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# A Study of Leadership Styles of Women Entrepreneurs in India

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## Abstract

*Economic development of any region is an outcome of purposeful efforts by different sections of the society. One of the major contributors to the economy is an entrepreneur. Entrepreneur is a person who organizes and operates the business and is responsible for the results in the business. Women entrepreneurship development is an important part of Human Resource Development. Entrepreneurship in women has been a very recent concern. Women have become aware of their existence, their rights, and their work situations. In the present scenario, women want to be independent in social and economic aspects. Several studies have been carried out in the area of women entrepreneurship but studies related to the leadership styles followed by famous entrepreneurs are limited. The present paper studies the leadership style followed by women entrepreneurs in India and what problems they have faced in their endeavors. The myth that women cannot engage in productive employment needs to be dispelled. Women are growing as successful in different areas and playing vital role in the socio economic development of the country.*

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurs, Leadership Styles, Problems Faced.

**Introduction:** In the ancient times women were considered inferior to men in every aspect. But with civilization and modernization the concept of women empowerment and feminism also came in light. The concept of women entrepreneurship was also a part of these approaches. Women Entrepreneurs is a person who accepts challenging roles to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. It may be defined as the woman or group of women who initiate, organize and co-operate a business enterprise. According to J.A. Schumpeter, "Woman who innovates, imitates, or adopts a business activity woman entrepreneur."

Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs "as an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of employment generated in the enterprise to women." The Indian women are no longer treated as dumb puppets. They are also enjoying the impact of globalization and making an influence not only in Indian market but also on international platform. The role of women business entrepreneurs in the economic development of the nation is inevitable. Earlier women entered only in a few fields like fashion, accessories and consumables. But now a day's women have excelled in fields like trade, engineering, chemical and industry.

### Objectives:

- To understand the status of women entrepreneurs in India.
- To understand the characteristics traits of successful women entrepreneurs and the strategies that they follow.

### Review of Literature:

**Sanjukta Mishra, (2009)** has conducted a study on types of women entrepreneurs, supportive measures to develop women entrepreneurship, financial schemes, technological training, federations and association and the problems faced by women entrepreneurs. The study concluded that women today are willing to take activities that were once considered to be preserved for men, and have proved that they are second to no one with respect to contribution to the growth of the economy.

**Dr Sunil Deshpande and Ms. Sunita Sethi, (2009), conducted** a study on problems of starting up a business venture by women, and also suggested effective solutions for overcoming these problems. They further concluded that women's participation in the field of entrepreneurship is increasing at a considerable rate. At global effort also efforts are being made to enhance involvement of women in enterprises. They also discussed about the supportive factors for the development of women entrepreneurship like attitudinal change of society towards women, increasing literacy rate among women gender, government assistance and supports provide to this sector, etc.

**Singh, (2008),** identifies the reasons & influencing factors behind entry of women in entrepreneurship. He explained the characteristics of their businesses in Indian context and also obstacles & challenges. He mentioned the obstacles in the growth of women entrepreneurship are mainly lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs, social un-acceptance as women entrepreneurs, family responsibility, gender discrimination, missing network, low priority given by

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bankers to provide loan to women entrepreneurs. He suggested the remedial measures like promoting micro enterprises, unlocking institutional frame work, projecting & pulling to grow & support the winners etc. The study advocates for ensuring synergy among women related ministry, economic ministry & social & welfare development ministry of the Government of India.

**Dr Vijayakumar, (2011)**, in their study on women entrepreneurship in India focused on the problems, issues, challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, how to overcome them and to analyze policies of Indian government for and problems faced by them while pursuing their business. He also depicted that the increasing presence of women in the business field as entrepreneurs has changed the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country. He concludes that Women being the vital gender of the overall population have great capacity and potential to be the contributor in the overall economic development of any nation. Therefore, programs and policies need to be customized to not just encourage entrepreneurship as well as implement strategies which can help support entrepreneurial culture among youth.

**Dima Jamali, (2009)**, made a study on the constraints and opportunities facing women entrepreneurs in developing countries. He examined the interplay of constraints and opportunities affecting female entrepreneurs and studied micro and macro level perspectives. The opportunities facing women entrepreneurs were mostly identified at the micro level like opportunity identification and strong motivation; and related to personal characteristics of self efficacy, resilience and autonomy.

**Bhardwaj and Parashar, (2010)**, have conducted a study opportunities and challenges face by women entrepreneur in India. The study found out the difference among various sets of people of the crucial factors which are concerned with the women entrepreneurial opportunities at large. They concluded that issues affecting business women vary from place to place and also vary according to the nature of business. They also said that though there are differences in factors but the contribution of women entrepreneurs is very crucial for the development of the economy.

#### **Methodology:**

In this study we have collected data of 5 sample women entrepreneurs working in Indian. This sample is selected on the basis of convenience sampling and we have covered different areas of businesses. Secondary data has been used for collecting the data with the help of journals, newspaper, articles and websites.

- **Ekta Kapoor:** Ekta Kapoor is aptly called the reigning queen of Indian television industry. She is the

daughter of the bollywood actor Jeetendra Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor and the sister of Tusshar Kapoor, who is also an actor. She did her schooling from Bombay Scottish School, Mahim and attended college at Mithibai College, Mumbai. She was not interested in academics, and on the advice of her father, ventured into television serial production at the age of 19. And soon she changed the face of Indian television industry and dominated it.

Today Ekta Kapoor is the creative director of Balaji Telefilms, a production house started by her father Mr. Jeetendra Kapoor. Her company has produced more than 25 TV serials each one is being shown on an average for four times in a week on different channels. Ekta Kapoor's serials have captured the imagination of the masses. She has broken all the previous records of serial production and their popularity among Indian masses.

Ekta Kapoor has long held the title of the queen of the Indian Television Industry. For her entrepreneurial skills and achievements, Ekta Kapoor has been awarded with Earnst and Young (E&Y) Startup Entrepreneur of The Year Award. In the short span of her career this young entrepreneur of India has achieved many wards and civic honors. She was chosen to lead the Confederation of Indian Industries' (CII) entertainment committee.

**Entrepreneurial Style:** Ekta is a completely hands-on-manager. She is closely involved with every aspect of her serials, be it the script, cast, sets, the dresses, the make-up of the characters and the marketing of the serials. As the creative head of BTL, she provided all story ideas. She supervises the team of associate creative directors and executive producers who write scripts. She personally auditions the actors who play various parts in the serials, as she believes she has a knack for choosing right faces for the right parts.

**Problems Faced:** Despite the popularity of her soaps, Ekta has received a lot of criticism for her controversial and bold scenes, the portrayal of female characters, false sophisticated sets, and repetitive plots. Ekta had to face a lot of criticism for her serials as well as for her attitude. On the human resource front, Ekta is totally professional. She acquired the image of an ogre and most of her subordinates were reluctant to approach her cabin due to her attitude.

- **Shahnaz Hussain:** Shahnaz Hussain has ushered an era of herbal cosmetics. She comes from a royal Muslim family. She did her schooling from the Irish convent. She got married, when she was only fifteen years old. At a very young age, she became a mother. When she went to Teheran along with her husband, she developed a keen interest in beauty treatments. Eventually, she decided to study the cosmetology course. She wanted to be self independent and so she began writing articles for the Iran Tribune on varied subjects.

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While pursuing studies, she learnt about the harmful effects of chemicals on human body. She studied Ayurveda and believed that it is the best alternative to chemical cosmetics. After leaving Teheran, she took an extensive training in cosmetic therapy for a long period of 10 years from the leading institutions of London, Paris, New York and Copenhagen. She returned to India in the year 1977 and established her first beauty salon in her abode. Unlike other salons, she did not use chemical cosmetics. Rather, she made use of Ayurvedic products that are absolutely safe on the human body.

Shahnaz Husain, CEO of Shahnaz Herbals Inc, the prominent Indian female entrepreneur best known for her herbal cosmetics, particularly skin care products. Currently, Shahnaz Hussain Group is the largest manufacturer of herbal products in the world. Shahnaz Hussain Group, New Delhi is worth \$ 100 million. This group has employed almost 4200 people in 650 saloons across 104 countries across the globe.

**Entrepreneurial Style:** Shahnaz Husain's journey as an entrepreneur is a great inspiration for all the young entrepreneurs and new ventures. Shahnaz Husain is one of the rare and few first generation women entrepreneur, pioneer, visionary and an innovator, who introduced a totally new concept of Ayurvedic Care and Cure worldwide. While studying cosmetology, she came to know about the harmful effects of the chemical cosmetics and this was the reason of her turned attention to Ayurveda. In the initial days, when she started Shahnaz Herbals in New Delhi with a mere investment of Rs. 35000, she herself used to go to people to give live demonstration of her products. She used to do door-to-door marketing of her products and did a lot of hard work to nourish her company. Today Shahnaz Herbals has become the market leader of Ayurvedic beauty products in the world. The group's sophisticated Research & Development units develop the products and put them through stringent quality tests. Shahnaz Hussain's unique entrepreneurial style is that she has never advertised any of her products. She believes that a satisfied customer is the best form of advertisement. Hussain's innovations and spirit of enterprise are well matched. Through her career, regular columns and books, she has created an awareness of the dangers of chemical treatments that has influenced minds and market demands. Her career is a portrayal of how she has translated her ideas into reality, living life by her values and unique philosophy. Her profound knowledge of natural care, her energy and vitality, as well as her faith in her own abilities, make it a story of a woman who dared to dream and succeeded.

• **Preetha Reddy:** Preetha Reddy is best known as the "queen of health care". Inspired and guided by her father, Dr. Prathap C. Reddy, the pioneer of corporatized healthcare in India, Dr. Preetha Reddy had formally joined Apollo Hospitals as Joint Managing Director in

1989 and five years later, she became the Managing Director of the Group. In this position she spearheaded the group's growth as quaternary and tertiary care hospitals in urban and semi-urban India, primary care & diagnostic family clinics, pharmacies, health education and research endeavours, global clinical trials, wellness, healthcare consulting, business process operations and healthcare technology services. Today, with over 8,500 beds across 50 hospitals, and a significant presence at every touch-point of the medical value chain, Apollo Hospitals is one of Asia's largest healthcare groups.

Dr. Preetha Reddy was ranked in the International list of "50 Most Powerful Women in Business", by Fortune in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and also in 'The Most Powerful Women in Business' List compiled by Fortune India 2011, 2012 and 2013

Among many other awards that she has received, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Loyola Forum of Historical Research is the most important one. She had been awarded the distinction for her service in Social sector she had worked to provide good health care to one and all, especially those in Tier II cities and rural areas. She had also launched SACHI (Save A Child's Heart Initiative), where she works for better cardiac care of unfortunate and under privileged children with congenital heart diseases.

**Entrepreneurial Style:** Preetha imbibed an attitude of love and care in the services offered by Apollo Speciality hospitals. She calls this TLC or Tender Loving Care. Even today, TLC is one of the values Apollo is recognized by. Along with high quality healthcare, professional yet compassionate behavior, Apollo extends a comfortable environment to patients and their companions, especially those who are in a new environment. Dr Preetha has toiled hard to improve the information systems under her leadership.

Apart from her corporate work, she also involves herself in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) of the organization. Activities such as SACHI (Save a Child's Heart Initiative), an endeavour to treat underprivileged children with congenital heart diseases was initiated by her.

**Problems Faced:** About two decade ago when Preetha was told to join the business, she was a full- fledged housewife managing home and two kids. She was fully unknown to the business world. As soon as Preetha joined Apollo, the staff and workers called for a strike, complete with slogan-shouting and uproar. She put out the fire by instructing the canteen to feed the strikers, despite opposition from the hospital administration. This made the well-fed staff to calm down and finally resumed their work. This was quite a achievement for Preetha since it established her standing amongst the more experienced



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members of the board. Her first solo project was the Apollo Paediatric Hospital in Chennai. Though it started without any fanfare, its functioning first brought to light the commendable implementing skills wielded by Preetha. Such qualities have helped her to build a team that is co-operative and intensely loyal to her. Her sweet disposition, calm temperament and balanced attitude have also endeared her to everyone. Thus, her success hinges on the qualities that are often seen as weaknesses in the modern world.

- **Sulajja Firodia Motwani:** Sulajja Firodia Motwani, Managing Director of Kinetic Motor Company, is one such woman entrepreneur in India who has established a name for herself in what was considered the male dominated industry. For Motwani, the desire to join her family's business became something more than simply carrying the business inheritance forward. She is one of the second generation woman entrepreneurs in the Kinetic group, who has brought about remarkable changes in the business and has taken it to new heights that the company never saw before.

Sulajja graduated from Carnegie Mellon University, USA, with a master's degree in Business Administration. Barra International, an investment firm based in California, was her first employer. The work Motwani learned there for four years helped her understand the practical details and difficulties involved in conducting a business.

With that knowledge in hand, Sulajja returned to India and joined the Kinetic group.

Soon after her appointment in 1997, Kinetic joined hands with Honda Motors and came to be known as the Kinetic Motors. The company then tied up with Hyosung Motors, a Taiwan based motor vehicle manufacturer. Under her management Kinetic has seen a huge increase in productivity, and its sales shot up to 19,000 additional vehicles in less than a year. The company now focuses on transmission systems and power train engines.

**Entrepreneurial Style:** She is an epitome of boldness and courage. With her strong determination and courage, she has been able to establish a niche for the firm in the business world. The company has witnessed tremendous expansion during her tenure. From being a mere moped manufacturer, today, it has set its foothold in the industry as a manufacturer offering a complete range of two wheelers right from mopeds, scooters to motorcycles.

**Problems Faced:** In 1998, Honda Motor Company unties the joint venture with it, after that Kinetic Motors faced a downfall in sales. It had to compromise on material quality and performance. In 2000, Kinetic was severely hit by the launch of Activa by Honda Corp. Although Sulajja got the business from her father but when she joined the company was facing turbulence. But she never

bent down in front of challenges and turned them into challenges.

- **Kiran Mazumdar Shaw:** Kiran Mazumdar is the chairman and managing director of Biocon Limited a biotechnology company based in Bangalore (Bengaluru), India and the current chairperson of one of the top management institute IIM-Bangalore.

After completing graduation in Zoology, Mazumdar qualified as a master brewer from Australia and wanted to set up her career in Brewing industry. On returning to India, she found that no company was willing to offer a brewing job to a woman. Instead she did some consultancy for a few years before meeting L. Auchincloss, then owner of Irish firm Biocon Biochemicals. Impressed by Mazumdar's drive and ambition Auchincloss took her as a partner in a new venture, Biocon India which was launched in 1978 and produced enzymes for alcoholic beverages, paper and other products.

Initially, she faced credibility challenges because of her youth, gender and her untested business model. Not only was funding a problem as no bank wanted to lend to her, but she also found it difficult to recruit people for her start-up. With single-minded determination she overcame these challenges only to be confronted with the technological challenges associated with trying to build a biotech business in a country facing infrastructural woes. Uninterrupted power, superior quality water, sterile labs, imported research equipment, and advanced scientific skills were not easily available in India during the time.

Her most cherished awards are the national awards, PADMASHRI (1989) and PADMA BHUSHAN (2005) presented to her by the President of India, for her pioneering efforts in Industrial Biotechnology.

Under her stewardship, Biocon has evolved from its inception in 1978 as an industrial enzymes company to a fully integrated Biopharmaceutical enterprise encompassing a well-balanced business portfolio of products and services with a research focus on Diabetes, Oncology and Auto-immune disease. Biocon also has a subsidiary, Syngene, which was established in 1994 to provide research services and contract manufacturing to the big pharmacy industry. Biocon has also built a remarkable Research Services business through Syngene and Clinigene that offers integrated discovery and development solutions for both small and large molecules.

**Entrepreneurship Style:** Ms Shaw's commitment to affordable healthcare extends beyond business. She is passionately focused on innovation led healthcare solutions for sustainable and affordable healthcare for the marginalized communities. Her philanthropic initiatives include an innovative micro-health insurance program

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based on delivering cashless healthcare through primary healthcare clinics in rural areas of Karnataka, an education initiative based on math education for school children in government schools as well making quality cancer care affordable to a larger patient population. She has established the 1,400-bed Mazumdar-Shaw Cancer Center (MSCC) in Bangalore in partnership with renowned heart surgeon Dr Devi Shetty to deliver affordable world-class cancer care services to patients irrespective of socio-economic status and class.

**Limitations of the Study:** The present study is having the following limitations.

- The study is based on secondary data.
- The sample size was limited to 5 women entrepreneurs for the study.
- The study identifies the problems faced by the women entrepreneurs but suggestions for overcoming them were not covered.

**Implications of the Study:** The purpose for studying the entrepreneurial styles followed by successful women entrepreneurs is to enable novice entrepreneurs to identify the strategies followed by them and to guide them in setting up their own venture successfully. There should be women entrepreneurs who can give great ideas and be able to translate them into reality, persuade fellow entrepreneurs and policy makers. The research may also be helpful for further research in this area wherein studies can be carried out for comparing the different leadership styles among women entrepreneurs and their male counterparts.

**Conclusion:** Entrepreneurship is presently the most discussed and encouraged concept all over the world to overcome economic challenges. Women being the vital gender of the overall population have great capacity and potential to be the contributor in the overall economic development of any nation. Therefore, programs and policies need to be customized to not just encourage entrepreneurship as well as implement strategies which can help support entrepreneurial culture among youth.

At this juncture, effective steps are needed to provide entrepreneurial awareness, orientation and skill development programs to women. The role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is also being recognized and steps are being taken to promote women entrepreneurship. Resurgence of entrepreneurship is the need of the hour emphasizing on educating women strata of population, spreading awareness and consciousness amongst women to outshine in the enterprise field, making them realize their strengths, and important position in the society and the great contribution they can make for their industry as well as the entire economy. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes in

trends, challenges global markets and also be competent enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena. If every citizen works with such an attitude towards respecting the important position occupied by women in society and understanding their vital role in the modern business field too, then very soon we can pre-estimate our chances of out beating our own conservative and rigid thought process which is the biggest barrier in our country's development process.

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