

Female Entrepreneurship In North East India: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship has been defined differently by various scholars all over the world. One of the significant developments in the concept of entrepreneurship has been the gender specific concept of entrepreneurship. The female entrepreneurs or women entrepreneurs are being identified by scientific community in recent past. The definition of women entrepreneurs are defined only on the basis of the enterprises which has been run or owned by the females. The role of women entrepreneurs for women empowerment as well as for economic development has been seen in the country like India. However, the role of women entrepreneurs in case of north east India has not been highlighted properly. The lack of research on women entrepreneurship in the region led to confinement of the idea of women entrepreneurship in India. The limited literatures on women entrepreneurship are reasons to have less knowledge about issues and challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in the region. The present paper figures out the available literature on women entrepreneurship and examine it accordingly. Thus present paper reflects the findings of available literatures on female entrepreneurship in north east India.

Keywords: Female Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, Empowerment, Northeast India, Women Entrepreneurship.

Introduction

The increasing presence of women as entrepreneurs has led to the change in the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country. The women entrepreneurs are playing a dynamic role with regard to start ups and other forms of business activities. However, it is little different in the context of north east India. The bigger enterprises in

north east India is still a distant dream. When entrepreneurial scenario in the north east India is gloomy, the participation of women in entrepreneurship development one can expect easily. Nevertheless, whatever may be the level of industrialization in north east India, women has economic liberty from the society to work hand in hand with their male counterparts. Female entrepreneurs plays important role in bringing valuable innovation to entrepreneurship (Bharathi, 2015), better entrepreneur phenomenon (Bhatt & Siddhpuria, 2018), and fostering economic growth of the region (Mutairi & Fayeze, 2015). As the northeastern states give a template for economic empowerment to women in the country, their contribution in the economic activities are remarkable in the region. Understanding the situation of female entrepreneurs in northeast India is really important as there is too much importance given to male entrepreneurs in the economy.

Without a doubt the dominance of male run enterprises are very much higher when we compare with women. However, women in the north-east are more involved in income-generating activities than women in the rest of India (Guha & Adak, 2014). The research communities also emphasized mostly on general business entrepreneurs which generally consist of men only. The past studies were mainly focused on the outcomes of enterprises without being gender specific. The studies on women and gender specification have been a practice of recent past only. In order to get the insight upon the wellbeing of female owned enterprises, one needs to take a instance of male enterprises. Several constructs, derived from research on men entrepreneurs, have been used for understanding this among women (Goswami et al., 2019) recently.

The present study introspects the literatures on women entrepreneurship from all the aspects. The literatures on women entrepreneurship world wide found to be available. A study on the review of literatures conducted by Cardella et al., (2020) identified a total of 4,164 documents published between 1950 and 2019 in the Scopus database out of which 2,848 scientific article were considered for the analysis. In the scientific community, recently women entrepreneurship becomes a hot topic for discussion. The studies conducted by different scholar highlighted different facets of women entrepreneurship in their paper. The most common aspect of study among the scholars is the motivational factors which plays an important role in enterprise performance (Chyne & Syngkon, 2020) of women owned enterprises. Another important aspect of study is the socio economic conditions of female entrepreneurs and group entrepreneurship through self help groups in rural areas (Chatterjee et al., 2017).

The studies which are conducted in northeastern region of India on women entrepreneurship is also not different from the studies which are already conducted in other places. However, the number of studies conducted in this part of the country is very limited. The northeastern region is already associated with a term call industrially backward by numerous scholars earlier. Indeed when we compare the national average of industries with the statics of northeastern region the claim of those scholars holds true still. So in such industrial scenario the level of involvement of women on entrepreneurship or other economic activities one can easily predict. Hence the female's participation in the industrial activities or for entrepreneurship is very low so it hardly caught the attention of the scholars as well.

Objectives

The study is confined to open access online available literatures only. Hence the objectives of this paper are:

1. The study summarizes the work done by other scholars on female entrepreneurship in northeast India.
2. The study also outlines the aspects, tools and the area where women entrepreneurship study conducted in north east India.

Methods

The study identified few online sources to retrieve literatures on female/women entrepreneurship in northeast India. A systematic search has been conducted on various research databases. The influence of academic journals the interest to researchers (Podsakoff et al., 2005) now a days. However it was observed that very limited studies has been conducted on women entrepreneurship in northeast India till date. Hence, the literature on female entrepreneurship has been downloaded from Scopus database which is recognized as best source in various studies for authentic source of literature, from Science Direct, J Store, Research Gate, Google Scholar, Academia, etc. In order to search female entrepreneurship in northeast India, the search words “women” / ”female” “enterprises” / “entrepreneurship” with “northeast India” or “Arunachal Pradesh”, “Assam”, “Manipur”, “Meghalaya”, “Mizoram”, “Nagaland”, “Sikkim” & “Tripura” is used to search all the fields with time range from 2010-2020.

All together 36 documents were found online on those mentioned publication platform, out of which only 19 articles were included in this study for reviewing. The articles other than published in journal i.e., notes, proceedings, dissertations, reports, book chapter, book, etc were excluded for the present review study.

Reviews

Female entrepreneurship is being studied with different aspects by different scholars. In this review section year-wise chronologically article are review and presented with their findings. The model of business for tribal people of Thenzawl handloom cluster in Mizoram has been highlighted by Ramswamy & Kumar (2013) in their article. The researchers conducted a mapping of the Thenzawl handloom cluster and discovered almost cent percent micro handloom firms operated by women entrepreneurs. The study found that household in the cluster was relied on handloom enterprises and money earned from the enterprises influence on livelihood of those entrepreneurs. They recommended the launching of cluster development activities for improvement in the earning of micro women entrepreneurs.

In the year 2014, the study on women entrepreneurs of Manipur attempted to examine the status of women entrepreneurs in hill and valley districts of Manipur. Their findings reveal that majority of women entrepreneurs of both hill and valley districts are in manufacturing sector & the number of women enterprises is quite low as compare to the male enterprises in Manipur (Chanu & Chanu, 2014). Another study conducted in the same year studied on Women

empowerment through entrepreneurship in the tribal communities. The study highlighted economic empowerment of women by entrepreneurial activities led to the empowerment of women in many things such as socio-economic opportunity, property rights, political representation, social equality, personal right and community development (Sarma, 2014). In the same year an article has been written on the opportunities and obstacles involved with promoting tea entrepreneurship among women of Assam. The study reflected Assam's capacity to produce tea in India which is nearly one-sixth of all tea produced worldwide and how it grows the women entrepreneurship development in the region (Sarmah & Goowalla, 2014). According to Guha & Adak (2014) the state of Mizoram has accounted for a sizable portion of women entrepreneurship activity. Their study revealed some unusual facts about gender bias in enterprise ownership as female participation in entrepreneurship is very high in the state capital i.e., Aizawl.

The impact of motivation and social supports for female entrepreneurship were investigated by Sinha (2015). He identified that the desire to make money has motivated women entrepreneurs to start a business. The majority of the business units were micro in nature mostly handicrafts and handloom businesses which rely on self financing. Another study conducted in the same year by Limbu & Bordoloi (2015) which had projected that there is a huge opportunity to improve rural women's entrepreneurship skills which can revolutionize rural Assam's economy. areas make up a very small percentage of all entrepreneurs. They have suggested that society must support women entrepreneurs, remove stereotypes and state governments must take the better initiative to improve women entrepreneurship development in Assam.

In 2015, a study was conducted by Datta et al. (2016) on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women in Tripura. The results suggest that only 16.25 percent women have a high entrepreneurial behaviour. His study found a positive association between entrepreneurial behaviour and investment in the business, annual income, credit orientation, extension engagement, mass media participation, and level of aspiration. Also the women entrepreneur of Tripura is completely reliant on middlemen for product marketing.

Saikia & Deka (2017) revealed a significant distinction in all aspects of weaving sector and women empowerment. For women in weaving sector the most influential factors were involvement in household decisions, opening a personal account, and food contribution followed by income control and household property purchase. Their study also found that participating in entrepreneurial activities increased rural women's self-confidence, self-reliance, and independence.

The study conducted on Missing and Bodo women of Assam examined the factors that influence tribal women's decision to start a handloom micro-enterprise. The information was gathered from five different districts in Assam where tribal communities run handloom businesses. The findings show that age, knowing other handloom micro-entrepreneurs, past history of family business, access to borrowing, and risk-taking behavior have positive influences on a woman's decision to become a handloom micro-entrepreneur (Hazarika & Goswami, 2018). Another study conducted in 2018 on rural women's effective participation in entrepreneurial activities found that northeast India is a least industrially developed in the country (Agarwal, 2018).

The study conducted by Goswami et al. (2019) found five entrepreneurial motives i.e., self-dependence, preserving handloom culture, providing monetary support, formal job environment, and work-flexibility to examine entrepreneurial motivation. Thus their study found that females with higher desires to support their families financially were less likely to become micro-entrepreneurs. The study conducted by Bora (2019) investigated women empowerment through entrepreneurship. According to the study, women entrepreneurs of Assam engage in a variety of entrepreneurial activities and successfully improve their socioeconomic status through entrepreneurship. Similarly, a study was undertaken on women-run home-based businesses from various regions of the Sonitpur district of Assam where home based firm to entice young women/mothers to work with the family and develop a new idea of entrepreneur/ mompreneurs. The business allows them to pursue their professional, intellectual, or artistic interests while also contributing to the family's financial necessities (Daisy & Kalita, 2019).

Another research article published by Saikia & Bora (2019) showed that women empowerment through entrepreneurship development. Their study discovered that women entrepreneurs engage in a variety of entrepreneurial activities and that these activities help them to better their socioeconomic status in society. The study also depicted that women have been empowered by economic independence, which allows them to exercise control over their self-reliance, self-determination, and a path to a better social status. Sharma & Parida (2019) identified link between market orientation and business performance in women-owned enterprises in Guwahati and Itanagar. Their study discovered a weak positive association between company performance and market orientation.

The impact of human capital on company performance is investigated empirically in the presence of motivation as a mediating component by Chyne & Syngkon (2020). Their study has been carried out in Meghalaya's women-owned businesses, which revealed that human capital has a favourable and considerable direct and indirect impact on enterprise performance. They also suggested that motivation is important in mediating the link between human capital and company's performance. Another study in the same year conducted on Rural women entrepreneurs and chances to improve rural women's entrepreneurship skills and boosting women's empowerment by Hazarika (2020). His study emphasized on the obstacles and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in Assam. According to Kashyap & Bordoloi (2020) the motivating factor encourages women to start their own enterprises in Assam. Their study focuses on the impact of socio-economic elements for the empowerment of female entrepreneurs. They have found that monthly income from the enterprises is proven to play a significant impact in obtaining economic empowerment for women. A study conducted by Sharma & Jena (2020) examined the marketing responses of women entrepreneurs in northeast India and also forecasted marketing strategies that can improve business performance.

Discussion

The present study has collected important open sources article on the relevant field and elaborated. The selected review papers further compiled and summaries in the following table for better understanding.

Table 1: Summary of reviewed literatures.

Sl. No.	Author	Aspect of study	Method //Tools of Study	Study Area
1	Ramswamy & Kumar (2013)	Entrepreneurial Motive, Income Earned	Descriptive	Mizoram
2	Sarmah & Goowalla (2014)	Growth, Demographic Characteristics	Descriptive/ qualitative	Assam
3	Chanu & Chanu (2014)	Growth Rate, Nature of Products	Descriptive & Inferential statistics	Manipur
4	Guha & Adak (2014)	Participation in Entrepreneurship, Overall Employment	linear regression	Mizoram
5	Sarma (2014)	Entrepreneurial Opportunities, Role of Government	Explanatory	Assam
6	Sinha (2015)	Motivational Factors, Constraints, Social support	Qualitative / Narrative	North Eastern States
7	Limbu & Bordoloi (2015)	Factors for Slow Growth, Prospects for the Development	Explanatory & descriptive	Assam
8	Datta et al. (2016)	Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Personal, Socio-Economic, psychological and communication Variables	Multiple Regression	Tripura
9	Saikia & Deka (2017)	Socio-Personal and Economic Characteristics, Economic Empowerment	Inferential statistics	Assam
10	Hazarika & Goswami (2018)	Demographic and Personal variables, Socio-economic variables	Binary Probit Model	Assam
11	Agarwal (2018)	Motivating Factors, Current Position, Challenges	Descriptive	North East India
12	Bora (2019)	Socio-Economic Status, Influencing Factors, Types of Enterprises	Descriptive	Assam
13	Goswami, et al. (2019)	Motivation, Push–Pull Factors, Socio-Cultural	Logistic Regression, EFA	Assam

		Values, Education, Spouse's Income		
14	Sharma & Parida (2019)	Market Orientation, Business Performance	Correlation & Regression	Arunachal Pradesh & Assam
15	Saikia & Bora (2019)	Socio-Economic Background, Motivating Factors	Descriptive	Assam
16	Chyne & Syngkon (2020)	Human Capital, Firm Performance, Motivation	Multiple Regression	Meghalaya
17	Kashyap & Bordoloi (2020)	Motivational Factors, Empowerment, Success, Socio-Economic Factors	Regression Analysis	Assam
18	Hazarika (2020)	Present Status, Prospects, Challenges	Descriptive	Assam
19	Sharma & Jena (2020)	Influence of Marketing, Impact of Aspects of Marketing	Binary Logistic Regression	North Eastern States

Source: Compiled by Researchers.

Table 1 presents the summary of the literatures which are reviewed in this article. The maximum literatures covered are women entrepreneurship of Assam. There no literature has been found on women entrepreneurship of Nagaland and Sikkim in recent times on those online platforms. Similarly very few literatures on female entrepreneurship development has been witness in Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh. The studies which are consider for the review has common theme mostly. The most common aspects of studies are:

- i) Motivational Factors;
- ii) Demographic Characteristics;
- iii) Women Empowerment;
- iv) Status of Female Entrepreneurs;
- v) Challenges & Opportunities;
- vi) Socio-Economic Status;
- vii) Push and Pull Factors; and
- viii) Marketing.

The reviewed literatures range from the year 2013 to 2020, which are being authored by different researchers of northeast India, mainly. Maximum articles are coauthored and very few are having single author.

Conclusion

The entrepreneurial aspiration persuades an individual to start business venture (Lalhunthara, 2019) in any economy. Female entrepreneurs are motivated equally like male to do entrepreneurial activities in the northeast India. However, they have to face additional challenges from the family and society when opting an entrepreneurship career. The studies conducted by different scholars in northeastern Indian states related to women entrepreneurship highlighted various aspects & issues of female entrepreneurship. The present article projected few major findings of papers which were published during 2010 to 2020. Most of the articles showed the socio-economic and political-cultural status of women entrepreneurs in the northeastern society. Those scholars also gave equal importance to women empowerment through women's liberty to start their independent venture. The study overall tried to find the number of research conducted on women entrepreneurship in northeast India so to understand the gap in the existing knowledge available online.

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