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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP VIS-À-VIS NAGA CULTURE

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Introduction

Indian Government defines women entrepreneurs as “enterprises owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of employment generated in the enterprise to women” (S.S.Khanka, 2018).

In an age-old practiced of Naga Culture, women were confined in agriculture task, weave of traditional attire, barter of goods, childbearing, child-rearing, respect and honor husband and household works. Women entrepreneurs confront negative attitude from the society, which halt in entrepreneurship progress since the society makes incapable to recognize women in entrepreneurship. In addition, in the rural areas of Nagaland, there is lack of education and useful opportunities for women. Historically, Entrepreneurship was gender stereotyped and was a male-dominated pursuit but today women are risk-takers in business and play a dual role of handling home and business. Contribution in the field of women entrepreneurship not only helps in socio-economic expansion of one state but also boosts in empowering women. Empowerment refers decision-making process. Empowerment of women through entrepreneurship can connect ideas from different aspect and convert positive impact on “Gross Domestic product, per-capita income, profit earning rate, employment, monetary and fiscal policy of the government. Women entrepreneurs whose enterprise existed in Nagaland are mostly urban-based. Most women entrepreneurs find it difficult to market their product successfully, Women-owned enterprises face problems because agencies are hesitant in lending loan or subsidies to women enterprises due to risk of profit and repayment to agencies and high operational costs occur in enterprises. The extend of assistance announced to women entrepreneur not only empower women but also boost liquidity and strengthen their competitive spirit, however, the procedures to avail these are lengthy and time consuming.

According to Government of Nagaland, census 2011, Nagaland has a literacy rate of 79.55 percent but wasn't equipped professionally in entrepreneurship, with that reason, find it impossible for creating an enterprise as well as further diversification. Like any other profession, entrepreneurship can be developed and fostered in a well-designed courses and workshops that cater to the need and offer avenues and means to battle the issue of economic problems and unemployment in the Naga society. With the advancement of science and technology, women are involved in video bloggers; social, agricultural and tourism entrepreneur, educators, caterers, and cultural fusion so as to be economically independent and provide work to womenfolk and young people. Today somehow, women have taken a step further and transformed themselves into successful entrepreneurs by forming Self Help Groups (SHGs), where together they convert all goods grown into marketable goods.

This study has been emphasized on positive impact about women entrepreneurs in Naga society.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are;

1. To study the impact on women opportunity to enjoy autonomy
2. To analyze women opportunity in contribution to society
3. To study problems of women entrepreneur

Research Methodology

Area of Study: The study was conducted in a commercial district of Nagaland called Dimapur with an area of 927 sq.km. The State of Nagaland is inhabited by people of Mongoloid race. The Nagas living in Dimapur comprises of 16 major Naga tribe having their own distinctive language and culture. Majority of people in the state depend on agriculture for their livelihood where 71.14 percent of the population lives in rural areas (Census, 2011). The district is commercial on account of; trading, manufacturing, agricultural, technical and non-technical entrepreneur existed to carry out research study.

Data collection: Data collection includes primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are direct verbal interview with 86 women entrepreneurs from varied enterprises such as distributors, whole sellers, and retailer's survey from Niuland block, Chumukedima block and Dimapur City. The secondary sources were collected from government publications, records and publication of entrepreneur, publication of financial institution, journal and studies conducted by researcher.



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Dimensions of empowering Naga women

- A. Social entrepreneur:** “Social entrepreneur is one who comes up with new solutions to daunting social problems and then implements them on a large-scale that benefits humanity”(S.S.Khanka, 2018). In Naga culture context, social entrepreneur acts as changing agents. Social entrepreneurship was an age-old carry out in Nagaland through Morung. “Morung” was a key educational and cultural centre for Nagas. It’s like schooling under the elder member supervision in the village. Naga women were tutored on social etiquettes, weaving, gardening and other home-duties. Historically, the best traditions, tales, dances and customs of the hospitable Naga women are revolutionizing economy for sustainable solution of the society. Women are ever ready to enlighten others about the culture heritage, both tangible and intangible, which they so honorably uphold.
- B. Manufacturing entrepreneur:** Manufacturing entrepreneur is the process of converting raw materials into finished products. The women folk wove in passionate colors tribal shawl for men and the mekhala or the hand-woven traditional skirt for women. Women explored the resources and then used to manufacture fined products such as necklaces, ear-rings, armlets, head bands, elaborate head gears, spears, shields, basket and waist bands to satisfy the customer needs. In a modern era, women are marketing their ventures products of catering and meat processing unit which are related to home-based enterprise in accelerating the process of economic development.
- C. Trading entrepreneur:** Trading entrepreneur is a person who sells finished goods. They are one who buy finished products from Manufacturers group and then sell goods to consumers directly or through retailer, which in turn serve as the middlemen between the manufacturers and customers. Most women pursued trading business as they felt the need to be economically independent or supplement family incomes and in certain cases, women were forced to shoulder responsibility in earning for their family livelihood. Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) further encouraged women entrepreneur because it assisted women’s to be autonomy in finance. Low-economic group of women are confined in vegetable vendors, garments as well as handicrafts sellers for convenience in running a small business.
- D. Agricultural entrepreneur:** The agricultural entrepreneurs are those who undertake agriculture pursuits for sustaining livelihood. Often cultivation and later selling of produced agriculture product becomes a necessity for most Naga women for financial independence. With an increase order of organic product in bazaar, the farmer community can be empowered and can uplift the source of revenue as 70 % of Nagaland resident are occupied in cultivation (Nagaland statistical handbook, 2020). Today, Naga women formed a Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in different block and transformed cultivator into entrepreneur, who jointly work tirelessly in fields and later go local market to trade the cultivated harvest. Creating SHG and running a business is not as simple as it may seem though it enables women to stand on their own feet. In order to assist women SHGs in overcoming the various challenges and socio-economic development, various initiatives was introduced by government agencies.
- E. Technological entrepreneur:** With progress of science and technology, it enabled Naga women to work at home and generate income or started home-based business, making easier to balance business careers along with family life. Naga women utilize ideas in addition to creative methods of running businesses with internet help to pursue a career for self-fulfillment. They also use substitute and copied methods of marketing and distribution strategies to survive their business and prosper in the competitive environment.

Challenges of Naga women entrepreneur

Though women in the northeastern state of Nagaland have traditionally enjoyed a high social position, within their family and community, a strong prevalence of patriarchy has ensured that they are not just kept aside from decision-making of the family or community but are also barred from claiming any ancestral assets like movable and immovable property.

Women possess business are faced with barrier in availing fund from government agencies as they are unwilling in lending fund on account of business risk involved run by them. Many women couldn’t start business and many couldn’t sustain the same due to unavailability in finance since their family refuse to provide opportunities. Furthermore, women aren’t in position to market their goods successfully because local consumer usually tend to think that goods which come from outside are usually consider a better quality than ones produced in local area. One of the major problems of women entrepreneurship is electricity which need to be addressed at the earliest as all business operate with electricity directly or indirectly. Another aspect is over taxation from different insurgency faction allow women entrepreneur to shut down their enterprise.



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Finding

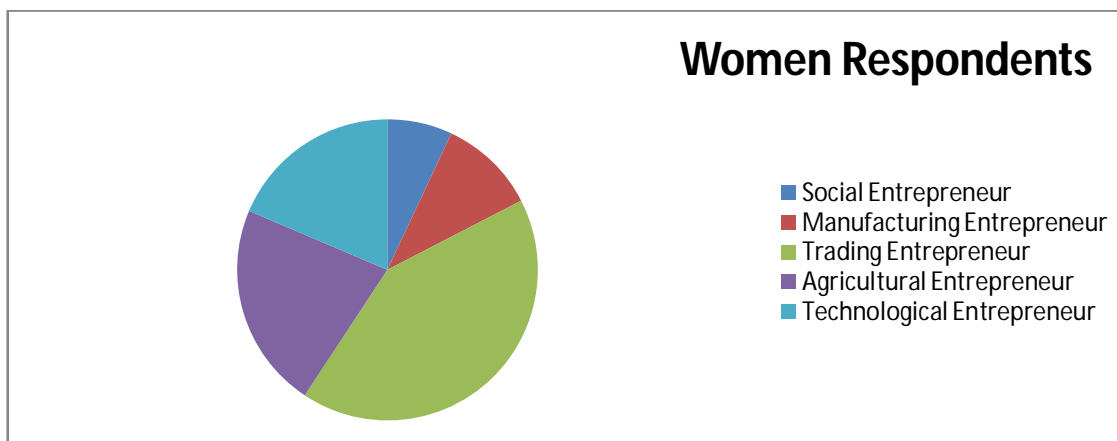


Fig-1: Dimensions of Naga women entrepreneur

1. Many women in business belong to low-income groups in the society and the economic environments compel them to be an entrepreneur.
2. In Dimapur, out of 86 women samples collected, 6.97% are social entrepreneur, 10.47% are manufacturing entrepreneur, 41.87% trading entrepreneur, 22.09% are agricultural entrepreneur and 18.60% are technological entrepreneur.
3. Uneducated women and women from low-income groups face difficulties to get access to financial support for setting up the enterprises
4. Entrepreneurship has usually been a male dominated and which halt in growth of women entrepreneur
5. Gender stereotyped classification is often encountered at every stage of business development.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship plays a key role in economy of the region. Women entrepreneur need to obtained ideas from various aspects through Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDPs).Moreover, business ideas should take seriously in converting them into business profit for fruitful venture. Women entrepreneur should be creative and innovative to satisfy customer needs as well as create jobs comprises the core of economic wellbeing of the society. The dimensions background of women empowerment can be through social entrepreneur, manufacturing entrepreneur, trading entrepreneur, agricultural entrepreneur, and technological entrepreneur. The major hindrance to women business is due to lack of proper access to finance and banks don't introduce fast tracks loans but at the same time there's also exist of opportunity available from different agencies to become an entrepreneur. Family members should support women entrepreneur to avoid the burden in businesses. The society should change the mindset of gender stereotyped. The state government has to initiate skills development for women only then equilibrium in entrepreneurship field can produce between men and women.

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