

EMPOWERING CREATIVE RURAL WOMEN THROUGH FASHION

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ABSTRACT

“THERE IS NO TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE WOMEN” – Kofi Annan.

“Fashion is an extremely powerful form of talent; it shows the world who we are and who we’d like to be. With the kind of impact that the fashion industry has globally, it unites diverse cultures, ethnicities and nations. That influences millions and promotes acceptance of our individual identities and choices, empowering us to express our preferences and beliefs. It has the capacity to affect the society as a whole and is therefore an integral platform to promote social change. Fashion is such a huge part of our economy and involves more people than we think it does from producers to designers to retailers and even consumers.

Empowering rural women to participate fully in trade and industry across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies. Many organizations are helping and conducting working clusters, or common-craft groups, that work together at one of their Common Facility Centers. The Common Facility Center is a technical, design, production, and marketing-support center where artisans can work in a congenial environment and benefit from education in producing high quality crafts. They also support to improve life of artisan through training, skill upgrades, design workshops, market linkages, arrangements with financial institutions, technical education, and awareness programs ensures a continuous flow of fair-trade of products into the international marketplace.

KEYWORDS: Women Empowerment, Creative Fashion, Fair Trade

INTRODUCTION

“Empowerment of women is essential for an empowered and stable society”, said A.P.J Abdul Kalam, Former President of India on the occasion of International Women’s Day. Empowerment of women was essential as their thoughts and value systems led to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation.. Active participation of any community in the development process is recognized as a tool for its empowerment. In Indian social set up, the participation of women in the development process has to be ensured through tangible measures taken at various levels for their overall development. The government has taken a conscious view to make adequate provisions in its policies and programs, through which it is to be ensured that the women of the country are not only empowered but also become active participants in the development process in the country.

Concept of Empowering Rural Women through Fashion

Fashion plays an imperative role in the growth of any society. Development of fashion culture and qualitative business development services are the major requirements for industrial growth. Fashion emerges from an individual’s creative spirit into long term business ownership, employment creation, capital formation and economic security.

As technology speeds up lives, women are an emerging economic force, which cannot be neglected by the policy makers. Women are trying their level best to attain quality of opportunity in various ways which are different over the time and among societies. Women Fashion enables to pool the small capital resources and skill available with women. It paves the way for fuller utilization of capital and also mobilizes the female human potential.

Fashion is suitable to women and it is possible to do work when she has free time. A self-employed woman is gaining better status and it enables her to take part in decision making in their family affairs.

Fashion can help women's economic independence and their improved social status. Through this economic independence automatically women get empowerment also. Development of women fashion enables men to understand and appreciate women's abilities. This in turn can lead rationalization of domestic life and it creates awareness about the potentiality in women through which, individual families and society at large can benefit.

Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

Women fashion is the process where women organize all the factors of production undertake risks, and provide employment to others. In terms of Schumpeterian concept of innovative entrepreneurs, women who innovate, imitate or adopt a business activity are called "women entrepreneurs".

The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women Participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, a women entrepreneur is defined as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women".

According to Medha Dubhashi vinze, a women entrepreneur is a person who is an enterprising individual with an eye for opportunities and an uncanny vision, commercial acumen, with tremendous perseverance and above all a person who is willing to take risks with the unknown because of the adventurous spirit she possesses.

According to Kamal Singh" A women entrepreneur can be defined as confident innovative and creative women capable of achieving self-economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life".

Thus a women entrepreneur is one who starts business and manages it independently and tactfully, takes all the risks, faces the challenges boldly with an iron will to succeed. Women fashion is an economic activity of those women who think of a business enterprise, initiate it, organise and combine the factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risks and handle economic uncertainty involved in running a business enterprise

Sector in Fashion for Empowering Rural Women

The impact of globalization in all sectors of economic development is visible in a variety of ways like technological change, opening of new markets, changing social norms and so on, thus creating a favorable environment for more and more entrepreneurial activities for women. The main spring of globalization, no doubt, is the development of information and communication Technology. Information and communication Technology have created new types of work that favor women.

Employment opportunities for women are increasing in the garments sector and related activities; consequent to

the growth in demand in the domestic market as well as in the export market. The expanding sector modern health care in the rural areas is another important service sector offering good employment opportunities for women. The system of micro finance is also contributing to the increase in the opportunities for employment and livelihood for women in a large way.

Craft sector has also increased employment opportunities for women. There is an increase in the female workforce participation particularly in rural home-based craft sector. There are large numbers of women artisans in embroidery and lace making, choir work, earthenware and printed textiles, weaving, leather ware and reed mat making etc.

Textile industry one of the oldest and largest industries in India occupies an outstanding place in the economy of the country by virtue of its contribution to the industrial output, employment generation, and foreign exchange earnings. It generates 20% of the total value of industrial output, accounts for about 5% of GDP and is the single largest foreign exchange earner, constituting more than 30% of the total exports of the country, and provides job for over 13 million workers.

The textile industry has been a mother industry. It has been the fountain head of a number of other industries, some totally unrelated. It was so because with the resources generated by the textile industry and expertise that it provided, industrialists were able to venture into other lines. Three decades back, the textile industry engaged itself only in the manufacture of yarns and fabrics such as spinning, cotton, wool, silk or rayon fabrics into yarn; weaving or knitting yarn into clothes finishing the fabric by dyeing, bleaching or printing and other preparatory or finishing operations. Fabrics were considered as the finished products of the textile industry. Readymade Garment is a product manufactured by cutting and sewing the fabrics is relatively a new outlet of textile industry. Thus the present activities of the textile industry include spinning, weaving and production of clothes and garment items. Nowadays, readymade garments are considered as the finished product of the textile industry. Therefore, the Readymade Garments sector forms an important segment in the broad based textile industry in India for woman empowerment.

Role of Rural Women in Fashion Industry

Starting a business or industrial unit- say, enterprise in short requires various resources and facilities. Small scale enterprises, given their small resources, find it difficult to have their own. Finance has been an important resource to start and run an enterprise because it facilitates the entrepreneurs to procure land, labour, material, machine and so on from different parties to run his/her enterprise. Hence, finance is considered as “life blood” for an enterprise. Recognizing it, the Government through her financial institutions and nationalized banks, etc to come forward to help small entrepreneurs provide them funds. Admittedly, finance is an important resource but not the only condition to run an enterprise. In order to start any economic activity, a minimum level of prior built up of infrastructural facilities is needed. Financial assistance and concessions cannot, in any case, adequately compensate for the deficiencies of infrastructure such as transport and communication. This is one of the reasons why industries have not been developing in backward areas in spite of financial assistance and concession given by the government to the entrepreneurs to establish industries in backward areas. Creation of infrastructural facilities involves huge funds which small entrepreneurs do lack. In view of this, various Central and State Government Institutions have come forward to help small entrepreneurs in this regard by providing them various kinds of support and facilities. Availability of the institutional support helps make the economic environment more conducive to business and industry.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Harnessing the power of innovation to transform the lives of women in the developing world is an idea whose time has come. Never before has the world experienced such dynamic change in technologies, economies and societies as it is today. Innovation through new ideas, products and practices increasingly is seen as a force for social change. At the same time, there is growing consensus that empowering the millions of women who live in poverty is essential both for their intrinsic human rights and broad benefits for global development and economic growth. An increasingly wide range of institutions from business, civil society and government have committed resources, rhetoric and political capital to promote women's empowerment. While this goal has been a challenge to realize in the past, the current convergence of commitment and shifting paradigms provides an unprecedented opportunity to forge new alliances and unleash innovation to achieve women's empowerment.

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