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## Research Article

### IS SOCIAL BACKGROUND RESPONSIBLE TO DEVELOP CERTAIN ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS?

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#### ABSTRACT

The main hypothesis of the paper is that the social background of women entrepreneurs does not have any relationship with the entrepreneurial traits that they possess. In this paper, social background of women entrepreneurs of Kamrup (urban) district of Assam and the entrepreneurial traits among them have been explored; the degree of different entrepreneurial traits among them are also measured. The findings show that self esteemed, self efficacy, need for achievement and internal locus of control are the entrepreneurial traits which are found among women entrepreneurs of the study area. The paper which is both descriptive and analytical in nature is based on both primary and secondary data. 5 point scale has been used to measure the degree of traits and spearman correlation analysis has been apply to find out the relationship between the social background and traits among women entrepreneurs of the study area.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Though the studies on women issues were in large number in the middle part of twentieth century, the studies on women entrepreneurship came to the light only during eighties when Schwartz's academic publication came out in 1976, on female entrepreneurship in the Journal of Contemporary Business. It is considered as the first academic publication on women entrepreneurship. Since then, there has been a rapid growth on the studies of women entrepreneurship. However, there is no common definition on 'who is a women entrepreneur and what are the characteristics of a women entrepreneur.' Some believe that women entrepreneurs are the product of the 'changed business environment of the contemporary world' and according to their opinion, the characteristics of women entrepreneurs are highly influenced by the social and cultural system.

In a patriarchal society, though it is a tradition on the part of women to make efficient management of household affairs, women also engage in agricultural activities, family business trade and commerce and other related economic activities. There is also emergence of a good number of women entrepreneurs who perform better than their male counterparts in terms of contribution towards the economic growth of a country. Presently, the major problems faced by developing

countries of the world including India are illiteracy, hunger and starvation, poverty, malnutrition, ill-health, unsafe drinking water, low per capita income, population explosion, under employment and unemployment, low capital formation, low living standard, etc. There is an existence of inequalities in the distribution of existing economic resources. Women entrepreneurship development would help to a certain extent to check some of the above constraints of development issues. However, in this age of commercialization and modernization of the economy, the survival of women entrepreneurs are largely depend upon the traits they possess and their actions. In the present paper, the authors highlight the social background of women entrepreneurs of the study area and the relationship of the social background and entrepreneurial traits possessed by them.

##### Statement of the problem

The thoughts and actions of a person is largely influenced by the social system which he/she exists. Marx also said that men are the product of the environment. If so, is there any relationship between the present social system and entrepreneurial traits of women entrepreneurs? If women entrepreneurs are influenced by the social system, how much influenced? These are the certain issues which have been highlighted in the present paper.

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**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In order to explore the influence of entrepreneurial traits on women entrepreneurs, the present study has included academic literature on each of the four traits of entrepreneurial traits (a) Self-esteem, (b) Self-efficacy (c) Need for achievement and (d) Internal locus of control are examined independently in the context of entrepreneurship. The details are shown below. According to Schweitzer, Seth-Smith, & Call an, (1992), ‘Self-esteem’ refers to a basic appraisal of personal worth made by an individual. It is critical in determining one’s success in one’s career, as it reflects the overall evaluation of an individual towards capability and worthiness. A study by Stoner, Hartman & Arora, (1990) on the work-home role conflict of women business owners links self esteem or self worth of the owner with business satisfaction, proposing that in the lean initial years in the life of the firm, self worth of the entrepreneur is strongly affected by business satisfaction and the financial health of the business. Regarding ‘Self-confidence of entrepreneurs’, according to Shane, Locke and Collins (2003), it is the ability of entrepreneurs to trust their own judgment and the belief that the entrepreneur has the ability to apply the necessary personal skills and capabilities to achieve a certain level of success in running the business. Entrepreneurs with self-confidence in a project they are pursuing persevere through setbacks, aim higher, and develop better plans and strategies for the task. They take negative feedback in a positive manner and use that feedback to improve the performance of their businesses. Although entrepreneurs are faced with several obstacles, such as sources of finance during business start-up and lack of business skills, belief in themselves never fades. They feel that the success in their entrepreneurship requires self-confidence (Burns, 2007 and Kuratko, 2009).

According to Anna, *et. al.*, (1999), Baum & Locke, (2004), Hmieleski & Corbett, (2008), individuals with higher self-efficacy exhibit higher venture initiation activity as well as greater persistence in venture creation behaviors. ‘Need for achievement’ is one of the most studied entrepreneurial traits of entrepreneur. It was first introduced by David C Mc Clelland as behavior of individual towards competing with excellence and argued that since beginning, human being have desire to accomplish, need to excel, succeed or achieve . (1961). According to Hornaday & Aboud (1971), these are not only motivational factor for startup of entrepreneurial venture, but also contribute to the success. According to Johnson, (1990) to satisfy this need, an individual tend to be an entrepreneur.. According to Elliot (2006), ‘need for achievement’ consists of two parts, one is hope for success and second is fear of failure. According to Kaufmann, *et. al.*, (1996), Mueller & Thomas, (2001), Rotter & Mulry, (1965) ‘ locus of Control’ refers to the degree to which an individual believes that one has influenced over life outcomes through one’s own ability, effort, or skills. A study by Wallston & Wallston, (1978), Kaufmann *et al.*, (1996), Mueller & Thomas, (2001), Ahmed, (1985), Pandey & Tewari, (1979), and Pareek, (1981) it has not only received substantial attention in behavioral research but is also identified as a key personal trait associated with entrepreneurial values and behavior in both Western as well as Indian studies. According to Bandura, (1986), an internal locus of control leads to a better control of life situations as well as external

risks, which are highly relevant for entrepreneurs, through a relationship between locus of control and autonomy.

**Objectives**

1. To find out the entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs of the study area.
2. To measure the degree of entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs of the study area.
3. To examine the relationship between social background and entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs of the study area.

**Hypothesis**

H0: There is no positive relationship between social background of women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial traits.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study is descriptive and empirical in nature and is based on both primarily and secondary data. To collect primary data a survey instrument was developed relating to the research objectives and personal interview design was adopted.

**Table 1** Profile of social background among women entrepreneurs

Caste	Frequency	Percentage
General	16	40
SC	10	25
ST	04	10
OBC	10	25
Total	40	100
Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hinduism	30	75
Islam	03	7.5
Christianism	02	5
Jainism	03	7.5
Others	02	5
Total	40	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	32	80
Unmarried	06	15
Widow	02	05
Total	40	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	-	-
Primary Education	03	7.5
Secondary Education	12	30
Graduation	20	50
Post Graduation	05	12.5
Others	-	-
Total	40	100
Types of Family	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear	26	65
Joint	14	35
Total	40	100
Ethnic Origin	Frequency	Percentage
Assamese	26	65
Non-Assamese	14	35
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey

**Table 2** Entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs

Variables	Yes	No	Total
Self esteem	40 (100)	-	40 (100)
Self efficacy	36 (90)	4 (10)	40 (100)
Need for achievement	40 (100)	-	40 (100)
Internal locus of control	35 (87.5)	5 (12.5)	40 (100)

Source: Field Survey; Figure in bracket indicates percentage.

A structured schedule which contains both open and close ended questions was distributed to the respondents. Primary data are collected from 40 women entrepreneurs engaged in different units of both manufacturing and service sector (Handicraft, Handlooms, food processing, travel agencies, apparel, restaurant, tailoring, cosmetics product and beauty parlour).

percent belong to Islam, 5 percent belong to Christianity and 7.5 percent belong to others religion. Marital status wise distribution shows that 80 percent respondents are married. They are doing their entrepreneurial to support to their household, improve economic condition and to enhance self status in the society while unmarried women (15 percent) and widow (5 percent) are doing their business to earn a living.

**Table 3** Degree of entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
<b>Self Esteem</b>					
E1	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
E2	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
E3	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
E4	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
E5	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
Average				1.0250	
<b>Self Efficacy</b>					
SF1	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
SF2	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
SF3	40	1.00	1.00	1.0000	.00000
SF4	40	1.00	3.00	1.0500	.05000
SF5	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
Average				1.025	
<b>Need for Achievement</b>					
N1	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
N2	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
N3	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
N4	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
N5	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
Average				1.0250	
<b>Internal Locus of Control</b>					
IL1	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
IL2	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
IL 3	40	1.00	2.00	1.0250	.02500
IL 4	40	1.00	1.00	1.0000	.00000
IL 5	40	1.00	1.00	1.0000	.00000
Average				1.015	

Source: Field Survey

Secondary data were collected from Library, books, magazines, newspaper, journals and official reports. To analyse and interpret data, descriptive statistics like tabulation, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation test were done through SPSS. 5 point scale (1=highly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree and 5=highly disagree) was also used to measure the degree of entrepreneurial traits.

**Findings**

**Social Profile of women entrepreneurs of the study area**

The distribution of respondents based on the social variables which is shown in Table 1 clearly reveals that as far as caste wise distribution is concerned, 40 percent of respondents belong general caste categories, 25 percent each belong to scheduled caste and other backward classes and 10percent of respondents belong to scheduled tribe. From the Religion-wise distribution of respondents, it has been found that majority of the respondents (75percent) belong to Hinduism while 7.5

Regarding the educational qualification of respondents, it is found that a half of the total respondents are graduate (50 percent); 7.5percent of respondents have education up to primary level, 30 percent up to secondary level. Majority of respondents (65) women entrepreneurs belong to nuclear family. The Ethnic origin wise distribution shows that majority (65 percent) are Assamese and 35 percent are non-Assamese.

**Entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs of the study area**

Table 2 shows that all the respondents possess ‘self esteemed’ and ‘need for achievement’ of entrepreneurial traits, 90 percent of respondents possess ‘self efficacy’ and 87.5 percent possess ‘internal locus of control’.

**Degree of entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs of the study area**

The descriptive result of the degree of entrepreneurial traits among the respondents is shown in table 3. For each of the four

entrepreneurial traits five factors are taken. From the mean score and standard deviation result which are shown in table 3, it is clearly revealed that there is higher degree of entrepreneurial traits among the respondents. The average result is same in case of all the three traits but in case of 'internal locus of control' the mean value is 1.015 and computed standard deviation value is .094866 which also means that there is high degree of entrepreneurial traits among the respondents.

**Relationship between social background and entrepreneurial traits among women entrepreneurs:** In order to know the direction of relationship between social background and entrepreneurial traits among the respondents, hypothesis testing is done by using spearman correlation.

**Hypothesis testing**

The spearman correlation analysis result of all the four entrepreneurial traits (which is shown in table 4) is .167 and Phi is .207. It means there is almost no relationship between social background of women entrepreneurs and all the four entrepreneurial traits; though the results are found to be positive in nature, the calculated Phi value indicates that the relationship is very weak. Hence, the null hypothesis 'there is no positive relationship between social background of women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial traits' is rejected.

**Table 4** Hypothesis testing result

Variables	Phi	Spearman correlation
Self esteemed	.207	.167
Self esteemed	.207	.167
Need for Achievement	.207	.167
Internal Locus of Control	.207	.167

**CONCLUSION**

To become a successful entrepreneur, women entrepreneurs have to possess certain entrepreneurial traits. It may be different from one entrepreneur to another entrepreneur. The psychological study of women entrepreneurs, hence, to be considered a an important area of study. The present study considers the four entrepreneurial traits such as self esteemed, self efficacy, locus of control and high need for achievement and these are important successful variables of the entrepreneurship. The presence of these traits will help the women entrepreneurs of Kamrup (Urban) district of Assam to make them successful women entrepreneurs. The overall analysis of these variables establishes that there is no relationship between social background of women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial trait among women entrepreneurs of the study area. However, it is observed from the field study that women entrepreneurs need training, financial support, marketing network to sale their products. Hence, there is a need for conducting training programmes with regard new production techniques, sales techniques, etc., by the government and entrepreneurial promoting agencies.

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