

# Role of Women Entrepreneurship in India - Women Empowerment

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## ABSTRACT

In India, status of women has changed over the years. Today we see women in all walks of life but still there are many who are far from forces of modernization. Modern Indian women illustrate transition from homemaker to sophisticated business women. An attempt has been made in this paper by author to analyze role of women entrepreneurship in the economy and their contribution to the society. This paper explores how women entrepreneur contribute to women’s empowerment and help to achieve gender equality. Entrepreneurship is male dominated activity since early ages, with the changing times, this percept has changed. Women entrepreneurship development is an important factor in economic development of India. Women’s economic empowerment is crucial to realize women’s rights and gender equality. Modern women are seen in all economic fields like trade, agriculture, industry, medical and engineering besides new sector of defense. Women empowerment raises productivity, increases economic diversification and brings income equality.

**KEYWORDS:** women empowerment, development, gender equality

## INTRODUCTION

“You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women’

-Jawaharlal Nehru

Indian constitution guarantees to all Indian women equality- Article 14, equality of opportunity- Article 16, equal pay for equal work- Article 39(d) and Article 42. The issue of women empowerment has gained in recent time’s significant importance among political thinkers, social scientists and reformers. According to McKinsey global Institute research, India could add USD 770 billion to its GDP (more than 18%) by 2025, by giving equal work opportunities to women. Women contribute largely to the economy in businesses, in farms, or unpaid work at home. In spite of rapid economic growth, 23.6% of women aged 15 and above participated in

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the labor force in 2018 compared to 78.6% of men. Indian low women labor force participation is due to increase in their education perusal at higher levels, availability of flexible work schedule and proximity of workplace. Young women prefer non-traditional jobs like communications.

In India, the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) has been collecting date on employment and unemployment from 2017 onwards the Periodic Labour Force Survey was launched by NSSO. According Periodic Labour Force Survey report, the trend has worsened for rural women since 2011-12 with Female Labour Force Participation rate came down to 25% in 2017-18 whereas for urban women rate is constant at 20%

**Table 1- distribution of labour in employment, 2017-18**

Category	Rural		Urban	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Own-account worker and employer	48.0	19.0	34.9	23.7
Helper in household enterprise	9.8	38.7	4.3	11.0
All self-employed	57.8	57.7	39.2	34.7
Regular wage salaried	14.0	10.5	45.7	52.1
Casual labour	28.2	31.8	15.1	13.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source- PLFS annual report, MoSPI, GOI, 2019

**Table 2- industrial distribution of women workers, 2017-18**

Category	Rural	Urban
Agriculture	73.2	9.1
Mining and quarrying	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	8.1	25.2
Electricity, water, etc.	0.0	0.6
Constructions	5.3	4.1
Trade, hotel and restaurant	4.0	13.0
Transport, storage & communications	0.3	3.3
Other services	8.9	44.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Source\_ PLFS report, MoSPI, 2019

**Objective-** The study focuses on development of women entrepreneurs through small and medium enterprises. This article highlights the factors influencing the women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the society.

**Methodology-** This is exploratory paper and study is based on secondary data which is collected from the published reports of RBI, newspapers, journals, websites etc.

### 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development goals (related to gender equity)

On 25 September 2015, United Nations general Assembly adopted 2030 agenda for sustainable Development for international development. Agenda aimed at goal of gender equality and empowerment for women and girls.

SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere- Gender inequality in the world makes and keeps women poor, women are deprived of basic rights and opportunities for well-being. Women have right to equal access to opportunities to eliminate or end poverty.

SDG 5-Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls- women's equality and women empowerment is one of the 17 sustainable Development Goals. Gender equality 2030 calls for immediate action to eliminate causes of discrimination in all walks of life. Today, in world priority is given for elimination of gender-based violence

### Gender Development Index (GDI)

GDI was introduced in Human Development report, 1995 measures achievements in the same dimensions using same indicators as HDI. GDI captures inequalities in achievement between women and men. All the countries are categorized into five groups based on the absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. It takes into account of disparity between women and men in basic dimensions of human development. GDI indicates how much women are lagging behind their male counterparts and how much improvement is required in each dimension. It is also easy tool for policy makers to design policy to address the gender gaps. The dimensions are:

1. health-measured by female and male life expectancy at birth
2. Knowledge-measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and female and male means years of schooling for adults aged 25 years or older; and
3. Standard of living-measured by female and male estimated earned income.

India's ranking is 139 compared to HDI which is 134 for the corresponding GDI which is based on the same dimensions that of HDI including penalty for any adverse differential for gender development inequality. India's score in GDI is 0.829.

### Gender inequality index (GII)

Girls and women have still not gained gender equity in India. They face discrimination in health, education, political representation, labour market. They lack freedom of choice. Female share of employment in senior and middle management is 13.0%. Female share of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes at tertiary level is 27.7%. India's GII score is 0.501. Share of seats in parliament held by women is 11.7%. India ranks at a low 122 out of 162 countries on GII, 2018. GII measures inequalities in basic three aspects of human development

1. Reproductive health-measured by maternal mortality ration and adolescent birth rates
2. empowerment-measured by ratio of parliamentary seats occupied by females and ratio of adult females and males aged 25 years and older with secondary education; and
3. Economic status-measured by labour market participation

### Gender Gap Index

World Economic forum has recently released Gender Gap Index, 2019 where in India has slipped to 112 rank. India has moved downwards in terms of gender equality amidst increasing disparity in terms of women's' participation in 2018, India was on 108<sup>th</sup> rank on Gender Gap Report. The report also highlights that workplace ineequality will not be reduced until 2276 as per the present scenario. The index is calculated between women and men in four key areas- healths, education economy, politics. It measures womens' disadvantage compared to men and is not a measure of equality of the gender gap. In India gender gap is larger comparatively to 153 countries. India ranks high on the political empowerment sub-index due to leadership headed by women for 20 years in the past 50 years. As per the report, 14.4% women make up in parliament and India ranks 122 globally and 23% in cabinet wherein India ranks 69.

### Rural women entrepreneur

Few women entrepreneur have made crucial contribution to rural development. They are

1. Ela Bhatt, founder of Self-employed women's association (SEWA) in 1972. Due to her relentless works, rural women in Bihar earn their living by renting solar bulbs

- to other families. Ela Bhatt has been awarded Padmashri, Ramon Magsaysay award and Padmabhushan.
- Thinlas Chorol, founder of Ladakhi Women's Travel Company in 2009 to bring women into field of travel and mountaineering and promote ecotourism in Ladakh.
  - Annie George, founder of BEDROC, organization that helps build disaster-resilient, sustainable coastal communities.
  - Chetna Gala Sinha, founder of Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank, cooperative bank run by women for women in 2007 in collaboration with HSBS Indian arm. Banks aims at providing vocational training and financial training to young women to become entrepreneurs.
  - Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad, women's cooperative which is manufacturer of many consumer goods. Lijjat was founded by seven Gujarati housewives from Mumbai-Jaswantiben Jamnadas Popat, Parvatiben Ramdas thodani, Ujamben Narandas Kunadalia, banuben N. Tanna, Laguben Amritlar Gokani, Jayaben V. Vithalani and other women.

### Status of women entrepreneurs in India

Indian society is one among most entrepreneurial in the world. In post independent era, Kalpana Saroj of Kamani industries is probably the first female corporate entrepreneurs. She started working at 16 in garment factory to support her family. Ministry of statistics and Programme implementation in its Sixth Economic Census by the National Sample Survey Organization presented highlights of status of women entrepreneurs in India in its survey

- Women constitute only 13.76% of the total entrepreneurs-8.05 million of 58.5 million entrepreneurs.
- Women entrepreneurship provide employment to 13.45 million.
- 2.76 million Women entrepreneurs work in agriculture sector (livestock dominant activity) and 5.29 million women entrepreneurs work in non-agriculture sectors (manufacturing and retails trade dominates)
- About 58% women entrepreneurs started their business between 2-30 years of age and 25% of women started even before age of 25.
- Nearly 73% women entrepreneurs report revenue of Rs10 lakhs in a year.
- Nearly 35% women entrepreneurs are co-founder.

### Indian women entrepreneur in Forbes list of 100 most powerful women

In past few years many women entrepreneurs have emerged in India. Forbes Asia's power business women list also features four Indian women

- Falguni Nayar, former Managing director of Kotak Mahindra capital Company and was awarded for the top woman achiever in the field of banking. Nykaa.com is her beauty retailer started in 2012.
- Upasana Taku launched Mobikwik in 2009 with cofounder Bipin Preet Singh. Mobikwik offers digital wallet solution and is a payment gateway for Uber and Zomato clients. Today, it is India's largest Fintech player.
- Anita Dongre, an ethical vegan, environmentalist and revivalist of local craft is co-founder and CEO of House of Anita Dongre. The House includes labels ranging from bridal couture to sustainable ready-to-wear. She is one of the India's leading fashion designers whose clientele

includes Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton and Canadian first lady Sophie Gregoire Trudeau. Anita Dongre foundation provides many rural women employment opportunities and skill training.

- 4.Smita Jatia, Managing director of master franchisee Hardcastle restaurants Pvt Ltd (HRPL), which operated McDonald's branded restaurants in west and south India. It's a unit of her family's business Westlife development.

Few other powerful women entrepreneurs are:

- Roshini Nadar Malhotra, CEO and Executive director, HCL enterprise is ranked 54<sup>th</sup> on the list. She is the daughter of HCL's founder Shiv Nadar who took over the reins of family business. She also does philanthropic work for Shiv Nadar Foundation.
- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, first generation entrepreneur, head of leading biotechnology enterprise of India-Biocon is ranked 65<sup>th</sup> in the list. She has been voted twice by Forbes as one of the most powerful women in the world.
- Renuka Jagtani, Chairman and CEO of Landmark group is ranked 96<sup>th</sup> in the list. She has led the company for over two decades in corporate strategy and its expansion into new markets.

In Forbes list 2019, 65 Indians made to prestigious list which recognizes high achievers under the age 30. Among these 65 Indians, Ankita Bose is the first Indian female owner of Unicorn. She became the first female owner of USD 1 billion company named Zilingo, online e-commerce market place started in 2015.

### Top 10 women entrepreneurs of India

- Vandana Luthra-founder of VLCC-"I'm not VLCC, I am a part of the 6000 professionals who run it".
- Suchi Mukherjee, founder and CEO of Limeroad-"you need to start off with basics and devise a plan to deal with teething issues"
- Richa Kar, co-founder of Zivame-"If you are strong, focused and passionate about what you want to do, everything falls into place".
- Falguni Nayar, founder & CEO of Nykaa-"I am building Nykaa to have life of its own".
- Vani Kola, founder & managing director of Kalaari capital-"Having a great work culture is not an option-it is a necessity"
- Pranshu Patni, co-founder of culture alley (Hello Englis)-"Women need to very show the investors that they're committed to their plan and need to let the merchandise represent itself"
- Shradha Sharma, founder & CEO of YourStory-"When you know you have to fend for yourself every inch of the way, it gives a different kind of grit and tenacity"
- Upasana Taku, co-founder of Mobikwik-"kick up a storm or die trying"
- Shahnaz Hussian, CEO of Shahnaz Herbals-"You don't have to be born as beautiful, you have to acquire it"
- Sairee Chahal, founder & CEO of SHEROES-"I was faced with questions like can you do it? Gladly, things are changing and now, they can see me doing it"

### Reasons for women to become entrepreneurs in India

- Employment generation
- Freedom to take their own decision and self-dependent.

- Creative and innovative thinking
- Need to support family and provide additional income.
- Increasing educational qualification, self-identity and social status
- Increasing socio-economic awareness

### Conclusion

India, Male-dominated society, a woman is assumed to be socially and economically dependent of male members. Today, women are willing to take up any acidity and have proved that they are no less in their contribution to growth of the economy. Women entrepreneurs must be mould with competent entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet changing global trends in market and sustain market competition. To achieve the goals of sustainable development, women empowerment is crucial. Promoting women entrepreneurs in India is assured way to achieve rapid economic growth. Women entrepreneurs face challenges as they play dual role as their personal life and as an entrepreneurs. Many women entrepreneurs work on empowering women and solving their specific issues. They are quite dynamic leaders

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