

Constraints of Work Life Balance of Women Entrepreneurs in Kokrajhar and Chirang District, BTAD, Assam

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a heroic mission for women in BTAD, Assam. Women entrepreneur is a human being who accepts challenges to congregate their personal needs and turn out to be economically self-sufficient, risk takers, leadership qualities and maintains their family unit healthier than their husbands. According to Beryl Ayn Young, work-life-balance means setting to commitments (both for work and home) and sticking to them. Work-life-balance is being able to flexibly handle multiple responsibilities- at home, work and in the society without fault or lament. A nation can only be developing if its women are getting numerous opportunities and freedom to success. The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through a well structured questionnaire and interview. A sample of 25 respondents is being collected from Kokrajhar and Chirang district of BTAD, Assam registered under DIC. The collected data are analysed and interpreted using tables and descriptive statistics by SPSS and MS Excel. The main objective is to study the demographic characteristics of women entrepreneurship and how the women entrepreneurs manage work life balance. The study shows that extensive support and encouragement from family and society has helped the women entrepreneurs to achieve the height of new scale in business ventures.

Key Words: 1.Women Entrepreneurship, 2.Work Life Balance, 3. Family

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship is considered as a major pitch in the competitive business world. Women entrepreneur is a human being who accepts challenges to congregate their personal needs and turn out to be economically self-sufficient and maintains their family unit healthier than their husbands. **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam** rightly quoted that “Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to development of good family, good society and ultimately good nation”. (**Beryl Ayn Young**) Work-life-balance means setting to commitments (both for work and home) and sticking to them. To me is being able to flexibly handle multiple responsibilities- at home, work and in the society without fault or lament. The chore of women entrepreneurs is to explore the prospects of starting modern venture by way of innovations and ought to be ready to acquire the risks, be in charge of trade and provide effectual leadership in all aspects of business. At this instant, women of both rural and urban areas are fascinated in establishing their own business to defeat poverty, generate family income, education of their children, improve family health, increase standard of living and to develop into self-dependent. Empowering women will escort to economic independence, reduce gender discrimination and establish a superior position of the women in the society. In the rural areas, economic status of women is very stumpy and their earning is much less. For that reason, at household level, women are encouraging to set up micro-enterprises, which play a key role in ensuring the survival of poor household and in building up women’s economic status, confidence and skills and meant for the economic comfort of the ancestors. At, present, women have been bearing in mind, equal partners with the male in the route of socio- economic progress. Previously, women in India and predominantly in countryside area were deserted component of the civilization; they deprive education and had to depend on their husbands.

Status of Women Entrepreneurship in BTAD:

About 49.10% (census 2011) of total population of BTAD consists of women. Out of which only 5% inhabit in town with a tradition by keeping them confined to the boundary created by the society. The willingness to come forward and establish their own venture with their own effort is still to be developed. Initiative has to be taken by local government with the support of state and central government by creating facilities of entrepreneurial training, education, financial support, reservation for women run enterprise, etc with the help of District Industries and Commerce (DIC's). The literacy rate for men is higher to women; the proportion of male rate is 71.78 percent and 59.70 percent for women. Education is fundamental to women's empowerment and way to eliminate gender disparity in the socio-economic aspects of life (**Gunajit Sarma, 2014**). Generally, in Tribal community women are very active and work hard for the family. They mainly depend on weaving traditional dresses for their livelihood. Now-a-days many of them have started business.. It is seen that some of them weave clothes by using modern methods of the technology and earn money by selling them. However, one drawback is that they are not getting opportunity to cope with the modern society. They deprived of many privileges of being women. It is found that women in BTAD have lot of potential to earn their own income, but they do not have the marketing potential. They have lot of innovative skills in weaving clothes, handloom and textiles, beauty parlours. Again, it is found that, the women do most of the traditional works of BTAD but they are not coming to the front and remain unknown to the society. If their products are sold through proper channel to the large market network, will increase their income and productivity. As a result, of which, the economy of BTAD can be improved through women entrepreneurship development. They do their work with full effort, patience, and they very politely and softly treat their customers. They, have the power to impress the customers. Problems are many, but to bring out the entire population out of grip of prejudice, the women should get themselves prepared to change themselves with the changing environment. Thus, women empowerment will raise the women position in the society, live independently, and support their family's wealth.

Review of literatures:

Goswami (2006); scrutinize the economic and non-economic causes. Women entrepreneurs' involvement in household works discards them from learning and joining skill development training for a successful business concern. **S. Veena and Samani (2008)**, **Mazumder and Ahmed (February 2015)**, **Ram et.al. (2013)** done parallel studies on women entrepreneurship who contributes to the economic well-being of family, communities and reduces poverty and attain better position in the society. The findings include that women entrepreneurs in nuclear family obtained more help from husband and family. They opine that socio-economic status had significant influence over entrepreneurial behaviour. **Sigroha (2014)** **Kluezyk (2013)** founds that there is significant difference in the employee's perception about the work-life-balance facilities on overall performance. WLB by family maintained by friendly initiatives- flexi-time, childcare, wellness programme maternity leave etc. at work place balance work and life. **S. Susi and K. Juwaharrani (2011)** explore the work-life-culture and work-life-balance policies and practices followed in industries in order to retain employee's engagement in business in a productive way. **Devi (2013)**; made a comparative study between the women entrepreneur of Manipur and Assam and elicited the information on motivation factors of both the states that includes self-employment, improve family income and generate employment through moral support and time management from their families to become flourishing entrepreneur. **Gupta (January 2013)**, **Subash and Bordoloi (2015)** prepared similar study and describes about the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs of BTAD and Assam who lacks in finance, resources availability and government concerns. The women entrepreneurs in Assam and BTAD are very negligible, and are treated as dependent part of society and for that reason they requires coordinated action from different stakeholders as well as the government. **Borah (July 2014)**; measured the socio-economic status and standard of living. Most of the women entrepreneurs are educated in Morigaon district of Assam. Therefore, providing scope for training, financial support marketing network to sell their products will encourage sustainable development of women enterprise. **Sarma (2014)**; analysed the effect of promoting a

tool for development of women enterprise in BTAD area. Establishing women colleges and educational institutions, providing awareness of government funded schemes provides loan to women entrepreneur and improve their social status.

Research Methodology:

Area of the Study: The present study attempts to discuss the various the demographic characteristics of women entrepreneurship and problems related to running the enterprise and maintaining family ties through entrepreneurship in Kokrajhar and Chirang Districts of BTAD, Assam. Kokrajhar is the Capital of BTAD. It came into existence immediately after surrender of Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLFT) cadres on 10th February 2003 under the Governor J. B. Patnaik and Chief Executive member Hagrama Mahilary. Chirang is the newly formed District of BTAD carved out of Bongaigaon and Barpeta District of Assam in the year 2011.

Objectives of the Study: Following are the objectives of the study-

- To study the demographic characteristics of women entrepreneurship.
- To study how the women entrepreneurs manages household work and business life.

Sample Design: The samples for the study are taken from the District Industries and Commerce of Kokrajhar and Chirang. A total of 83 women entrepreneurs are registered under DIC Kokrajhar and Chirang. Out of which Kokrajhar have 56 registered women entrepreneurs and Chirang have 27 registered women entrepreneur. Out of which a total of 25 samples are collected from Kokrajhar and 15 respondents from Chirang district. The targeted group for the study were the registered women entrepreneurs of these two districts.

Sources of Data: The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through a well structured questionnaire and interview. The secondary sources include-newspaper, journals, District Industries Hand Book of Kokrajhar and Chirang, DIC, and websites. The collected data are analysed and interpreted using tables and descriptive statistics by using SPSS and MS Excel.

Limitations of the Study: Every research has some limitation. However, hard work has been done to reduce these limitations and make the study effectual and reliable. The range of limitations are-

- The study is limited to the registered women entrepreneurs under DIC. Hence, the actual scenario of women entrepreneurs in Kokrajhar and Chirang cannot be recognized.
- Resource constraint is also limited for the study- language and culture.

Research Questions:

1. Are family ties and responsibilities became obstacle for women entrepreneurs?
2. How women become successful entrepreneurs along with family responsibilities?
3. Is modernization and expansion possible in women oriented business?

Data Analysis and Discussion:

In order to subject the data to statistical testing, the collected data were coded and analysed using SPSS and also tabulated with percentage using MS Excel.

Demographic characteristics of women entrepreneur:

The demographic characteristics of the women entrepreneur are given in Table No. 1. Out of the 40 respondents taken for the study, 45% belong to the age group 30-40 years. Regarding marital status 63% are married 35% are living in a family of 5-7 members. 45% of the women entrepreneurs are class 12 passed and 80% are first generation entrepreneurs and 60% of them works for 5-10 hours. Sources of fund were difficult to manage at initial time and 40% of them take loans from private financier with high interest rates. 70% are staying in nuclear family and 80% of them get family support in household tasks, financial help, rearing children. 32% are engaged in garments, weaving, tailoring, and 35% in beauty parlour and remaining in other type of business. Areas of conflict arise in domestic work, and managing work life balance. However, 32% of the women entrepreneur says that they don't face any problems in managing household task and business.

Table No. 1- Demographic Characteristics

Particulars	Classifications	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age Group	Below 20	2	5
	20-30	15	37
	30-40	18	45
	40 and above	5	13
Marital Status	Unmarried	5	13
	Married	25	63
	Divorce	3	7
	Widow	6	15
	Separated	1	2
Children	Yes	32	80
	No	8	20
Family size	Less than 3	7	17
	3-5	10	25
	5-7	14	35
	7 and above	9	23
No. of dependents	Less than 3	1	
	3-5	5	
	5-7	10	
	7 and above	6	
	Total = 22		
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	1	2
	HSLC	12	30
	12 th passed	18	45
	Graduate and above	9	23
Type of entrepreneur	First generation entrepreneur	32	80
	Parents as entrepreneur	5	13
	In-laws as entrepreneurs	3	7
Entrepreneurial experience	Less than 3 years	7	18
	3-5 years	10	25
	5-7 years	11	27
	7-9 years	3	7
	9 years and above	9	23
Time spent in enterprise	1-5 hours	5	13
	5-10 hours	24	60
	More than 10 hours	11	27
Sources of funds	Self	9	23
	Spouse and family members	7	17
	Bank	3	7
	Friends and relatives	5	13
	Others	16	40
Type of family	Nuclear	17	43

	Joint	23	57
Family support	Yes	32	80
	No	8	20
Nature of support	Household tasks	9	23
	Rearing children	6	15
	Financial help	10	25
	Marketing of products	4	10
	Managing enterprise	3	7
	No support	8	20
Type of business	Garments, weaving, tailoring	15	38
	Beauty parlour	14	35
	Pickle and jam	1	2
	Printing and DTP	2	5
	Rice Mill Plant	2	5
	Water Aqua	1	2
	Miscellaneous	5	13
	Areas of conflict	Domestic work	9
Inconvenience of family members		2	5
Being a good spouse		9	23
Children's education		7	17
No conflicts between two role		13	32

Source: Field survey

Table No.2- Descriptive Statistics- Numerical variables

Quantitative variables	No. of respondents					
	Mean	Median	Std. deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Age of respondents	12.67	15	6.80656	5	18	13
Marital status	8.75	4.5	11.02648	1	25	24
Educational qualification	13	12	4.582576	9	18	9
Type of entrepreneur	4	4	1.414214	3	5	2
Time spent in enterprise	17.5	17.5	9.192388	11	24	13
Sources of funds	7.75	6	5.737305	3	16	13
No. of dependents in family	7	6	2.64575	5	10	5
Family size	11	10	2.64575	9	14	5
Year of entrepreneurial experience	8.25	9.5	12.91667	3	11	8
Type of business	4.1667	2	5.036533	1	14	13
Nature of help	6.2	6	2.863564	3	10	7
Areas of conflict	7.75	8	4.573437	2	13	11

Work Life Balance of Women Entrepreneurs:

In the earlier period, women were considered as home makers and restricted to the four walls only. But with the passage of time, women now break the stereotype thinking of people and society, and engaged themselves in entrepreneurial tasks to establish their own identity. The financial condition of a family doesnot solely depends on male counterparts only. Women are also accountable to a healthier family.

Eagerness to become self dependent, own boss, make own rules and regulations of business has encouraged many women entrepreneurs to establish their own enterprise, balancing proper time between business and family ties. Their success also depends upon support from family, spouse and society at large. In managing family and business women are now not able to take proper care of their health and personal activities; which is very essential to live a happy and disease free life. Inability to attend domestic work after a demanding day in business leads to conflicts. Work and family are two indispensable elements of both family and business. So, in order to sustain a healthy work-life-balance, a women entrepreneur needs to employ flexible schedule involving work and personal responsibilities. **(Dhas and Karthikeyan, 2015)** Juggling between the commitment of family and expectation of the enterprise plus steady effort to retain work-life-balance can have solemn allegation on the individual and in general the quality of life. In this background, the present study is a step towards analysing issues confronted by female entrepreneurs of Kokrajhar and Chirang district of BTAD, Assam in maintaining work-life-balance.

Ratings of Work Life Balance (WLB) Issues (N=40):

The research study contained 13 statements related to WLB issues. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement from 1(strongly agree) to 5(strongly disagree). Among all of the WLB related statements presented in the table, the statement was “Family is my first priority” rated highest with a mean statistics of 1.8500; followed by the statement “I take care of my children and managing their education” with mean statistic 2.1750 and “I spent more time in family than business” with mean statistics of 2.1000; this proves that women entrepreneurs in Kokrajhar and Chirang district of BTAD area gives much priority to family and children care. Again, observing the mean statistic of “I can balance work and family domain satisfactorily” with a mean statistic of 1.9500 shows that inspite of having attachment with family members, the women entrepreneur of Kokrajhar and Chirang are very determined about their business affairs and are striking to maintain a favourable work life balance. Lastly “Societal constraints and family do not support modernisation and expansion” with 2.1500 mean statistic. Thus, majority of women entrepreneurs established a strong relationship when it comes to family bonding and supervising a tension free business life. They are solemn to present business situation as society and family doesn’t support expansion because expansion requires more time, dedication and money. The family believes that this will harm and reduce time for their family constraints. *(Highest mean statistics shows lowest priority)*

Table No. 3- Factor analysing work life balance of the respondents:

Issues	Eigen value	Standard Deviation	Cumulative variance	Mean
F1. Are family ties and responsibilities became obstacle for women entrepreneurs?				
Family is my first priority.	1.513	.80224	39.571	1.8500
I take care of my children and managing their education.	1.311	.84391	32.780	2.1750
I spent more time in family than business.	1.106	.92819	27.649	2.1000
I am facing domestic violence.		.51578		3.8750
F2. How women become successful entrepreneurs along with family responsibilities?				
I can balance work and family domain satisfactorily.	1.607	.87560	40.184	1.9500
I get family support in daily chores at home.	1.452	1.06187	36.305	2.2750
I am a successful entrepreneur by scarifying my family roles.		.96044	23.511	2.2750
I don't face family conflict on regular basis.		.933700		3.5000

F3. Is modernization and expansion possible in women oriented business?				
Too costly for targeted customers.	1.764	1.27124	35.279	2.7500
Societal constraints and family don't support modernization.	1.394	1.27199	27.871	2.1500
Fear of taking risks.	1.032	1.30850	20.630	3.6750
Lack of technical know-how.	.811	1.33949	16.220	2.7250
Satisfied with the existing business.		1.38119		3.7000

Source: Field survey

The above table shows the factors which are of personal level constraints for women entrepreneurs showing how they maintain proper work life balance inspite of all the challenges and are they interested for modernisation and expansion of their enterprise. It is found that they give more priority to family than business and are able to manage both properly but society and family doesn't support them in expansion and modernisation.

Findings:

1. 63% of the women entrepreneur in Kokrajhar and Chirang are married, and 45% are in the age group 30-40 having highest educational qualification upto class 12 passed, where 57% belonging to joint family.
2. 80% of them are first generation entrepreneur, 60% working for 5-10 hours a day, followed by 27% working for more than 10 hours.
3. 80% of them get family support in managing a proper work-life-balance as 32% of them said that they do not face any conflict between dual role of family and work.

Conclusion:

Entrepreneurship among women increases wealth of the country and the family respectively. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that women consider access to entrepreneurial trade despite of family challenges. They are able to maintain a proper balance between family and business life overcoming all the challenges. Women of Kokrajhar and Chirang have proved that they have faith and confidence in themselves to become successful, independent and contribute to family income leading a comfortable life. Raising the participation of women in entrepreneurial activity will lead to an industrial society gaining equality and equal participation in economic development. The problems and difficulties of women are multi-dimensional, therefore a supportive family, spouse society and employees is required by these women in balancing their work and family life and achieve the height of new scale in business ventures.

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