy aimed at economic development will be lop-sided without involving women who constitute half of the world population. Entrepreneurship enhances financial independence and self esteem of women which empower them socially and economically. The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. The present study has been conducted to know the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural women of Tripura. Being one of the major bamboo growing states in India, bamboo handicrafts providing self employment to many rural women and in order to understand the intricacies associated with the bamboo handicrafts, this enterprise has been selected purposively for the study. The study has been conducted in Sepahijala and West Tripura district in 2015-16. Total sample size for the present study was 80. Result shows that 58.75% rural women belong to medium entrepreneurial behaviour category followed by 25% low and 16.25% belong to high entrepreneurial behavior category. The study also indicated that investment on enterprise, annual income, credit orientation, extension participation, mass media participation and level of aspiration have positive and significant relationship with entrepreneurial behavior. The entrepreneur are solely dependent on the middlemen for marketing of their product which ultimately reflected in the marketing orientation as it is evidenced negative significant relationship in the study. Therefore, to promote women entrepreneurship and improve their socio-economic condition adequate institutional, financial support should be given by the Govt. for sustainable livelihood besides the development of infrastructure on marketing.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Entrepreneurship, Rural Women, Participation

Women are the Builder and Moulder of Nation's Destiny.

—**Rabindranath Tagore**

Women have a unique position in the society. Real development cannot take place if it bypasses women, who not only represent one half of a country's population but also the kernel around which societal revolution take place. For centuries women were not treated equal to men in many ways. They were not allowed to own property, they did not have a share in the property of their parents, they had no voting rights and they had no freedom to choose their work or job and so on. Gender

inequality has been part and parcel of an accepted male-dominated Indian society throughout history. Women were expected to be bound to the house, while men went out and worked. There is systematic discrimination against women economically, socially, politically and culturally more so, in India. These discriminations & disabilities are practiced at all levels day in & day out.

Women constitute half of humankind and 40% of the global workforce. As workers, entrepreneurs and service providers they contribute actively to social and economic development. Women entrepreneurs comprise about 10% of the total entrepreneurs

in India. Women farmers account for more than quarter of the world's population. If they have easy, timely and reliable access to productive resources as men, women can increase yield by 20% to 30%, raising the overall agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5% to 4%. This gain in production can reduce the number of hungry people in the world by about 12% to 17%, besides increasing women's income (FAO, 2011). Women-entrepreneurs have been making a so considerable impact in all most all the segments of the economy which is more than 25% of all kinds of business. Entrepreneurship is increasingly being recognized as a primary engine of economic growth. By combining existing resources with innovative ideas, entrepreneurs add value through the commercialization of new products, the creation of new jobs, and the building of new firms. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor indicates that nations with higher levels of entrepreneurial activity enjoy strong economic growth. (Henderson, 2006).

Every woman is an entrepreneur as she manages, organizes and assures responsibility for running her house. It has been increasingly realized that women possess talent which can be harnessed for the productive purposes. Since time immemorial they played a vital role directly or indirectly besides fulfilling their other responsibilities of home making and child caring. But this contribution made by them is often not adequately recognized. A very little attention was paid to involve rural women directly with development activities and enable them to make more effective and productive. Although, all women are self-employed, we have not yet recognized that the progress of society depends also on the entrepreneurial behaviour of these women. We have seldom thought women as entrepreneurs. The belief that even illiterate or semi-literate women could also play entrepreneurial role does not seem to have covered enough ground.

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 & society; these women entrepreneurs have entered many industries and sectors. Women entrepreneurs can play powerful role in confidence building and creating awareness in other women to promote self-reliance (Rana and Masood, 2011). Around 50% of India's population is women,

yet business spheres such as trade, commerce and industry is still considered a male preserve. Therefore, it is essential to exploit the potential of Indian women. Women's participation in trade, industry and commerce, requiring entrepreneurship is still poor, mainly because of the problems associated with their gender roles. Therefore, promotion of entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of women poses a challenge to the government, funding agencies and non-government organizations.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the purposeful activity of an individual or a group of associated individual undertaken to initiate, maintain, or aggrandize profit by production or distribution of economic goods and services (Cole, 1959). The term "Women Entrepreneurship" mean, an act of business ownership and business creation that empowers women economically, increases their economic strength as well as position in society. "Women Entrepreneur" is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women, who is capable of contributing values in both family and social life. Development of the society is directly related with the income Generation Capacity of its members and the key income generation activity is the entrepreneurship on farm and home which can directly affect the income of a major chunk of our population. The growth of modernization processes such as industrialization, technical change; urbanization and migration further encourage it (Sathiabama, 2010).

Socio-economic condition of Tripura

From the distant past, agriculture in various forms has been the mainstay in the lives of people in Tripura. The primary sector (Agricultural) contributes about 64% of total employment in the state and about 48% of the State Domestic Product (SDP). A variety of Horticultural/ Plantation Crops are produced in Tripura like Pineapple, Orange, Cashew nut, Jackfruit, Coconut, Tea, Rubber, Forest Plantations etc. At present both conventional settled agriculture in the plains and *Jhum* system of

cultivation in the hills are practiced. Most of farmers of Tripura are small and marginal where farming system is mostly subsistence farming system. The Industry Sector has remained undeveloped so far, despite the vast potential. The secondary sector contributes only about 5% of total employment and about 7% of the total income (SDP) of the state at present. Handicraft is emerging as a potential industry in Tripura. With nearly half of the state's forest being covered with dense forest where per capita forest availability is relatively high i.e. 0.22 ha and bamboo features in 38% of total forest area as their pure or mixed bamboo forest. So, bamboo handicrafts are playing a major role in providing self employment in rural and urban both areas where a large number of women are involved in preparation of bamboo handicrafts as their tradition. As women of Tripura are involved with bamboo based enterprises either as their tradition or as a source of income, the present study has been conducted with the objective to know the entrepreneurial behavior of rural women in Tripura.

Research Methodology

The present study has been conducted in Tripura in 2015-16. As Tripura is one of the major traditionally bamboo growing state in India and bamboo based enterprises providing self employment to the many rural women, so women entrepreneurs on bamboo handicrafts has been selected purposively. As majority of the bamboo handicraft enterprises present in Sepahijala and West Tripura District, so these two districts of Tripura has been selected purposively for the present study. Among all the bamboo handicrafts most of women were involved in production of basket and mat based utility. Other items were furniture, turning products, decorative items etc.

Ex-post facto research design was followed for the present study. Based on the list of available women SHGs on handicrafts from Tripura Bamboo Mission, 4 SHGs have been selected from each district and thus total number of SGH selected was eight from two districts. From each SHG, 10 women have been selected randomly and thus total sample size was 80 for the present study. From these two enterprises viz. basket and mat based product 40 respondents each has been selected.

Measurement of Variable: Dependent variable i.e. entrepreneurial behaviour was measured using Scale developed by Chaudhari Ratan Ranuji (2006) with suitable modification, entrepreneurial behaviour was measured in terms of nine dimensions viz. innovativeness, achievement motivation, decision making ability, risk orientation, co-coordinating ability, planning ability, information seeking behaviour, cosmopolitaness and self confidence. Based on total score of the respondent in all the component of entrepreneurial behaviour, the respondent were classified into three categories viz. low ($< \text{Mean} - \frac{1}{2} \text{SD}$), medium ($= \text{Mean} \pm \frac{1}{2} \text{SD}$), high ($> \text{mean} + \frac{1}{2} \text{SD}$). Data was collected through pre-tested interview schedule. To obtain primary data personal as well as focus group discussion method was followed.

Results and Discussion

Components of Entrepreneurial Behaviour

Table 1 shows that 47.5% respondents having medium innovativeness followed by 28.75% high and 23.75% low innovativeness. Most of the women keep themselves updated with different innovative designs of bamboo crafts like designs on jewelry box, ladies purse, table mat, file cover, door curtain, weeding card which are made of bamboo mat, decorative table lamp, flower basket, fruit basket, flower vase etc. made of bamboo cane. In fact all these products are so unique, innovative and elegant that it has more market demand in various states of India.

Around 41.25% of women having high achievement motivation followed by 31.25% medium and 27.5% having low achievement motivation as most of them want to be better and successful entrepreneur than others and also like to earn more profit. It is evident that majority of them (58.75%) having high level of decision making ability. Whatever they are producing they use appropriate technology based on their experience and sometimes on the basis of the recommendation of experts, keep the products under strict vigilance to prevent damage, quality of the products, and to maintain records to some extent related to economics of the enterprise. It is observed that 28.75% of women having high risk taking ability. They always try to make products with new designs and they do not have fear of losses of

their products as their products have always more market demand. This is because bamboo handicrafts of Tripura are always unique as other states cannot produce those products much.

Table 1: Components of Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Rural Women

Component	Frequency	Percentage
Innovativeness		
Low (<13.87)	19	23.75
Medium (13.87 to 15.33)	38	47.50
High (>15.33)	23	28.75
Achievement Motivation		
Low (<7.65)	22	27.50
Medium (7.65 to 8.71)	33	41.25
High (>8.71)	25	31.25
Decision making ability		
Low (<15.15)	31	38.75
Medium (15.15 to 16.93)	2	2.50
High (>16.93)	47	58.75
Risk taking ability		
Low (<8.2)	51	63.75
Medium(8.2 to 9.1)	6	7.50
High (>9.1)	23	28.75
Co-ordinating ability		
Low (<8.17)	14	17.50
Medium (8.17 to 9.63)	36	45.00
High (>9.63)	30	37.5
Planning ability		
Low (<4.17)	47	58.75
Medium (4.17 to 4.83)	26	32.50
High (>4.83)	7	8.75
Information seeking behaviour		
Low (<10.8)	19	23.75
Medium (10.8 to 12.42)	41	51.25
High (>12.42)	20	25.00
Cosmopolitaness		
Low (<8.6)	21	26.25
Medium (8.6 to 9.38)	43	53.75
High (>9.38)	16	20.00
Self confidence		
Low (<4.04)	41	51.25
Medium (4.04 to 5.01)	25	31.25
High (>5.01)	14	17.50

Almost 45% of women have medium co-ordinating ability followed by 37.5% have high co-ordinating ability. They prepare plan of work, estimate capital to be required to purchase raw materials, maintenance of enterprise well in advance. They develop a good network with other persons or agencies or organizations for purchasing input and selling outputs in wholesale. Most of them (47%) have low planning ability followed by 26% have medium planning ability. They prepare a calendar of operation of their activities. Mostly they do not consult with expert in advance as they have their many years of experience with the wok but they anticipate in advance to the access of market scope of the products. Most of the women (51.25%) having medium followed by 25% having high information seeking behaviour. They have regular contact with salesman, SHG, TV, Newspaper, different organization like National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) etc. Majority of the women (53.27%) have medium cosmopolitaness as they always keep contact with agencies of their own village or SHGs or Bamboo Mission, Dept. of HHS, GOT for selling their products. Through those organizations they sell their products, so they need not go much outside of their village or town. But they participate in training, exhibition, trade fair, etc. It is found that 51.25% respondents have low self confidence followed by 31.25% have medium self confidence as they are devoid of getting their due share owing to involvement of middleman.

Table 2: Overall Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Rural Women

Entrepreneurial behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
Low	20	25.00
Medium	47	58.75
High	13	16.25
Total	80	100

A critical perusal of the data furnished in Table 2 portrays that more than half of rural women (58.75%) belongs to of entrepreneurial behavior category, followed by 25.00% belongs to low and 16.25% belongs to high entrepreneurial behavior category as rural women had medium innovativeness,

achievement motivation, coordinating ability, cosmopolitaness, information seeking behavior and low risk taking ability, planning ability, self-confidence but high decision making ability. Sowmya (2009) also found that with respect to entrepreneurial behaviour majority of the women respondents belonged to medium entrepreneurial behaviour category.

Relationship between personal, socio-economic, psychological and communication variable with entrepreneurial behavior of rural women

It is observed from the Table 3 that investment on enterprise, annual income, credit orientation, extension participation, mass media participation has positive significant relationship with entrepreneurial behavior at 1% level of significant whereas level of aspiration has positive significant relationship with entrepreneurial behavior at 5% level of significant. Other variables are non-significant.

Table 3: Correlation between independent variables and Entrepreneurial behavior of rural women

Sl. No.	Independent variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
1	Age	0.109
2	Education	0.034
3	Family size	0.208
4	Investment on enterprise	0.521**
5	Annual Income	0.416**
6	Experience	0.213
7	Credit orientation	0.442**
8	Market Orientation	-0.098
9	Economic Motivation	-0.060
10	Organizational participation	-0.015
11	Extension participation	0.593**
12	Mass media participation	0.513**
13	Level of Aspiration	0.255*
14	Deferred Gratification	0.155
15	Value Orientation	-0.115

*Significant at 5% Level of Significance **Significant at 1% Level of Significance

The most significant aspect of the findings is that it clearly reflected two important behavioural aspects of enterprise one is the financial aspect which is considered to be the life and blood of an enterprise and another is the accumulation of knowledge/

information part based upon which the survival of the enterprise largely depends.

The accumulation of knowledge or information by the entrepreneur is gained from the different sources like mass media, participation in different extension programmes, training, discussion, group meeting, participation in trade fair etc. as evidenced from the findings. The impact/effect of those programmes ultimately reflected in the level of aspiration of entrepreneur to motivate them for modernizing the enterprise in the form of innovative design of the product, customer preferences/choices, product value, marketing behavior. For the development of any enterprise capital investment is one of the major concerns. The sources of capital is generally depend on the credit facility from the govt. sectors through financial institution in the form of loan, subsidy. Shashtri and Sinha (2010) also stated that women entrepreneurs need encouragement and support from their families, social circles and most importantly the government. Government should make initiations to provide financial supports to women entrepreneurs. Profitability from the enterprise depends on the production cost and the selling price. To harvest more profitability the cost of production is to be reduced to a significant extent.

Contribution of independent variables on entrepreneurial behaviour of rural women

Table 4 shows that Age, family size, annual income, credit orientation, market orientation, organizational participation, extension participation, level of aspiration, deferred gratification, value orientation are fitted together in regression model. The most contributing factors for entrepreneurial behavior are credit orientation, market orientation and extension participation. Credit orientation is positively significant with entrepreneurial behavior at 5% level of significance where as extension participation is positively significant at 1% level of significance. But Market orientation is negatively significant at 5% level of Significance. These three variables together explained almost 48% variation in the entrepreneurial behavior.

The negative value of market orientation is clearly suggestive of the fact that women entrepreneur have very little scope to sell their product of their own as per the demand of the value of the product in the market, because they have to depend totally on

the middle men who are marketing their product elsewhere.

Table 4: Multiple regression analysis of entrepreneurial behavior of rural women with independent variable

Sl. No.	Independent variables	Regression co-efficient (β)	Std. Error	't' value
1	Age	0.062	0.067	0.682
2	Family size	0.039	0.528	0.364
3	Annual Income	0.173	0.000	1.547
4	Credit orientation	0.230	0.473	2.095*
5	Market Orientation	-0.212	0.958	-2.128*
6	Organizational participation	-0.197	0.921	-1.957
7	Extension participation	0.431	0.333	3.521**
8	Level of Aspiration	-0.057	0.256	-0.511
9	Deferred Gratification	0.122	0.331	1.214
10	Value Orientation	-0.036	0.635	-0.390

*Significant at 5% Level of Significance **Significant at 1% Level of Significance

$R^2 = 0.476$

$F = 6.279$

And it is fact that the entrepreneur those who are living in far flung rural areas they have neither any opportunity nor it is feasible to sell their produce in the urban or city markets. The middlemen have that kind of network in the marketing system. As the rate of the product is fixed by the middlemen, the entrepreneur sometimes forces to sell their products accordingly.

Conclusion

Women entrepreneurship is about accepting a challenging role through creation of any business enterprise to meet personal need and become economically independent. The study shows that rural women of Tripura having medium, followed by low and high level of entrepreneurial

behaviour. Investment on enterprise, annual income, credit orientation, extension participation, mass media participation, level of aspiration are the key areas based on which the entrepreneurial behaviour largely depends. To promote women entrepreneurship Govt. should take initiative through providing financial support, impart various training programme, marketing support etc. to make their involvement more in development and improve their socio-economic condition. Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their participation in entrepreneurial activities, investments, finding a position in the market, creating a sizable employment for others and setting the trend for other women entrepreneurs in the unorganized sector. To earn more profitability from the products curbing the dominance of middle men is the prime need of the women entrepreneur for their survival and sustainability.

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