

Women Entrepreneurs in Education Sector

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Abstract

The following paper focuses on the contribution of women in the education sector. The paper highlights the efforts made by women entrepreneurs in the education sector. Working as a teacher or being a professional in the field of education is the most preferred career option sought by women. Anyhow, opting for a full day shift and also managing the household becomes a herculean task for most women. Women nowadays are not only working in various sectors as employees but are also leaving a mark when it comes to entrepreneurship. Being in the profession of ones liking and doing things way makes one feel happy and yields the best results. Women are more involved in the workforce following World War II. Paid employment of women has metamorphosed from traditional female-oriented jobs to all options that were previously in the so-called male-dominated arena. Women have made a mark in many fields such as the food industry, packaging, textile industry and even the educational sector. The food industry remains a favourite among women entrepreneurs. We have the classic example of 'Lizzat Papad.' When we think of school, we only imagine a lady teaching! At the Montessori level, only women are hired because they have the ability and the patience to handle small children with ease, care and warmth alongside teaching them the basics of education and also life. We cannot imagine Montessori schools and primary schools without female teachers. Most schools have female principals too. Women are also working at higher executive positions as Director, Dean, Head of the Department, Registrar, Chief Executive Officer and Education officer. A large number of women have also evolved as entrepreneurs in the education sector. From running a playschool, or a private school, they now head coaching classes and skill development centres. When it comes to working, women focus on the details. They opt for quality and make sure all the finer aspects are taken care of.

Keywords- Education, Entrepreneur, Profession, School, Women

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought people closer to each other. We can say that many things which were impossible in the past are now accessible to everyone. Anyhow, one can't overlook the fact that there are many people who are still deprived

of knowledge and the resources to connect with the world. There are many organizations striving to reach those such people; anyhow, there's a long road ahead. One such group is that of girls and women who struggle to get a quality education and then embark on their professional journey.

Education plays an important role in the development of any society.

Providing quality education to children from all the strata of society is a major problem in India. Though there are many policies, schemes, facilities for universal education, but India has not yet achieved its dream of 100% literacy yet. There are many reasons for not attending a school, like lack of awareness about education, poverty-stricken household and even paucity of schools. There is the problem of wastage and stagnation in education at different levels of schooling and even in higher education. There is a lack of uniformity in the education sector and services. Chosen few have access to world-class education facilities, and many students are still deprived of even the basic education. Educating girls at all levels is also an issue. We see that at the school level and college level, girls score good marks and often secure top positions when we speak of Board exams and university exams. The scenario is totally different at the higher level, or even while considering career prospects; the girls don't fare as well. They are not able to establish their mark in the field still dominated by men like that of science, technology, engineering, medical etc.

There are many reasons for this change or pattern of career and professional choices made by women. One reason for this could be the stereotype followed by society. There are set career options selected by parents for boys and girls. We live in a society that is bound to follow gender stereotypes. Unless and until we free ourselves from these tags, we won't be able to see women flourish in different sectors.

The family plays an important role in deciding the career of an individual. If we see women working

at top positions, we can often make a generalisation that she is either handling her family business or her husband's business. We need to create a society where women can stand independently and take decisions about her career or the profession she wants to be in. The role of education is crucial as we need to provide entrepreneurship education or, say, professional education to women in order to help them make their own career choices. There is a need for women to prioritize things in advance. Girls face many challenges at different levels and even at the professional level. These challenges differ in rural and urban areas. After marriage, women face many challenges to keep their careers moving ahead as compared to their male counterparts. Marriage leads to increased household responsibilities and having a child result in career gaps or change of profession that helps them balance everything. Gain from one's profession should not only be measured by solely the monetary bit but one's level of satisfaction, true professional development and empowerment in all aspects.

BACKGROUND

Women are more involved in the workforce following World War II. Paid employment of women has shifted from primarily female-oriented workplaces to more unconventional ones that were previously dominated by men.

Education is most important for the social, economic and moral development of a human being. People from lower castes and women were deprived of education during the pre-independence period in India. Due to illiteracy, people belonging to lower castes and women could not indulge in economic activity, entrepreneurship and the job

market as they had to work at lower levels and for a lesser salary. In the past, women were paid less as compared to men. Due to a lack of education and regular paid jobs, empowerment and development of lower caste people and women could not be achieved. This scenario changed after India got freedom in 1947. The makers of the Indian Constitution included the provision of universal elementary education in the list of the Directive Principles of State Policy. Under that, Article 45 of the Constitution states that the state shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years by 1960. Education is very important for any country for its economic development. If both men and women are educated equally, they can result in an upward financial graph for themselves and even for their country. A person who is working and earning for his own is not a burden on any society, whereas a person who is unemployed is a burden for the family and even the society as someone else has to support him or earn for him. Education enables humans to earn for themselves. Education enables women to know their self-worth and their potential. They happen to think beyond their traditional life and transcend the role that had been played by the women previously. Education makes a person self-reliant, confident and imbibes required professional and employability skills in them.

During the British period, various socio-religious movements led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, emphasized on women's education in India. Mahatama Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Periyar E.V.Ramasamy, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar were leaders in India who took various initiatives to make education available to women

in India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar got inspired by the mission of Mahatama Jyotiba Phule of educating women. His agitation for social rights and a boost for education influenced the British Government to bring in a change and also protected the social rights of women. Education is essential for all men and women, irrespective of their social and economic status.

It is difficult to get an overall picture of the employment of women in India. Most women work in the informal sector. Women constitute 48% of the total population in India. In the dynamic and emerging world of globalization and technology innovation, perceptions about the quality of education have changed drastically. Education quality now composes not only of acquisition of basic knowledge but also the development of values and competencies.

Although girls do fairly well in school and college-level education, but when they enter the employment sector, the situation becomes difficult for them. After marriage, many women have to leave their studies or job as marriage adds additional responsibility in their life. They are not able to dedicate enough time to academics, careers or professions. Although there are exceptional cases too where women have achieved a lot even after marriage and motherhood, but that requires true motivation, dedication, determination and overall support and help from the family members, friends and society. Anyhow, there is a trend of women switching jobs. Women tend to switch to jobs that are less deadline-oriented and do not require constant upgradation of skills and expertise. Many women leave their careers for the family. Some women choose to be entrepreneurs as it allows them to work on their own timeline

and at their own pace. It also helps them to enhance their creativity and realise their true self.

Entrepreneurship deals with starting up a new business unit, generally at a smaller scale, which can flourish into a big venture later on. Women have made their mark in many fields such as the food industry, packaging, textile industry and even the educational sector. The food industry remains favourite among women entrepreneur. Women in the food industry have taken on preparations of dry and wet spices, pickles, papad, dry snacks, ready-to-cook meals and even the catering services. In catering services, women are providing a lot of variety in food, with cuisines from different regions to custom made cakes, different kinds of chocolates etc. Packaging work can be done from home at small levels, with the raw material being provided by the shop owner or small business units. Textile and Fashion industry includes stitching, designing of clothes for different occasions, and we have many examples of fashion designers from India who have excelled at the international level.

Many women are working in the education sector. When we think of school, we only imagine women teachers. At the Montessori level, only women are hired because they have the ability and patience to handle small children with ease, care and love. We cannot imagine Montessori schools or primary schools without female teachers. Most schools have female principals too. Women are also working at higher levels like that of Director, Dean, Head of the Department, Registrar, Chief Executive Officer and Education officer. A large number of women have also grown as entrepreneurs in the education sector. From running a playschool or a private school, coaching

classes, they are now proud owners of the Skill Development Centres too. When it comes to working, women love to focus on each tiny detail. They prefer that the quality of work is maintained.

Women had the highest share of employment in the education sector at 24.47 lakh workers in April-June, followed by the manufacturing sector at 18.57 lakh workers, according to the revamped first round of Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) (2017).

Women have been experimenting in the field of entrepreneurship for a long. Women have done a lot of constructive work in various fields that interest them. One such field is the education sector. One cannot forget the evergreen example of Savitribai Phule. She was one of the prime entrepreneurs in the education sector as she started and taught in the first school for girls. Her work has been honoured by giving her name to the University of Pune. Since 2014 the University of Pune has been renamed as Savitribai Phule Pune University in her honour and to commemorate her work which she has done eons ago for the poor and downtrodden women.

Education and teaching is an old and well-established profession. We have a tradition of rishis, munis, sages as our gurus, teachers and mentors. Women consider the education sector and teaching profession as the most suitable career option for themselves. Teaching requires pedagogical skills, professional skills and content knowledge. The teaching profession also demands interest, patience, collaborative skills, leadership qualities and counselling basics. There are many girls who think of becoming a teacher or working in the education sector at a very early age. The education and teaching sector gives oneself a

feeling of honour, respect and recognition not only from the students but also from the parents and the guardians. Women have maternal instincts, and hence, they tend to understand more emotional feelings and possess keen observation skills. Students feel motivated and love teachers who take care of the student's academic growth and give them personal attention.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR IN EDUCATION SECTOR

In the paragraphs below, we will discuss about women who have done good work in the education sector and left their mark in the field. From working for the underprivileged group to making use of technology for innovation, experimenting in the teaching and learning process, women have left their mark in various sectors of education.

Aditi Avasthi is founder and CEO of Embibe. She has completed engineering from Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology and MBA from Booth School of Business in 2010. She has worked at TCS and Barclays. Embibe is an Educational Technology company which is based out of Bangalore and it was founded in 2012. Embibe is an artificial intelligence platform that delivers education to students as per the current world standards. Embibe offers services based on JEE Advanced. This start-up was initiated to guide aspirants of competitive exams like JEE Main, JEE Advance, BITSAT and CET/AIPMT. Students using this tool have demonstrated better understanding and improved learning outcomes. She was recognized as the 'Accenture Vaahini Innovator of The Year' and the 'Women Entrepreneur of the year' in 2019 by the Education Congress. Economic Times Prime recognized her as the 'Innovator of the Year' and was awarded

Prime Women Leadership Awards (ET PWLA' 19) by Economic Times. She was also chosen as the 'Woman of the Year' by Vogue in the year 2018. She was also ranked among BBC's top 100 inspirational and innovative women in the year 2017.

Divya Gokulnath is the Co-founder of BYJU's learning App, teacher and team builder. She has completed engineering in Biotechnology from RV College of Engineering, Bangalore. She wanted to go abroad for a Master's degree.

Although she cracked GRE, she decided to stay back in India and work for BYJU. Divya Gokulnath conducted classes for BYJU's and also prepared question papers and practice tests for the students. She conducted classes until 2009, and later BYJU's embraced technology through V-SAT.

It has now grown to almost 90 centres. BYJU's learning app was launched in 2015. This app is being used by many students to understand the concepts of mathematics and science and also other subjects. During the pandemic situation and lockdown, this app has been subscribed to by many school students. It has also introduced live classes, new subjects and added multiple languages. Divya Gokulnath believes education is the most powerful tool that shapes the way young students think. She believes in creating unique and personalized learning experiences for students. She thoroughly believes that teachers play a very important role in the life of the students.

Geeta Dharmrajan is the Executive Director of Katha. She is a teacher, children's book writer, editor and social worker. She has been awarded the Padma Shree (2012), civilian honour, the

fourth-highest recognition in India. She established 'Katha' 28 years ago. Today Katha runs schools for underprivileged children in about 252 slums in various locations of Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana and Maharashtra. Katha is a registered non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Delhi and founded in the year 1989. Katha works in the field of teacher training, children's education and literature. Geeta Dharmarajan has devised a teaching-learning tool, 'Story Pedagogy,' and it has been used in Katha learning centres since 2001. Her published work includes more than 30 children's books and over 450 individual articles in magazines and newspapers in India and abroad. She believes in the idea that 'Children can bring real, sustainable change to their communities and families when they have access to quality books and learning'. She was awarded the 'Innovator' of the I Love Reading by the Millennium Alliance, set up by USAID and the Government of India. Today Katha has helped over 20,000 women to increase their household income by ten folds. Today Katha has 45,000 students in 43 training labs that are volunteered by 200 slum volunteers. Many students have joined college for higher education, and several have gone to pursue professional degrees in various fields.

Kiran Dham is Managing Director and CEO of Globus Infocom. Globus Infocom was founded by Kiran Dham along with her husband, Ashish Dham. It provides need-based innovative technological solutions in the field of Educational Technology. These technological solutions include digital boards, teaching solutions, digital language labs, digital lounge, virtual classroom solutions and video conferencing solutions. During this

situation of lockdown, online education proved to be the best option to keep students engaged in learning. After working for several years, Kiran Dham realized that her interest is in entrepreneurship, and thus Globus Infocom was founded in 2001.

Dr. Mona Mathur is the Founder, CEO of Million Sparks Foundation (MSF) and also an educationist. She has completed Masters in Technology from IIT Delhi and a Ph.D. in Neuro Computing and Machine Learning. She is involved in teaching-learning for the last 29 years. She is also an adjunct faculty at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. Dr. Mona Mathur believes that every child must have access to the same kind of learning opportunities. MSF focuses on teacher training and lifelong learning, and continuous capacity development of the teachers. The teacher training provided by the MSF includes scholastic as well as non-scholastic inputs. With such inputs, teachers are able to improve their conceptual and pedagogical skills. MSF was recognized as the most innovative educational technology startup in the Asia Pacific at BETT Asia 2019 in Malaysia. It was also awarded as the best Indian educational technology startup award by the Global EdTech Startup Awards 2018 at the Learnit Conference in London, 2019. Dr. Mona Mathur was also a finalist in the 'Women Transforming India Awards' organized by NITI Aayog. She has also advised and contributed to several startups and non-profit organizations in the arena of education.

Muktaben Dagli is the founder of Pragnachakshu Mahila Seva Kunj. It is a non-profit school for blind and visually impaired women founded in 1995. Muktaben lost her eyesight at the age of seven due to meningitis. She completed Teachers

Training Diploma for the blind and also pursued a BA degree with a first-class. Pragnachakshu Mahila Seva Kunj provides training in computer coding in different languages along with Braille studies. Muktaben believes that it is essential for the students to fearless and hones life skills also. She has received Nari Shakti Puraskar in 2001 and India's fourth highest civilian award Padma Shree from President Ramnath Kovind.

We have many examples where women have contributed efficiently to the less privileged section of society. Roshni Mukherjee is the founder of the free education platform, ExamFear.com (2011). She aims to provide good quality education to all that too free of cost. She has been recognized as one of the 100 Women Achievers of India by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. Tanushri Nagori is the Co-founder of Doubtnut (2017). It offers video solutions for doubts raised by students on an app-based platform. About 12-12 million doubts are raised every month, and more than 4,000 videos are created every day in order to answer the doubts raised by the students. Vimla Kaul established a school named Guldasta in 1993, Delhi. The school has been established for underprivileged students from the slum area. There are many more examples where women have contributed as teachers, educators, founders, facilitators, mentors and guides for the students.

CONCLUSION

Today, we see many women entrepreneurs in the education sector, and they are dealing with all sorts of work in their organization. They have had to work very hard to reach the position in which they are working today and have also provided employment opportunities to others. They have

invariably become role models for the rest. Women have accepted and followed the tenets of absolute professionalism, honing their interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, lifelong learning, self-discipline and respect for the work culture. Education plays a very important role in the growth and development of any society. Every society faces different problems when it comes to educating its masses. Problems related to education differ in urban and rural areas. They can be regarding the disparity between male and female education, problems of underprivileged sections, problems of the backward classes, the problem of the learning disabled etc. Many women have entered into education sector and putting in their best to provide quality education to the masses. Some particularly focus on the vulnerable groups because education is indeed a basic right of all human beings. As responsible citizens of a free nation, we should recognize their efforts and motivate and support women around us who are trying to universalize education and help reach out to every individual. Being considered as a weaker section of society in the past, women have come a long way with innovative ideas in almost every sector and have carved a niche for themselves. We have examples of Indira Gandhi, Bachendri Pal, Kalpana Chawla, Pratibhatai Patil, Mary Com, Meera Kumar, Sushmita Sen, Indira Nooyi, Sudha Murthy, Meghna Gulzar, to name a few. Let's hope that Indian women keep setting examples and striving for perfection.

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