

Intrapersonal Conflict: The Autoimmunity in Women Entrepreneurship

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Abstract –

India has created economic opportunities and provided economic liberalization to Indian women by empowering them through entrepreneurship prominently since the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85). The male dominated society has since then seen a pronounced reduction of socio-cultural tax paid by women and a widespread improvement in women literacy, employment, financial independence and government's entrepreneurial development schemes. Yet, the representation of women entrepreneurs in the economy especially from the urban sector is considerably low. Among the problems a woman entrepreneur encounters, a crucial challenge that hinders decision making and repels her natural success gene is her conflict with self; the intrapersonal conflict. There has not been much probe into this particular aspect that works slowly within and may eventually extinguish the urge of economic independence. Hence this theoretical study is an effort to highlight the fact that, while psychological traits such as aspiration, confidence, self-worth, self-esteem, self-actualization and internal locus of control stimulate women to dart towards economic independence, the conflict among them can also hold them back from it, creating the "autoimmune system" in the process. Reviews from various research and e-books and secondary data from Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MOSPI), National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), 6th Economic Census have been used to substantiate the facts.

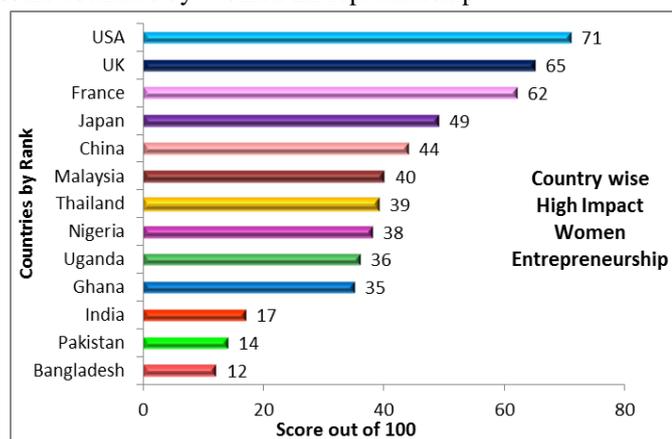
Keywords— autoimmune, intrapersonal conflict, self-esteem, self-confidence, women entrepreneurship

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian women have long been imprisoned in the clutches of massive social splits which in recent years have slackened due to the growing tempo of vibrant women movements. The global push for women empowerment has been gaining steam since 1970s and India witnessed a definite shift from welfare to development of women in the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85). The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian Constitution brought about an increase in the representation of women who are now entitled to one third of seats in local governing bodies. This enhanced room for representation and empowerment. Women are now recognized as active agents of change and women entrepreneurship is considered to be an effective instrument to the economic development and economic empowerment of women. Indian Government has set up several Self Help Groups, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Development Banks, training centres etc. to encourage women entrepreneurship and steps have also been taken to eradicate socio cultural evils that confine women to family life; yet, women contribute only 17 percent to GDP in India as against 40 percent of women's contribution worldwide and ranks 29th with a score of 17 out of 100 among 31 countries of the world assessed for their support of high-impact women's entrepreneurship (Acg Inc.2015)^[1].

Table I: Score and Rank of some countries by Women Entrepreneurship

Countries	Score	Rank
Bangladesh	12	31
Pakistan	14	30
India	17	29
Ghana	35	26
Uganda	36	25
Nigeria	38	23
Thailand	39	22
Malaysia	40	21
China	44	17
Japan	49	12
France	62	6
UK	65	5
USA	71	1



Source: Global Women Entrepreneur Leaders Scorecard, Acg Inc.

Fig.1: Score And Rank Of Some Countries By Women Entrepreneurship

Women entrepreneurship in India has moved from pickles, powder and papad to engineering, electronics and energy. According to Sixth Economic Census, 2016, out of total 80.6 lakh women run establishment in the country, the five top states in terms of their share are: i) Tamil Nadu, ii) Kerala, iii) Andhra Pradesh, iv) West Bengal and v) Maharashtra.

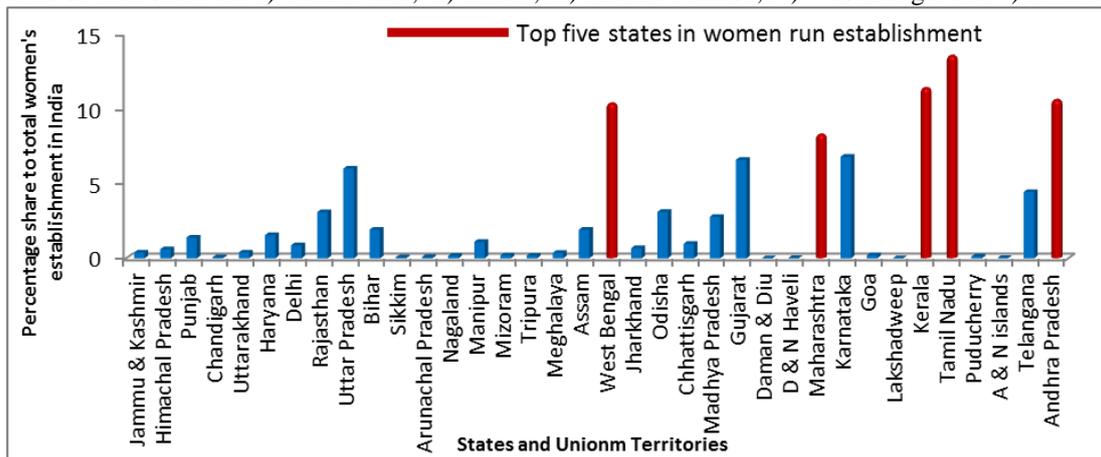


Fig. 2: State wise Women Establishments in India

There has been an 11.8 percent growth in female literacy rate from 2001 – 2011 but there are only 34.8 percent women establishments in urban area as against 65.12 percent in rural area. The high percentage of women entrepreneurs in rural India is mostly stimulated by their poor financial status contributing to the “push factor” i.e. forced entrepreneurship. Thus women’s participation in entrepreneurship is barely 14 percent (NSO, 2014)^[9] to total entrepreneurship indicating that they still have a long way to go to match the numbers with their male counterparts.

II. CONCEPTS

Defining some concepts used in the study:

A. Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment is the ability of women and men to contribute in and benefit from growth processes in ways where the values of their contribution are recognized and their dignity is respected so as to make it possible to negotiate better distribution of the benefits.

B. Women Entrepreneur

Women entrepreneur is defined as an enterprise which is owned and controlled by women having 51 per cent interest of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women.

C. Psychological Traits – The Core Construct

Entrepreneurial orientation depends on the degree of psychological traits present in an individual. The main psychological traits are:

- 1) *Aspiration*: is the ambition to achieve, measured by the need for achievement and the need for power (Aylward 2007)^[2].
- 2) *Self-efficacy/self-confidence*: is an individual's belief in his or her capacity to produce specific performance attainments (Eythórsdóttir, 2008)^[9].
- 3) *Self-worth*: is valuing oneself by discovering and becoming familiar with one’s unique personality traits, skills, weaknesses and passions/interests.
- 4) *Self-esteem*: is the confidence and satisfaction with oneself that creates self-pride and self-respect. High self-esteem is healthy unless it is affected by narcissism whereas low self-esteem reveals high self-criticism, neurotic guilt, pessimism etc.
- 5) *Self-actualization*: is reaching fulfillment of an individual's highest needs. Abraham Maslow used this concept in his Need Hierarchy Theory where he stated that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfillment and change through personal growth.
- 6) *Locus of Control*: is the level to which one feels that they can control events affecting them. They are of two types:
 - Internal locus of control is the extent to which people believe that the occurrence of events in their life depends on their characteristics and is under their control.
 - External locus of control is the extent to which people think that the result of their behavior depend upon luck or fate, is unpredictable and may be under the control of others.
- 7) *Conflict*: is an opposition between contradictory impulses that occur when more than one, equally powerful desires or motives are present at the same time and pressurize for immediate satisfaction.
 - Intrapersonal conflict is the type where the conflict is caused within the individual involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions. It is conflict between “should” which is always

driven by values, religious beliefs, up-bringing etc. and “wants” that are driven by the environment. The types of intrapersonal conflicts mentioned in this study are:

- Approach-approach conflict that is having two desires with positive valence which are equally powerful.
 - Avoidance-avoidance conflict involves two goals with negative valence. Here the individual is caught between two repelling threats, fears or situations and may escape choosing none.
 - Approach-avoidance conflict which is being attracted and repelled by the same goal object as the goal object will have both positive and negative valences. The positive valence attracts the person, but as he/she approaches, the negative valence repels him/her back.
- 8) *Autoimmunity*: is the system where the immunity system of an organism works against its own healthy cells and tissues. The concept has been used as a metaphor to describe how the intrapersonal attributes (healthy cells and tissues) that contribute to motivating women towards entrepreneurship also works against them by creating intrapersonal conflict that discourages them.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An “average” woman entrepreneur was defined as the first born, middle class, college graduate with a major in liberal arts, married, with children, and a supportive spouse in a professional or technical occupation. This paved way to studies that found that the relationship between time commitment to work and family mediated the effect of role demands and women with low self-esteem and self-worth were found to suffer from role conflict. Motivation and type of business among women entrepreneurs was found to be age and literacy specific indicating more older and educated women in “non-traditional” business (Greene et. al, 2003)^[12]. The challenges faced by women entrepreneurs exhibited moderate positive values with family, environment and psychology topping the list (Okafor & Roy 2010)^[20]. Cohoon, Wadhwa and Mitchell (2010)^[5] surveyed men and women entrepreneur’s motivations and experiences and identified that their desire to build wealth, capitalize business ideas, appeal of startup culture, long standing desire to own their own company and working with someone else did not appeal them. They were more concerned about protecting intellectual capital. Lall, Madhurima, and Sahai Shikha (2008)^[15] identified psychographic variables like degree of commitment, self-perception, self-esteem, entrepreneurial intensity and future plan for expansion.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Government effort towards educating women among other external provisions have given a sense of independence to women specifically in urban and semi urban India. Yet, the representation of women in total entrepreneurship and its share in urban India has been considerably low. The society has become supportive and family has become broad minded towards women but there still remains a missing link. The above review of literature on women entrepreneurs has highlighted certain behavioural aspects other than those mostly known; the intrapersonal conflicts that cause a hurdle in the progress of women entrepreneurs. The psychological traits that motivate women entrepreneurs become their own enemy when faced by choice. This aspect needs continuous attention so as to avoid the consequences arising from such conflicts.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The above statement of problem makes it necessary to discuss

- the psychological traits that motivate women entrepreneurs,
- the challenges of intrapersonal conflict in women entrepreneurs,
- the consequences of intrapersonal conflict on decision making.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on theoretical content analysis. Reviews from various research articles, research journals, case studies and e-books has been incorporated in the study and secondary data from Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MOSPI), National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), 6th Economic Census have been used to substantiate the facts.

VII. THE CHALLENGES OF INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICTS IN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

A. Aspiration

While literate women have high levels of aspiration in their years of education, they do not always turn towards workplace and very few who intend to work, seek formal and structured employment rather than own a business. A study by Ernst & Young LLP (2015)^[8] conducted in four major metropolitan and cosmopolitan cities of India, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad observed that 80 to 90 percent of the forty graduates who were covered under the research study reported an aspiration to work as full time employees in established corporates or firms. It was also observed that women and girls from the age group of 23 to 34 years, rather than young girls (16 to 23 years) more likely aspired to be a part of the workforce through home based businesses mainly because women in this age group are married and have children to look after and therefore they do not have the time, freedom or support required to enter formal employment. This research is an indication that women consider entrepreneurship as a source of extra income only which will not require time and commitment. Their personal concern about home and family thereafter becomes more important than economic considerations for business (Greene et. al, 2003)^[12]. A study on the characteristics of women entrepreneurs found that the biggest obstacle to progress in India is ‘limited aspirations’ (Rai and Srivastava, 2011)^[24].

B. Self-efficacy/self- confidence

In India, women feel obliged to their family for giving them the opportunity to take time out of family life and become entrepreneurs. Hence they are in constant fear of losing their support which lowers their self-efficacy. In the study conducted by Ernest & Young LLP (2015)^[8], about 45 percent respondents in Hyderabad to 60 percent in Mumbai reported that they need the help and support of family where they have to deal with male suppliers or customers. According to a study by Wilson et.al (2007)^[30], adolescent girls with high levels of interest in entrepreneurship had higher self-efficacy than boys while lower level of self-efficacy was found among women in careers historically perceived as "non-traditional". According to Kirkwood (2009)^[13], once in an established business, women do not relate to entrepreneurship as much as men and they feel uncomfortable calling themselves entrepreneurs.

C. Self-worth

Women entrepreneurs are no longer settling for the same old position that has been projected upon them throughout history. They realize their potential, value them and then enter into business. But major part of the Indian society still finds it difficult to accept a woman in the forefront, successful and an all-rounder. They are given too little and are starved of recognition; hence, they view themselves as lacking and believe they are inadequate. They become hard on themselves and insecure in conflictual situations because they fear being seen as wrong. This leads to women entrepreneurs spending too much time in comparing themselves to other entrepreneurs and their sense of self-worth bounces, rising and falling in lock-step. This hinders the process to establish a money mindset.

D. Self-esteem

Women are tagged as timid with low self-esteem and not as visible as men. A meeting in Nairobi on women entrepreneurs concluded that many women despite having very viable ideas remained invisible due to low esteem. On the other hand self-esteem of women entrepreneurs over 50 who needed a new purpose in life after their children grew up was found to be high (Kumar 2016)^[14].

E. Self-actualization

Women have a tendency to be satisfied with little but it varies with age, social status and background. Women's perception of self-actualization was significantly and positively correlated with the place of enterprise, which revealed that self-actualization increased with urbanization of the place (Ganesan et. al, 2000)^[10].

F. Locus of Control

Female entrepreneurs have a significantly more internal locus of control (Spillan & Brazier, 2003)^[28]. Those with high internal locus of control believe that their success and failure is affected by their own action and hence they have an intense fear of failure and avoid taking risk where risk taking is inherent in entrepreneurship. According to GEM Annual Report (2007)^[11], fear of failure is highly correlated to entrepreneurial activity that withholds one third of women population to become entrepreneurs; preferably in low and middle income countries like India.

VIII. THE CONSEQUENCES OF INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICT AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

A. THE Opportunity cost - The tradeoff between family and entrepreneurship

A woman wishes to excel in every field, be it her status in family or entrepreneurship. To be an ideal daughter, mother or wife is equally important to being a successful entrepreneur. Thus, the women entrepreneurs face approach-approach intrapersonal conflict; two equally powerful and positive desires. Though joint family is not an obstacle for developing entrepreneurs rather a facilitating factor (Singh & Raghuvanshi, 2012)^[27], and even when husbands are willing to share the household and childcare duties, women tend to suffer guilt and anxiety when their businesses require long hours away from home (Sharma, 2014)^[26]. This prevents them from focusing on the activities required for sustaining an entrepreneurial venture. Mathur, (2011)^[17] has claimed that in India, most of the women are very serious about family obligations but they do not equally focus on career obligations like entrepreneurship.

B. Choice of Industry and Product Selection

Women entrepreneurs often lack the aptitude of product selection and they end up selecting a product unsuitable to their knowledge and background. Urban women choose a business in accordance to the status of their husband and family. Women belonging to high status do not usually enter into "traditional" business of pickle, powder and papad as they feel that they would humiliate their husband or family. On the other hand they lack self confidence in entering into the "nontraditional" business of engineering, electronics and energy. Self-confidence that motivates them to start a business loses its worth, indicating the avoidance-avoidance conflict where the woman entrepreneur is caught between two repelling threats: humiliating the family and losing in business due to a wrong choice of product/industry. In rural areas however, a number of women establishments are involved in agricultural activities that is traditional to them and it constitutes 34.3 percent of the total number of establishments owned by women in India (6th Economic Census)^[7].

C. Selecting Low Growth Strategies

Indian women grow up with pre conceived notion about her role in the society which portrays low self-esteem (Sandra, et. al 2005)^[25]. They take pride in the performance of their husbands rather than on their success and often tend to belittle their accomplishments by giving credit to others. They deliberately select low growth strategies and establish maximum

business size threshold beyond which they do not expand (Aylward, 2007)^[2] thus indicating the approach-avoidance conflict wherein their high aspiration attracts them to set up a successful business but their low self-esteem and tendency to please male ego repels them.

D. Unhealthy Money Mindset

Money mindset is a combination of one's relationship with money and self-worth.

- Since women's relationship with money is a relatively new phenomenon, there is no precedent for women valuing themselves from a financial perspective, or women interacting consistently with money. A study by Green et al (2003)^[12] found that traditional socialization of women had an influence on the type of business and startup capital and it was found that they tend to prefer internal sources to external financing. Women ask for less money than men when applying for finance and tend to use home finance. It has been observed in the study of McCracken (2015)^[18] that out of 14 percent of the total number of establishments run by women, as many as 79 percent are self-financed and only 4.4 per cent have borrowed money from financial institutions or received assistance from the government. This was reported widely to be the result of their limited growth ambitions as well as reluctance to take on financial risk: the avoidance-avoidance conflict.
- Women entrepreneurs price their products and services too low. They tend to undervalue their products and sell cheap. They fear selling. During transactions, they feel a strong sense of guilt about asking money for their products and that has everything to do with self-worth. Another study reported that women chose self-fulfillment and goal achievement as primary measures of success rather than financial profitability (Buttner & Moore 1997)^[4]. This indicates the approach-avoidance conflict: they desire to own and run a successful business but are repelled by their guilt of asking the value for their products.

E. Aversion to Personal Branding and Networking

Personal branding is the practice of people marketing themselves and their career as brands. Though most women understand the importance of self-promotion, they do not intentionally use it mostly because the myths of being tagged as bragging, waiting till recognized, promotion through relatives and the myth of "cannot change a purchase decision" often mask a deeper insecurity about the value the women entrepreneurs place on what they have to offer. Women are stronger in more logic based skills though they are weaker in self-promotion and handling frustration (Deepa et. al, 2015)^[6]. For women entrepreneurs, boldly putting themselves out in the marketplace can sometimes be overwhelming but there is evidence that they mostly feel shy "tooting their own horn". Their aspiration, self-worth, self-esteem and self-actualization are in constant conflict. The high aspiration to succeed in business is restrained by their avoidance to sell: the approach-avoidance conflict.

Similarly, women entrepreneurs were found to be weak at networking. Business networking are essential for sharing information, gaining wider recognition and marketing is concerned as the most challenging aspect for women entrepreneurs. A study found that personal networks are more supportive asset than business networks and women entrepreneurs who are positive towards new networks already have a more heterogenic network than those who do not express this willingness (Bogren et. al, 2013)^[3]. Women usually develop their enterprises by relying on their own resources. Where men talk business when they socialize, women discuss family. Given the proven importance of networking, women still lag behind. It may be due to negative stereotyping and socialization that boys dare and girl conform or the reason that women are one-on-one listener and hence invest more time nurturing close relationships where men engineer their networks through their own gain (Liataud, 2016)^[16].

F. One-Woman Show

Women usually want to do everything themselves. They lack the ability to give up control and delegate responsibilities (Eythórsdóttir, 2008)^[9]. Women were poor at task delegation which was found to have a negative correlation with enterprise success (Greene et.al, 2003)^[12]. They fail to envision that business owners can be successful with only strings in their hands and not doing every job by themselves. They are paranoid with the way others work for their enterprise. In India, 83.19percent of total women run establishments operated without hired workers and 16.31percent operated with hired workers. The percentage of establishments without hired workers in rural areas was 86.85percent whereas, in urban areas, it was 76.33percent (6th Economic Census, 2016)^[7]. Women entrepreneurs thus show increasingly high level of self-confidence and work all by their own but this affect their business by limiting growth. It has also been found that they are afraid to take in stock financing as that involves some sort of delegation of power (Eythórsdóttir, 2008)^[9]; this is the approach avoidance conflict.

G. "Self-Blame" The Ultimate Emotional Abuse

The loci of control in women entrepreneurs are more internally oriented. Entrepreneurs with a successful venture show a significantly greater internal orientation of locus of control (Prakash et. al, 2015)^[23]. Also, women entrepreneurs with internal locus of control are more likely to make less rational decisions and favour more formalized processes and centralization (Oben et. al, 2011)^[21]. It was found that women with high self-efficacy and internal locus of control scored higher on entrepreneurial innovative behaviour (Samson, 2009)^[29].

There has not been any or much study about the effect of internal locus of control in case of a failure, resulting in "self-blame", that is accusing oneself of the failure. Even men entrepreneurs with internal locus of control can undergo this effect but women being tagged "emotional" may be most affected. As women depend on family for finance and seek

family support in all respect, failure in business will result in a feeling of guilt and blaming oneself may have severe consequences. Thus the internal locus of control, a promising predictor of entrepreneurial success that motivates women as they can control their road to success themselves, may also result in depression when business fails, depicting the downside of it.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

Intrapersonal conflicts are psychological, inbuilt and complicated; yet they have to be attended to so that the fire of entrepreneurship can be kept burning within the women folk.

- Women entrepreneurs should continually assess their level of confidence and innovativeness and seek for knowledge where there are deficiencies.
- Even after becoming an entrepreneur, women should attend entrepreneurial development programs at regular intervals.
- The training should be designed primarily to stimulate the imagination and encourage introspection into personal motivation and community goals.
- There should be continuous monitoring through practical experience to improvise their overall personality standards.
- Focus should be on the development of a relational attitude and a willingness to put oneself into a relational interplay, improve self-worth and self-esteem, overcome self-doubt through perseverance in the face of fear and actualize their dreams.
- A famous American circus owner, P.T. Barnum said that without promotion, something terrible happens, and that is nothing. In order that the women entrepreneurs develop a healthy money mindset, concepts like “selling” should be replaced by “the art of branding” in the business world. As Parihar and Singh (2006)^[22] suggested, leadership qualities should be promoted among women entrepreneurs and the government should provide market assistance and create awareness of its schemes.
- Women can resort increasingly to e-commerce portals and the “path breaking” initiative Mahila e-Haat” the online marketing platform for women launched by Mrs. Maneka Gandhi to avoid “putting themselves out in the market place” if in spite of all efforts the society and family status remains more important than their identity making their guilt stronger than their inspiration.
- The study also draws attention to the need that women entrepreneurs should be made to realize that women power can be achieved by building a community, i.e. employing women into a women venture that can help create their personal brand.
- Counselors and role models should be easily accessible and should constantly prompt women entrepreneurs to increase women employment in their business and reap the benefits of work delegation.
- Women entrepreneurs should be clear headed when they enter into business.
- Finally, it is expected that this study will further aid policy makers and women entrepreneurial training programs to stimulate ability which are intrinsic in individuals for the exhibition of entrepreneurial innovative behaviour.

X. CONCLUSION

Women’s career path that was once limited and restricted has now paved way to a new venture towards entrepreneurship. Empowering women through entrepreneurship has revolutionized the World economy impacting India as well. The Government, society, financial institutions, social networks, NGOs and many other organizations have come to the rescue of the difficulties faced by the women entrepreneurs; yet women’s representation in entrepreneurship, especially in urban area has been low. This research thus highlights some of the underlying causes that relates to women psychology, the conflicts within and the consequences. From the limited available research it has been found that psychological traits such as aspiration, self-confidence, self-worth, self-esteem, self-actualization and internal locus of control common to men and women work differently in women entrepreneurs. The intrapersonal conflict in women results in problems like choosing between work and family, product and industry, attitude to personal branding and networking, unhealthy money mindset, choosing low growth strategy, running a one-woman show and blaming self for failure. Thus, the trait that motivates women and boosts her power to enter into the male dominated market also works against them and makes it difficult to sustain. The inner game struggle repels their eternal natural success gene: the autoimmunity in the system.

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