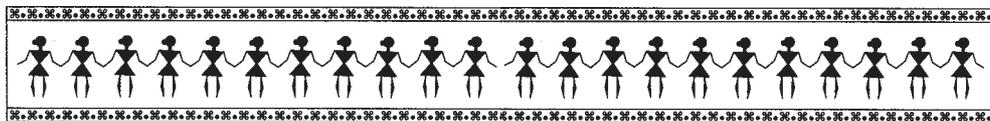


Entrepreneurial Activities: Overcoming Barriers for Women



General Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to help participants in your training session to provide an overview of what is entrepreneurship and barriers faced by women in developing entrepreneurship.

Specific Objectives

This Training Unit will help to enable trainees to:

- Describe entrepreneurship;
- List the advantages of being an entrepreneur; and
- Identify problems faced by women in creation and management of an enterprise.

Planning

Time	:	Three hours
Training Methodology	:	Group discussion, simulation exercise and group work
Training Materials	:	Broken squares games material, charts and markers.
Trainer's Preparation	:	Preparation of charts and posters on functions, advantages, characteristics, gender issues involved in women's entrepreneurship. Understanding arranging setting required for conducting games. Preparing plan for presenting a short lecture on the barriers faced by women in starting, managing and sustaining an enterprise.

Background Material

What is Entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship and the trend in defining the entrepreneur has been to make the definition more flexible and more widely applicable to a number of given situations. This is a response to the value given to entrepreneurial behaviour in small communities, organizations, teams or nations. Perhaps the simplest and most elegant definition, of an entrepreneur is as follows:

“An entrepreneur is someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it.” This kind of behaviour can be evident in any number of situations and can apply equally well to a farmer, a marketing manager in a larger firm, as much as it refers to the well-known initiator of a new business. Many organizations seek to maximise entrepreneurial behaviour in their staff and as a result entrepreneurship has widespread appeal beyond the scope of enterprise growth. Much has been written about that secret ingredient which entrepreneurs possess that sets them apart from others but the one which is most explicit is from Jeffery Timmons who puts it like this:

“Experienced entrepreneurs exhibit an ability to quickly recognise a pattern—an opportunity— while it is still taking shape. Thus, the process of sorting through ideas and recognising a pattern can also be compared to the process of fitting pieces into a three dimensional jigsaw puzzle. It is impossible to assemble such a puzzle by looking at it as a whole unit. Rather one needs to see the relationship between seemingly unrelated pieces and be able to fit them together before the whole is visible. The ability to recognize ideas that can become entrepreneurial opportunities stems from a capacity to see what others do not... that one plus one equals three or more.”

Mark Twain, the famous American novelist, was known to lament his lack of entrepreneurship when he said: “I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one.” However, David McClelland was the first to link the knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship to the creation of replicable methodologies that could be applied, in selective situations, to the promotion of entrepreneurship. His brand of achievement motivation training set the tone for much of the entrepreneurship development that has taken place over the last forty years. Most of these authors have focused primarily on the individual, and in some respects glorified the role of the entrepreneur as the archetype for a new society and the initiator of innovation and progress. There is, of course, another side to this coin and that is the individualist tone for personal gratification and maximizing selfish interests. It is important to understand entrepreneurship in the context of the aspirations of society. The model more common to developing countries is where the “interaction” between the entrepreneur and society is given more prominence. *Entrepreneurship in developing countries is a tool aimed at altering the distribution of wealth in favour of lower income groups. By stimulating innovation it is hoped that investments will follow and then eventually some form of sustainable advantage will emerge.* Sometimes the entrepreneurship programme is seen as the “quick fix” – something that can be done with a low cost.

Over the last ten years a great deal of research has been done on entrepreneurs and their roles in society. Also what conditions are needed for training interventions to be more successful? There are individual and social constraints, which need to be addressed in order for success rates of training programmes to be raised.

Individual Constraints

Many training programmes have the objective of transferring needed skills with the result that knowledge is acquired but there is very little application. This is particularly seen in lower income groups comprising mostly of women where they are intimidated by the formalities of business situations such as applying for a loan.

- The first stage is awareness, in which participants are encouraged to examine who they are and evaluate their own personality, motivations, capabilities and resources.
- The second stage is acceptance or the recognition of one's own strengths and weaknesses.

- The third stage is one of goal setting.
- The fourth stage involves developing strategies or action plans, formulated on the basis of the participants' motivation, competencies.
- The fifth stage involves direct experience where the emphasis is on doing.
- The last stage is empowerment where the prepared action plans, skills/competencies acquired match with personal strengths and goals.

Constraints in Society

Many of the small and microenterprise programmes favour the small entrepreneur, particularly women with special programmes which gave preferential access to raw material supplies, credit at subsidised interest rates, low rent industrial space, and free extension services. Here the value of the small enterprise/entrepreneur was recognized, but still fears about the consequences of exploitation existed.

Some cultures are more favourable for the emergence of entrepreneurship, but all cultures exhibit it in their own way. In collective cultures the motivation for starting an enterprise is more related to the needs of the family and the community rather than individual self-actualization.

The process of empowerment has its origin in elements of motivation, (stimulus) which leads one to perform some action (activity). The positive intent of this action could be termed 'empowerment'. It can generally be assumed that empowerment enables a woman to not only run her enterprise efficiently and successfully but also take charge of all activities in her life. In this way, empowerment leads to entrepreneurship.

This process could be presented as follows:

I want to do	+	I can do	=	I will do
(Motivation)		(Action)		(Empowerment)

A gender-based entrepreneurship programme needs to incorporate the above.

Barriers for Women

Many poor women are the only earners for their households. If they cannot find jobs what options remain for them? Perhaps self-employment is the only option. Reasons may be:

- Microenterprises can be run from home.
- Microenterprises can be run part-time or on a seasonal basis.
- Women do not have the education necessary to get jobs.

Work Plan for Your Training Session

Group Activity 1

You are a manager of an enterprise and you have to decide which of two possible microenterprise support projects to start.

Project A : Enables 1000 men to add Rs. 100 a week to their incomes.

Project B : Enables 1000 women to do the same.

Both projects cost the same and you can choose only one.



Identify as many reasons as possible in favour of A and B and decide which you will choose and why.

List out arguments in favour of both projects and explain that participants must be able to understand both points of view.

Project A: 1000 men (Barriers to women)

Men:

- are more likely to get loans;
- have access to materials and markets;
- are better educated;
- have more skills;
- are physically stronger;
- are free to travel as their business requires;
- have more business experience;
- dominate society: change will be difficult;
- men's enterprises more likely to expand in future; and
- are not diverted by childbirth and family care.

Project B: 1000 women

Women:

- need self-employment more than men;
- save regularly;
- repay loans more reliably;
- work harder and are more committed;
- spend their earnings on family;
- need to be empowered;
- make better collaborators;
- have no options but men can get jobs.

Group Activity 2

You as the trainer pin up two charts on the wall with a figure of a woman on each one of them.

The participants draw arrows from the various parts of the woman's figure on the first chart, illustrating the barriers which women are faced with and on the other chart indicate with arrows the strengths which women possess.

The trainer facilitates a discussion on the above activity and highlights the issue of entrepreneurship in women.

Group Activity 3

Broken Squares

Instructions to the Group

A set consisting of five envelopes containing pieces of cardboard cut into different sizes and shapes which, when properly arranged will form five squares

of equal size. One such set is provided to each group of five persons. When a facilitator gives the signal to begin, the task of the group is to form five squares of the same size. The task will not be completed until each individual has before him or her a perfect square of the same size as held by others. While performing, the group has to follow the following rules of the game:

1. No member will speak to any other member.
2. No member is allowed to demand or ask for card pieces from other members not even through gesture or posture.
3. Members may, however, give pieces to other members of the group. Pieces can be handed over to any member but cannot be thrown or left in the middle. If left in the middle, the pieces can be confiscated by the observer/judge.

Instructions for Observers

You are going to observe a group in which five players are participating. Each player has before her a packet containing pieces of cardboard. The task of the group is to make five squares of equal size using these cardboard pieces. They are instructed to complete their task as soon as possible. Their task will be considered complete only when group members have a square of the same size in front of them. The group members are to follow the following norms:

1. No member will speak to each other.
2. No member is allowed to demand or ask for card pieces from other members not even through gesture or posture.
3. Members may, however, give pieces to other members of the group. Pieces can be handed over to any member but cannot be thrown or left in the middle. If left in the middle, the pieces can be confiscated by the observer/judge.

As an observer, you have to ensure that the players of the group follow these norms. In case they default, act like a judge and warn them not to violate the rule. In case participants are leaving the cardboard pieces in the middle, you will remind them that they will be confiscated. Also observe the behaviour of different participants particularly related to the following:

- Who was willing to give pieces?
- Who made the square first?
- Who broke her square first in order to give pieces to others?
- Who was reluctant to break her square once formed?
- Who was holding the pieces and with what consequences?
- Who were looking around assessing the needs of other participants? And trying to offer her card pieces as resources to others?

As an observer, you will also note down all other behaviour exhibited by the participants that either facilitated or inhibited the group performance and early completion of task.

Making a Set of Squares

In order to prepare a set, take five cardboard squares each of 6x6 square inches size. Mark each of the five squares as, pencilling the letters lightly so that they can be erased. Now cut the pieces along the lines. These pieces with the following combinations are kept in 5 different envelopes.

Env 1 (l, h & e)

Env 2 (a, a a' & c)

Env 3 (a & j)

Env 4 (d & f)

Env 5 (g, b, f & c)

Processing

In this game the emphasis is on group dynamics leading to entrepreneurship and the experiences of raising resources to a meaningful size and magnitude. In the enterprise context it relates to the fact that every individual has some financial resources but this may not be adequate to start and run an enterprise. However, these can be raised to operational level by pooling together the meagre individual resources of all group members. Similarly, an individual member may have some competence or skill but she may lack other competencies which are available with some other individual. A favourable attitude, concern for others, sensitivity to others' needs, effective communication are some other competencies and skills necessary for the development of entrepreneurship.

Two major steps to be followed here include:

Step 1

1. Present the objective and discuss with participants.
2. Ask women participants to describe the functions of a business person. What does a business person do to run the business successfully?

Expected responses:

- sells goods;
- offers services;
- produces goods;
- manufactures and sells;
- buys and sells;
- attracts customers;

3. Integrate the responses to present the concept of enterprise, entrepreneur, and entrepreneurship. Use charts and posters to explain the concepts.

Step 2

1. Involve participants in discussing the advantages of being an entrepreneur by raising questions such as: What are some of the obvious things you notice in a business person?
2. Present the conclusions which emerge from the group discussion.