

Women's Day 2021 – Gender Roles Slowing Entrepreneurs Down

By Naghma Mulla, COO, EdelGive Foundation - March 8, 2021

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Let's talk gender roles on International Women's Day today. Women constitute almost half the population in India and by the end of 2030, women in India are expected to create 150 million-170 million jobs in the country playing a pivotal role in the entrepreneurship landscape, as per a 2019 [report](#) published jointly by Google and Bain & Company. Yet, only seven out of 100 entrepreneurs in India are women and of them, nearly half (49.9%) get into business out of necessity rather than aspiration, says a November 2020 [report](#) of the [Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy](#) gender research and advocacy organization.

Gender roles for women in business

The entrepreneurial endeavour of a woman is subjected to various gendered ethical issues of equality, access, and capability. The practice of entrepreneurship involves the segregation of roles and responsibilities for individuals but more so for women due to the prevalence of gender roles and social conditioning.

In a male-dominated society like ours, women are often perceived to lack the calibre to manage an enterprise of their own. It is this popular belief that feeds a lack of self-confidence, willpower, and the inability to exude the entrepreneurial attitude in women.

A woman's commitment towards her family duties and responsibilities often become a hindrance in conducting entrepreneurial activities. These women grow up in conditioned settings where they are taught to develop their personalities as caregivers and homemakers. They are wired to take care of children and the household chores which results in entrepreneurship taking a back seat in their life.

Globally, India ranks third among countries reporting gender gaps in business – only 33% of the early-stage entrepreneurs in India are women, according to the Financial Inclusion for Woman-Owned Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises in India, an August 2019 report of the International Finance Corporation.

Women who do manage to break societal barriers and take the leap are still obstructed by gender bias every step of the way. Fellow workers including investors, government officials, clients and sometimes even friends and families do not take women entrepreneurs solemnly. Even the skill, age, and education of a woman are scrutinized more closely than men.

The first step to address this kind of gender inequality towards women in businesses is to deploy appropriate strategies in eliminating all kinds of discrimination. To provide equal opportunities to aspiring [women entrepreneurs](#), creating maximum awareness in society to stop stereotyping them as homemakers becomes mandatory.

We consciously need to stop confining individuals to a certain kind of stereotype, especially women to household chores. Education systems also need to provide knowledge and training to girls at a young age to sow the seeds of entrepreneurial spirit in their minds.

Organizing exhibitions, seminars, and vendor development programs to offer incubator facilities where an entrepreneur can manufacture a product with a minimum investment in infrastructure is much needed. Additionally, families need to be sensitized to express their support to women which will boost their confidence. Most importantly, highlighting the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship through training at a young age for a girl can also help in developing her personality and instill more confidence in her for starting and growing her own enterprise.

Views of the author are personal and do not necessarily represent the website's views.



The author is President and Chief Operating Officer of EdelGive Foundation. Naghma has been instrumental in driving the mission of the organization towards creating asymmetrical impact across the project areas. Over the last seven years of her journey with the organization, she closely managed the strategic growth of the organizations that the foundation supports, and fostered new partnerships within the philanthropic network. She is also associated with several not-for-profits in different capacities. She has been a Director at Railway Children India and a mentor at the Nadathur S. Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning in Bangalore, providing support to start-ups.

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