

# IMPACT OF ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ON THEIR BUSINESS

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## ABSTRACT

*Women in India are still underrepresented in the area of entrepreneurship. Though the number has increased over the years but is still far behind the number of women entrepreneurs in the developed nations. Researchers in the area of entrepreneurship have given various reasons for this underrepresentation right from family constraint, lack of education to lack of economic support. This paper tries to study the attitude and perceptions of women entrepreneurs and tries to find out its impact on their business. The paper is an empirical study based on 100 women entrepreneurs in the city of Delhi. Some of the findings of the study are that women consider their career secondary to that of their husband's. They purposely like to keep their businesses small because it allows them to keep a centralized control and work in an informal set up. They give more importance to character than professional qualification in their employees. For them non-monetary rewards are more satisfying than monetary rewards. They have a high self esteem and are confident about their managerial and business abilities.*

## INTRODUCTION

Women in India are still underrepresented in the area of entrepreneurship. Though the number has increased over the years but is still far behind the number of women entrepreneurs in the developed nations. Researchers in the area of entrepreneurship have given various reasons for this underrepresentation right from family constraint, lack of education to lack of economic support. It is generally believed that a right kind of attitude is required to accomplish any task. While a positive attitude can bring success to a person, a negative one can bring failures. That holds true even for women entrepreneurs. This paper tries to study the

attitude and perceptions of women entrepreneurs and tries to find out its impact on their business.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on women entrepreneurs have shown that the subjective perception about the likelihood of failure is highly and significantly correlated to a woman's decision to start a new business (Kollinger et al., 2004). Women who take up entrepreneurship due to financial needs are more insecure and hence fear failure in their business venture is higher amongst them (GEM, 2007).

It has also been found that there exists a strong positive correlation between the presence of role models and the emergence of entrepreneurs

(Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Deaux and Lafrance, 1998). Women who take up entrepreneurship are generally inspired to take it up as a career due to the positive influence of their role models.

Women hold low expectancies to values like economic rewards (Deepak, 1993). They look for non economic rewards from their business, such as recognition (a rise in status), confidence building, satisfaction, independence (Vinze 1987) and good social relationship (Deepak, 1993).

Women entrepreneurs' careers are considered secondary to those of their husbands (Brannon, 1999), because it is a male member of the family who is considered the bread winner of the family and not a female member (Singh, 1992). Their duties are given priority as a wife, a mother, a daughter and a daughter-in-law in society. Duties as owners of business come last in order of priority (Rao and Rao, 1985).

From the literature discussed above several hypotheses have been generated and a list of these hypotheses is mentioned below:

**H1:** For women entrepreneurs their careers are secondary to the careers of their husbands

**H2:** Women who take up entrepreneurship mostly have role models.

**H3:** Fear of failure is mostly found in necessity driven women entrepreneurs

**H4:** Women entrepreneurs hold high expectancies from non economic rewards.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sampling and data collection*

The study has been conducted on hundred women entrepreneurs in Delhi and its adjoining areas (NCR-National Capital Region) who were chosen on the basis of random sampling. They were selected at random from the following sources:

- FLO (FICCI Ladies Organization) Directory

- References of women contacted from the FLO Directory
- References of women entrepreneurs other than contacted from the FLO Directory
- References of friends and colleagues

A questionnaire was prepared and the respondents (women entrepreneurs) were made to fill them. To have an authentic and first hand reliable data each respondent was personally contacted and interviewed. In all 350 women entrepreneurs were contacted of which only 100 gave time and personally gave their inputs. In the sample there were 15 different categories of businesses run by the respondents and according to the nature of business they were classified as: Manufacturing, Trade and Service. Majority of the respondents were in the service sector (54%) followed by manufacturing (31%) and trade (15%).

## DATA ANALYSIS

The filled up questionnaires were then coded and tabulated using the SPSS package. Descriptive analysis of the variables under study was done using the frequencies, figures and tables. Statistical analysis of the variables under study was done using the non parametric test (Chi square).

### *Perceptions and Attitudes*

In this paper we studied the attitudes and perceptions of women entrepreneurs. The perceptions and attitudes were assessed on the basis of the feedback given by the respondents on some of the questions put to them. The questions with the feedback are given below:

### *Rating of Career of Self and Husband*

The questions asked were the following:

- Q1.** How do you rate your career to your husband's career?
- Q2.** If one of you has to sacrifice his or her career then who would it be?

Table 1 shows that 49% of the respondents considered their career secondary to their husband's career, 10% of the respondents considered their husband's career secondary to theirs, 30% considered both their and their husband's career of equal importance. Eleven per cent respondents did

not respond to this question as they were unmarried, divorcee or single. The chi square value 40.88 was statistically significant at five percent level of significance. This shows that most of the women entrepreneurs considered their career secondary to their husbands.

**Table 1: Rating of Career of Self and Husband (Q1)**

How do you rate your career to your husband's career?	
Options	Number of Entrepreneurs
His career is secondary to yours	10
Your career is secondary to your husband's	49
Both of your career are of equal importance	30
Not applicable	11
Total	100
Chi square=40.88, df=3, significant at .05 level	

Table 2 shows that 68% of the respondents were ready to sacrifice their career to protect their husband's career, 21% said that their husbands would sacrifice their career and 11% were not

applicable to respond to this question. The chi square value 55.58 was statistically significant at five percent level of significance.

**Table 2: Rating of Career of Self and Husband (Q2)**

If one of you has to sacrifice his or her career then who would it be?	
Options	Number of Entrepreneurs
You	68
Your husband	21
Not applicable	11
Total	100
Chi square=55.58, df=2, significant at .05 level	

It is quite obvious from both Table 1 and 2 that women entrepreneurs gave first priority to the careers of their husbands and not to their own career. Majority of them (68%) were ready to sacrifice their career for their husbands' career and 49% considered their career secondary to that of their husbands. The chi square values 55.58 and 40.88 respectively was statistically significant at five percent level of significance. *Hence the hypothesis (H1) that for women entrepreneurs their career is secondary to the career of their husbands holds true.*

## SELF PERCEPTION ON BUSINESS PARAMETERS

The respondents were asked to assess themselves by rating themselves on eleven business parameters. They were asked to choose any one of the following options: Excellent, Very Good, Good, O.K. and Poor.

The eleven business parameters were the following:

- a Management of Funds
- b Raising of funds

- c Sales & marketing
- d Managing & Coordinating employees
- e Networking & Interpersonal relations
- f Manufacturing standardized products
- g Rendering good quality service
- h Acquiring technical know how
- i Up gradation of technology in business
- j Customer care service
- k Accounting and arithmetic

good for raising of funds, good for sales & marketing, very good for managing & coordinating employees, good for networking & interpersonal relations, very good for manufacturing standardized products, excellent in rendering good quality service, very good in acquiring technical knowhow, very good in up gradation of technology in business, good in customer care service and good in accounting and arithmetic. Out of the eleven areas the respondents on an average considered themselves good in six areas, very good in four areas and excellent in one area. Hence they seemed quite confident about their managerial abilities.

Table 3 shows that on an average the respondents gave a rating of good for management of funds,

**Table 3: Rating of Self on Business Parameters**

Options	Number of Entrepreneurs										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	g	H	I	j	k
Excellent	15	12	27	30	23	18	<b>50</b>	12	15	16	9
Very Good	15	13	14	<b>32</b>	31	<b>38</b>	41	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	34	27
Good	<b>36</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29</b>	25	<b>38</b>	35	8	30	31	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>
O.K	23	25	28	12	8	9	1	16	18	10	27
Poor	11	6	2	1	0	0	0	4	2	0	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

## SELF PERCEPTION ON BUSINESS STRATEGIES

The respondents were given seven sets comprising of two statements each and they were asked to choose any one of them. The sets with the respective statements are given below:

### Set 1

Statement 1 You put great deal of your effort in acquiring business information and make use of that information in making business decisions.

Statement 2 You rely on personal intuition and judgment for

making business decisions.

As shown in Table 4 majority of the respondents (61%) chose statement 1. This shows that women entrepreneurs nowadays do not like to take decisions on impulse.

### Set 2

Statement 1 You recruit trustworthy, dependable and obedient employees.

Statement 2 You recruit qualified and trained professionals.

As shown in Table 4 majority (67%) of them chose statement 1. This shows that women give more preference to values like honesty and loyalty than qualifications when it comes to hiring their employees.

**Set 3**

Statement 1 You like to do everything yourself with the help of assistants in an informal manner.

Statement 2 You like to formalize systems and appoint professionals for working.

Table 4 shows that majority (81%) of the respondents chose statement 1. Women prefer to work in an informal set up than a more structured and formal set up.

**Set 4**

Statement 1 You maintain close supervision over employees.

Statement 2 You delegate, decentralize and assign responsibilities.

Table 4 shows that majority (56%) of the respondents chose option Statement 1. Women in the sample prefer to work in a centralized set up. They like to closely supervise all the work and every employee. This again is possible in a small firm. With a large size firm decentralization and delegation becomes inevitable.

**Set 5**

Statement 1 You never compromise on business ethics.

Statement 2 You believe that ends justify the means.

Table 4 shows that the majority (78%) of the respondents chose statement 1. This shows that women do not compromise values and ethics even if it means losses to them.

**Set 6**

Statement 1 You develop a long-term vision/perspective for the business

Statement 2 You like to live your business day by day and tackle issues as and when they come.

Table 4 shows that majority (53%) of the respondents chose statement 2. This again reflects that women like to keep their business small because with large businesses one cannot afford to live ones business day by day without having any set deadlines, priorities or goals. A long term vision and perspective is a must for a large firm.

**Set 7**

Statement 1 You like to be a pioneer in the choice of products or substantially improve upon existing products.

Statement 2 You choose only tried and tested products.

Table 4 shows that majority (72%) of the respondents chose statement 1. This shows that women in the sample are quite innovative and are ready to take risk.

**Table 41: Self perception on Business Strategies**

Set	Number of Entrepreneurs		
	Statement a	Statement b	Total
1	39	61	100
2	67	33	100
3	81	19	100
4	56	44	100
5	78	22	100
6	47	53	100
7	72	28	100

It has been found that women mostly prefer to work in an informal set up, work in a centralized set up, like to closely supervise all the work and every employee and live business day by day without setting any deadlines, priorities or goals for the business. All this is possible only in small size firms. Once the business expands it cannot operate in an informal structure. A more formal structure is needed to make the business run smoothly. Decentralization and delegation becomes inevitable. And lastly with expansion a long term vision and perspective for business is needed. The business cannot afford to live day by day without having any set deadlines, priorities or goals. A long term vision and perspective is needed. It is quite clear from the sample that women generally do not have the kind of attitude that is required to operate a large size firm. *Hence it is quite evident that women purposely do not like to expand their business even if they are capable of doing it.*

## LOCUS OF CONTROL

The locus of control is of two types: internal and external. According to Rotter (1966) an entrepreneur is one who has an internal locus of control.

To check the locus of the respondents were asked as to what extent their business decisions were influenced by their husbands, employees and astrologers.

Table 5 shows that majority (62%) of the respondents said that their decisions were never influenced by the husbands, 42% said that their decisions are rarely influenced by their employee and 73% said that their decisions were never influenced by an astrologer. This clearly shows that women entrepreneurs have internal locus of control.

**Table 5: Locus of Control**

Options	Number of Entrepreneurs		
	Husband	Employee	Astrologer
Largely	29	20	16
Rarely	09	<b>42</b>	11
Never	<b>62</b>	38	<b>73</b>
Total	100	100	100

## ROLE MODEL

The respondents were asked the question if they have any role models and they were to choose any one out of the options given. Table 6 shows that majority of the respondents (53%) had no role models. Twenty five respondents (25%) had entrepreneurs as their role models, seventeen

respondents (17%) had their parents as their role models, one respondent had her husband as her role model and four respondents (4%) had others as their role models. The chi square value of 87 is significant at five percent level of significance. As the majority of the respondents (53%) did not have a role model hence *the hypothesis that women who take up entrepreneurship mostly have role models does not hold true.*

**Table 6: Role Models**

Options	Number of Entrepreneurs
None	53
Parents (Father / Mother)	17
Husband	01
Entrepreneur (both celebrity and non celebrity)	25
Others	04
Total	100
Chi square=87, df=4, significant at .05 level	

**Competition**

We tried to find out how women entrepreneurs perceive competition in their business. Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents (63%) perceived a high degree of competition from other entrepreneurs. Twenty nine percent (29%) of them

perceived no competition, 4% each perceived medium competition and low competition. The chi square value 93.680 was significant at five cent level of significance. This shows that majority of the women perceive very high degree of competition from other entrepreneurs.

**Table 7: Degree of Competition**

Degree of Competition	Number of Entrepreneurs
No competition	29
Low Competition	04
Medium Competition	04
High Competition	63
Total	100
Chi square = 93.680; df = 3; significant at .05 level	

**INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS**

The respondents were asked that according to them, which is the most important ingredient for success? They were to choose any one of the options given.

Table 8 shows 55% of the respondents found family support as the most crucial ingredient

for their success, followed by risk-taking attitude at 18%, innovation at 17% and capital at 10%. The chi square value 49.520 was significant at five percent level. The majority (55%) of the respondents find family support as the most important ingredient for their success.

**Table 8: Ingredients for Success**

Options	Number of Entrepreneurs
Family Support	55
Capital / Finance	10
Innovation	17
Risk-taking	18
Total	100
Chi square=49.520, df=3,	

## HUSBAND'S SUPPORT

It was asked by the respondents whether their husbands encouraged them and gave them all the moral support which they needed to do their business. Table 9 shows that majority of the

respondents' (73%) had the support of their husband. Only eight of the respondents' (8%) did not have their husbands' support in running the business. Nineteen of the respondents (19%) did not respond to this question as they were unmarried, single or divorced. The chi square value 72.620 was significant at five percent level of significance.

**Table 9: Husband's Support**

Support of the husband	Number of Entrepreneurs
Yes	73
No	08
Not Applicable	19
Total	100
Chi square = 72.620; df = 2; significant at .05 level	

Let us now see if there is any relationship between the ingredient for success and the support of the husband. Table 10 shows that there is a positive relationship between the ingredient for success and husband's support. The chi square value 13.966 was significant at five percent level of significance. Amongst the women entrepreneurs who considered family support as the main reason for their success 85% of them got the support of their husband. Women entrepreneurs who considered capital as

the main reason for their success, 60% of them got the support of their husband. Women who considered innovation as the main reason for success, 52% got support from their husband and women who considered risk taking as the main reason for their success, 61% of them got support from their husband. We can see that the reason for success and the husband's support are positive correlated. More the support from the husband more likelihood of the business to succeed.

**Table 10: Ingredients for Success and Husband's support**

Husband's support	Family Support	Capital	Innovation	Risk taking	Total
Yes	47 (85)	6 (60)	9 (52)	11 (61)	73
No	2 (04)	1 (10)	4 (24)	1 (06)	8
Not applicable	6 (11)	3 (30)	4 (24)	6 (33)	19
Total	55 (100)	10 (100)	17 (100)	18 (100)	100
Chi Square = 13.966; df = 6; significant at .05 level					

## FUTURE PLAN

The respondents were asked about their future plan and were to choose any one of the options given. Table 11 shows that majority (87%) of the

respondents wanted to continue doing the same business. Eleven percent (11%) were ready to retire and 2% wanted to switch to another business. The chi square value 130.820 was statistically significant at five percent level of significance.

**Table 11: Future Plan**

Options	Number of Entrepreneurs
Continue doing same business	87
Take retirement	11
Take employment in a company	0
Switch over to another business	2
Total	100
Chi square = 130.820; df = 2, significant at .05 level	

## OUTLOOK AT THE TIME OF STARTING BUSINESS

The respondents were asked that at the time of starting of business how did they feel about the outcome of the business venture. They had to choose any one of the options given. Table 12 shows

that majority of the (61%) of the respondents expected success, 24% had a mix feeling of both failure and success and only 15% feared failure. The chi square value 35.66 was statistically significant at five percent level of significance.

**Table 12: Outlook at the Time of Starting Business**

Options	Number of Entrepreneurs
Feared failure	15
Expected success	61
Mix feeling of both failure & success	24
Total	100
Chi square=35.66, df=2, significant at .05 level.	

Table 13 shows that there exists a relationship between the type of entrepreneurship and the outlook of women entrepreneur at the time of starting their business. It was found that the entrepreneurs who were opportunity driven were in majority (68%) and entrepreneurs who expected success at the time of starting of business were also in majority (61%). On the other hand entrepreneurs who were necessity driven were in minority (32%) and the ones who feared failure were also in

minority (15%). The chi square value 6.310 was significant at five percent level of significance. *Hence the hypothesis that fear of failure is mostly found in necessity driven women entrepreneurs holds true.* In this sample as there was higher prevalence of opportunity driven entrepreneurship therefore the fear of failure amongst the women entrepreneur at the starting of the business was less and that of expected success was more.

**Table 13: Type of Entrepreneurship & Outlook at the Time of Starting the Business**

Type of Entrepreneurship	Feared failure	Expected success	Mix feeling	Total
Opportunity driven (by choice)	9	47	12	68
Necessity driven (by force)	6	14	12	32
Total	15	61	24	100
Chi square = 6.310; df = 2; significant at .05 level				

## REWARD FROM BUSINESS

The respondents were asked that in their opinion what have they achieved from this business. They were to choose any one of the options given. Table 14 shows that majority (38%) of the respondents had got a sense of work satisfaction from doing business. Twenty six percent (26%) had got confidence, 18% had got recognition from doing business and the remaining 18% felt that they were

rewarded with financial security. The Chi square value 10.720 was significant at five percent level of significance. Out of the four rewards, work satisfaction, confidence and recognition were non economic rewards and financial security was an economic reward. Eighty two (82%) of the respondents opted for non economic rewards and only 18% of the respondents opted for economic reward. *Hence the hypothesis that women entrepreneurs hold high expectancies to non economic rewards holds true.*

**Table 14: Reward from Business**

Options	Number of Entrepreneurs
Financial Security / Independence	18
Confidence	26
Work Satisfaction	38
Recognition	18
Any other	0
Total	100
Chi square=10.720, df=3, significant at .05 level	

## EXPECTATIONS FROM BUSINESS IN FUTURE

The respondents were asked about their future expectations from their business. They were to choose any one of the options given. Table 15 shows that 39% wanted to make more profits from the business, 20% wanted to expand their business

through branching, 6% of them wanted to capture more markets and 35% of the respondents did not expect anything from their business. This broadly indicated a feeling of contentment and a lack of ambition to achieve anything more from their business.

**Table 15: Expectations from Business in Future**

Options	Number of entrepreneurs
More Profits	39
More customers / markets	06
More Branches / Expansion	20
Nothing	35
Total	100
Chi square=27.28, df=3, significant at .05 level	

## FINDINGS

- Majority of the women entrepreneurs are ready to sacrifice their career for their husbands' career as they consider their career secondary to that of their husbands.
- Women entrepreneurs are quite confident about their managerial and business abilities. This shows that they have a high self esteem

and confidence to run their business on their own.

- Women like to be scientific and do not wish to take business decisions on an impulse or intuition.
- In recruiting employee majority of the women entrepreneurs like to give more preference to values like honesty and loyalty than professional qualifications in their prospective employee.

- It was found that the majority of the women are not ready to compromise values and ethics even if it means losses to them.
- Majority of the women entrepreneurs do not depend on external sources like their husbands, employees or astrologers for their business decisions. Hence they exhibit internal locus of control.
- As far as style of working is concerned majority of the women prefer to work in an informal set up, prefer to work in a centralized set up, like to closely supervise all the work and every employee, like to live their business day by day without having any set deadlines, priorities or goal. This shows that the women entrepreneurs do not have the kind of attitude that is required to operate a large size firm. Hence women entrepreneurs by choice like to keep their businesses small.
- Majority of the women entrepreneurs in the sample have established themselves as successful entrepreneurs without having any role models.
- As far as competition is concerned majority of the women entrepreneurs perceive a high degree of competition from their business counterparts
- Majority of the women entrepreneurs find family support as the most crucial ingredient for their success followed by risk-taking attitude, innovation and capital.
- It is found that amongst women entrepreneurs who consider family support as the main reason for their success, majority of them have reported to be having the support of their husband. This shows a positive relationship between the ingredient for success and husband's support.
- Regarding the future plan majority of the women entrepreneurs want to continue doing the same business. Very few want to retire and a negligible ratio want to switch to another

business. Hence women are quite satisfied and happy continuing in the same profession.

- As far as outlook of women entrepreneur at the starting of business is concerned it is found that majority expected success, few had a mixed feeling of both failure and success and a handful of them feared failure.
- There is a relationship between the type of entrepreneurship and the outlook of women entrepreneur at the time of starting the business. It was found that the entrepreneurs who were opportunity driven expected success at the time of starting the business and the ones who were necessity driven expected failure at the time of starting the business.
- It was found that women entrepreneurs hold high expectancies to non economic rewards than to economic rewards and many do not expect anything from their current business which indicates a sense of contentment from their present state of business and a lack of ambition to achieve something more from it.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the above findings we can say that in many respects women entrepreneurs in India are still quite conservative and family oriented. They are ready to sacrifice their career for their husbands' career as they consider their career secondary to that of their husbands. For them family support is the most important ingredient for their business success. However, for decision making they are quite independent. They consider themselves quite competent in handling their business. They are quite confident about their managerial and business abilities and they like to take decisions on scientific analysis rather than on impulse. They have an internal locus of control and rarely depend on their husbands or any other person for decision making.

Women entrepreneur are not profit driven nor they give importance to monetary rewards. In doing business they are not ready to compromise values and ethics even if it means losses to them.

Also while recruiting employees they give preference to values like honesty and loyalty rather than the qualifications in their prospective employees.

It has also been found that women driven by opportunity have a more positive outlook towards the outcome of their business than women who started business due to necessity. Also irrespective of opportunity driven or necessity driven business women in general perceive a high degree of competition from their business counterparts.

Women deliberately like to keep their businesses small. This is because they like to work in a centralized manner without delegating the work. Also they prefer to work in an informal set up which is possible only in small businesses. In addition they do not expect anything from their current business which indicates a sense of contentment in them from their present state of business and hence a lack of ambition to expand their business and to expect anything more from it. This also exhibits that women entrepreneurs hold high expectancies to non economic rewards than to economic rewards.

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