

**Case Studies of Women Entrepreneurs in Service Sector in Chennai City**

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**Abstract:**

*In the modern world, women entrepreneurship has become a global phenomenon. India, as a developing country is not lagging behind in promoting women entrepreneurship. Women empowerment is the drive and more and more home makers are changing into entrepreneurs. Women are encouraged by reservations, incentives and subsidies to operate in different fields especially in SSI sector. In view of this, women are progressing to emerge as an intelligent entrepreneur from the stereotyped dependent home maker. Service sector is an easily approachable sector for everybody for the reasons such as low investment, easy made infrastructure and due to its nature. Especially, it is an added advantage for a woman due to her patience, creativity, hospitality etc. Metro like Chennai have all facilities to support entrepreneurship especially service sector. Hence, this paper explains about the case studies of 6 women entrepreneurs and the problems, prospects they have met in running their venture in Chennai city.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Women Empowerment, SSI Sector, Chennai City.

**Introduction:**

Entrepreneurship is gender neutral. It is evident from the following definitions. According to J.A. Schumpeter (1969), "Woman who innovates, imitates, or adopts a business activity is called woman entrepreneur." Thus women entrepreneur are those women who initiate, organise and operate business enterprise and want to prove their mettle in innovative and competitive jobs. She also wants to oversee and control every aspects of her business for its overall success. As noted earlier, like entrepreneur term, there is no single definition of women entrepreneurs. In the Indian context the following definitions will be sufficient to understand the concept. Medha (1987) defined woman entrepreneur as 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.

Government of India has defined women entrepreneur as an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving atleast 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women" (Tiwari and Tiwari, 2007).

**Typology of Women Entrepreneurs**

Different typologies of women entrepreneurs reflecting different goals or motives and personal characteristics that might influence the entrepreneurial decision are offered by different researchers. Moore (1990) differentiated female entrepreneurs as traditional and modern based on their background and the way business is found and developed.

**Traditional female entrepreneurs** are the first generations who are less likely to venture into traditionally male-dominated business sectors but focus on domestic services and retail sectors instead. They lacked business skills and often faced major problems in obtaining financing. Their businesses are characterized as low income, low equity and slow growing.

**Modern female entrepreneurs** are oriented towards making money and creating new

markets. They are more exposed to the business world before becoming entrepreneurs, have more business and technical skills and are more financial savvy.

Women entrepreneurs can be classified into three groups depending upon the driving

- **Natural Entrepreneurs** - They undertake business as profession on their own either. They like to be busy, and earn money. They define success by the growth in the firm and size of earnings.
- **Generated entrepreneurs** - They are trained to set up independent business.
- **Forced entrepreneurs** - Those who are compelled by circumstances such as the death of father or husband who were owners of a business.

There is another category of women entrepreneurs - benami. To avail of the incentives offered to women entrepreneurs, men start an enterprise in the name of wife, mother or sister and manage it. The woman in whose name it is started will remain a passive partner.

**SHEROES Report** (2014) based on study of women entrepreneurs in more than 60 Indian towns and cities from Allahabad to Port Blair, revealed the following categories.

- **New Trackers**-24 % is early stage professionals. They are into their first job or an internship. Typical concerns of women in this category are lack of a visible roadmap in their careers, mentorship, and sometimes lack of family support or peer network.
- **Off trackers** – 23 percent women are professionals with significant experience, skill and adaptability. They stopped working for various reasons, which can range from marriage and childbirth to having taken up care-giving roles in the family.
- **Alternative careers** - 11 % women fall in this bracket. 'Mompreneurs' and women owners of small/medium businesses are seeking alternative to jobs. These include home based businesses, boutiques and custom fit lifestyle businesses. With the digital space in India expanding, the number of such women will keep growing.

Here is a brief biography of the women entrepreneurs who fall under different types of entrepreneurship.

**(i) Innovator – Modern - Young - Natural - New tracker**

(To make a career and earn name with professional background) (Team inc42, 2014)

**Suchi Mukherjee**, a graduate from London School of Economics, founded Limeroad in 2012 along with Manish Saxena, Ankush Mehra and Prashant Malik. The business idea came to her while she was reading a magazine after the birth of her second child in London. She realized that there is no interactive consumer platform to access products one needs.



Limeroad is a well-known fashion discovery portal which provides the users with the latest range of products and accessories, 80 percent of which are unique to their own portal. It has a product listing of over 200,000 products. The company has raised a funding of \$20 Mn in rounds A and B from Light speed venture partners, Matrix partners and Tiger Global. Suchi has been named 1<sup>st</sup> of the 15 'Rising Talent, high potential leader under 40' worldwide.

**(ii) Innovator- Young - Modern -New tracker**

(To make a career and earn name - with rich family support) (MamtaChhikara 2015)

**EktaKapoor** off late has become a brand to reckon with and is now known mostly as the queen of television. She is born in 1975 in a rich family. She is daughter of former Bollywood superstar Jeetendra and sister of current Bollywood hero TussharKapoor. On the advice of her father, she ventured into TV-serial production at the age of 19.



As the creative director of Balaji Telefilms she has produced more than 25 serials and each one is being shown, on an average, four times a week on different television channels. She has broken all previous records of TV serial production and popularity in India. For her entrepreneurial skills and achievements, EktaKapoor was awarded with Ernst & Young (E&Y) Startup Entrepreneur of The Year award in 2011.

**(iii)Block factor- Income driven- Natural**

(To prove woman can survive without husband in a male dominated world and make a living) (Sebastian, Juliet, 2014),

**Sudeshna Banerjee** decided to walk out of the marriage, when she realized her husband of 6 years was cheating on her with her own friend. She left her teaching career of 14 years and joined in AutoCAD Company. She faced problems with the male managers in the company who never considered her as an equal.



Eventually, Sudeshna decided to turn a business woman, when her employers decided to close the company in losses. She purchased the company and named it DigiTech HR and started soft skills training for employees in engineering companies. Gradually, PS DigiTech-Hr turned itself around by becoming a company delivering highly dynamic project management and engineering services.

Her abiding interest in group theatre as an actress, love for writing in the vernacular press, and the inner fort of idealism helped her to weather through a broken marriage and explore the uncharted territories of a tough, male dominated business world. Sudeshsna advices woman to be on their own. She maintained: "One of the most courageous things a woman can do is to identify herself. She must know who she is, what she wants, what she believes in, and where she wants to go".

**(iv) Conventional - Dualists - Modern - Income driven -Forced**

(To take care of family in distress times)(MamtaChhikara, 2015)

Against the wish of her parents, Patrica Narayan married at the age of 19. Unfortunately, her husband turned out to be an alcoholic and abuser. She was thrown out of the house with two children. Her father gave her a refuge at his home. She then started selling jam, pickles and squashes. On the first day, she could sell everything what she had prepared. This gave her immense confidence. In 1982, she got an offer to run a mobile cart at Marina Beach. Unfortunately, on the first day she could sell only a single cup of coffee at Fifty paisa.



Disheartened she came crying at home. However, her mother restored her faith and next day she earned good by selling snacks and other items on her cart. Soon, she got offers to run canteens in offices and government buildings. In between her daughter and son-in-law died in a car accident after a month of marriage. Patricia became weak, but with the assistance of her son, she opened a chain of restaurants – Sandeepha. Today, she is one of the successful women entrepreneurs in India and earns more than 2 Lakh a day and more than 200 employees work for her.

Today, she owns a chain of restaurants. She started her business with just two people. Now, there are 200 people working in her restaurants. From travelling in a cycle rickshaw, she moved to auto rickshaws and now she owns a car. From 50 paise a day, her revenue has gone up to Rs 2 lakh a day. Her ambition is to build her Sandeepha brand.” The ‘FICCI entrepreneur of the year’ award is the culmination of all the hard work she put.

**(v)Radical- Innovator- Modern – Young- Family driven**

Driven by social motto (AlessioPieroni, 2014)

SmritiNagpal’s two older siblings were hearing impaired.Smriti took it upon herself to learn the sign language to be the voice of her siblings. At the age of 16 she volunteered at the National Association of Deaf (NAD). She did Bachelor of Business Administration, worked for a TV channel. She was responsible for the Hearing Impaired Morning Bulletin for the Doordarshan Network.



At 23, Smriti is the CEO and Founder of Atulyakala, a social enterprise that is empowering deaf artists through design partnership and creative collaborations. Atulyakala is a for-profit social enterprise that is creating opportunities for deaf artists to grow, learn, share and live a life of dignity and pride. They make profit from selling online and offline art pieces done by hearing impaired artists.

**(vi) Traditional-Block factor- Income driven- Natural - Alternative**

(To support husband in taking care of family)(ESAF, 2015)

Archana a resident of Nagpur found it difficult to bring up her two children, with the limited income of her husband. Having heard the success stories of ESAF Micro finance members she decided to start a venture of her own.



Instead of starting the popular edible oils business in the town, she decided to set up a steel utensils shop, based on the findings of a market study she undertook. The study showed that steel utensils were in great demand in the area, and there was no steel retail outlet. She started sourcing steel utensils from wholesale market and selling it from her house. In 2011, she started the business with a loan of Rs 10,000 from ESAF. Now she owns an inventory worth Rs 80,000. Her business has helped her to give her children, studying in 8th and 5th standards, quality education and also has given her enough disposable income to meet their needs. Now Archana wants a space of her own to run the business and free her room at home.

**Literature review**

**Entrepreneurial motivations and hurdles**

Several studies are made to identify entrepreneurial motivations and hurdles.

**Anjali Singh (2014)**, based on the review of secondary data, concluded that Indian government has taken steps to promote women entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurs are engaged in various enterprises in rural and urban areas. She observed that they still lack confidence to expand despite growth potential. Lack of access to technology, lack of self-confidence and discrimination in credit sanctions by the banks are the identified problems.

**Neha Dangi and Ritika (2014)**, reviewed the growth of performance of MSMEs, and role played by government in their promotion. They examined the growth of women entrepreneurship and identified the following problems and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs: male dominated society, distrust in entrepreneurial abilities of women, inadequate financial resources and working capital, family obligation, more importance attached to family ties, lack of managerial skills, competition between male and female, lack of education, lack of awareness about raw material sources, low mobility, inability to take risks, ineffective management of people and finances.

**Yogita Sharma (2013)**, listed problems faced by women entrepreneurs based on secondary data as follows: Family ties, Male dominated society, Lack of education, Social barriers, Low

risk bearing capacity, Limited mobility, Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude, Limited managerial ability, Lack of self-confidence. Shortage of raw materials, Problem of finance, High cost of production, Tough competition, Exploitation by middlemen and Legal formalities.

**Kaushik Sanjay (2013)**, conducted a study to find the time women can spare for business. He found that only 3% women are totally devoted to their business. While 27% of the women gave 8-9 hrs to their business, about 51% of the women are working for 5-7 hrs. For the women, working longer, it is impossible to devote more time to business because they have less family responsibilities either due to atomistic family or family support.

**ShikhaMahajan (2013)**, reviewed the status of women entrepreneurs in India and also presented the success story of Hina Shah the most successful women entrepreneurs of India in plastic packaging and Founder of ICECD. The problems faced by women entrepreneurs are: conflict between work and domestic commitments, gender gaps in education, lack of finance, heavy household responsibilities, and legal constraints in family law. ILO report identified the following problems: lack of capital, lack of family support, lack of faith and confidence and lack of right public and private institutions.

**ArakeriShanta (2013)**, examined women entrepreneurship in India based on secondary data. Women participation in work is much lower being 31.6% in population, compared to 45% in USA and Sri Lanka, 43% in UK, 40% in Brazil. She categorised women entrepreneurs into four groups - (i) Metro/city, industry, technically sound (ii) Cities/towns commercial services like kinder garden, crèches, beauty parlours, health clinics,(iii) Rural illiterate vocations like agriculture, dairy, handlooms and power looms. The number of women entrepreneurs is about 30% of the registered units in different states in India. She cited the cases of successful women entrepreneurs and listed the problems like (i) weak motivation (ii) Male domination in family (iii) family obligations (iv) male-female competition (v) sceptical attitude of financial institutions and (vi) working capital shortages.

**SenthilKumar, et al. (2012)**, studied 50 women entrepreneurs of various categories like petty shop units, tailoring shops units, hotel units, vegetable shop units and beauty parlor units, chosen from Arumbaur, Krishnapuram, Perambalur town and Padalur. About 58% of the respondents are falling in 25-50 years age group category, Majority of the respondents belongs to backward caste (93%). The highest number of respondents is coming under the category of high school (35%). Reasons for starting the units are: povertylike situation, easy to manage, self-confidence and training.

**Tambunan (2009)**, made a study on recent developments of women entrepreneurs in Asian developing countries. The study focused mainly on women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises based on data analysis and review of recent key literature. This study found that in Asian developing countries SMEs are gaining overwhelming importance; more than 95% of all firms in all sectors on average per country. The study also depicted the fact that representation of women entrepreneurs in this region is relatively low due to factors like low level of education, lack of capital and cultural or religious constraints. However, the study revealed that most of the women entrepreneurs in SMEs are from the category of forced entrepreneurs seeking for better family incomes.

**Singh, Sehgal, Tinani and Sengupta (1986)** conducted a study on 60 successful women entrepreneurs from in and around Delhi revealed that, majority of the women entrepreneurs were married, and in the age group of 26 to 35 years. The reasons for the choice of business are in the order of high demand for product, processing skills, ready market, future prospects and creativity. The reasons for women to become entrepreneurs were to keep them busy, to earn money on their own, to pursue hobby as an earning activity, by accident and circumstances beyond control

**Hisrich and O'brien (1981)** studied women entrepreneurs from a business and a sociological perspective. The study was conducted on 21 female entrepreneurs with a purpose of exploring the demographic characteristics, their motivations and business problems. The results indicated that women entrepreneurs experienced varying business problems, particularly problems with weak collateral position, obtaining credit and overcoming societies' belief that women are not as serious as men about business.

### **Success Determinants**

**Chitra, M. et al. (2014)**, studied the personal factors influencing the women entrepreneurs for the success of beauty salon, and their inter relationship. The sample size for the present study is 350 women entrepreneurs of beauty salons in Chennai. A structured questionnaire was used for the study. The pilot study was carried out with 35 respondents and reliability was checked using Cronbach alpha for different statements. Statements which seemed to be not useful for study were removed. In order to study the influence of factors on level of success of beauty clinics, multiple linear regressions were applied. Results indicated that Social security, Clarity in network, Personal motives, Technology and Personal factors determined success.

**Castro N Gichuki (2014)** adopted cross-sectional survey design and took a sample of 225 women entrepreneurs who participated in Village Saving and Credit Associations from Nakuru Town Kenya. The study found that the selected factors income, credit and education level of the respondents influenced positive changes in the net profits and capital of Small Micro Enterprises (SMEs). Results also revealed that Ordinal logit regression model (OLR) had Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> of 60.2% and 49.3% which was above the statistical threshold of 20%.

A study of **McClelland et al. (2005)**, showed that the female entrepreneurs in Canada, Singapore and Ireland utilized networking as a means of business development. Finally, innovation in the business through Information Communications Technology (ICT) play an important role in supporting women entrepreneurs on business by gaining a low cost structure and achieving higher returns per customer (**Marlin and Wright, 2005**).

**Fielden and Dave (2004)**, suggested that socially constructed barriers were responsible for inhibiting women's progressions. A study of Nigerian women business owners by **Ehigie and Umoren (2003)**, found that a high self-concept regarding their role in business and commitment to business can help women to become more successful entrepreneurs. This study also reveals that entrepreneurial success depends on psychological factors such as self-concept, managerial competence, work-stress and business commitment.

### **2.5 Studies in TamilNadu**

**Kanchana Devi and Sujatha (2010)** carried out a study in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu state to know the socio economic background, impact of driving factors, and growth of women entrepreneurs. About 150 respondents were interviewed with the help of pre-tested interview schedule. Random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of women entrepreneurs. It was found that (60%) of them belong to backward community, (62.7%) have started a new business and (88%) of the women entrepreneurs do their business within the state, 53.3% have started their business out of own investment. Family members to certain extent have an influence in all the business matters. The performance level indicates that there is increase in sales when compared to the year of starting. (40%) of the respondents ranked contribution to family income as the motivational factor for starting their own enterprise followed by the use of spare time. The personal factors like age, community, education qualification, and marital status, type of family and family size showed a significant influence on the type of enterprise.



**Jayan (2013)**, analysed women entrepreneurship in MSMEs and the relationship between industries related factors and success of entrepreneurs with special reference to Coimbatore city. The study identified that the factors which motivate women to become a successful entrepreneurs are achievement motivation and human relations

**Reasons for the choice of business** - High demand for product, processing skills, ready market, future prospects and creativity in that order. (Singh, Sehgal, Tinani and Sengupta, 1986). More and more women are taking up entrepreneurial activity especially in MSMEs (Singh and Raina, 2013)

**Problems** Women entrepreneurs face a variety of problems at different stages of the life of enterprise. Male dominated society, distrust in entrepreneurial abilities of women, inadequate financial resources and working capital, family obligation, more importance attached to family ties, lack of managerial skill, competition between male and female, lack of education, lack of awareness about raw material sources, low mobility, inability to take risks, ineffective management of people and finances (NehaDangi and Ritika, 2014),

**During start up** - credit discrimination (Sehwartz, 1979) problems with weak collateral position, obtaining credit and overcoming societies' belief that women are not as serious as men about business (Hisrich and O'brien,1981) faced financial hurdles (Huntley, 1985) low level of education, lack of capital and cultural or religious constraints (Tambunan, 2009), not ready to leave their place for business activities and prefer staying only in their residential areas (Ghani et al. 2011). Lack of education and pressure of child care in the family (Benard and Victor, 2013).

**Subsequent problems** - Underestimating operating and / or marketing costs. (Sehwartz, 1979) looking for a balance of personal and professional interest (Huntley, 1985).

Successful women entrepreneurs faced the problems like - (i) weak motivation (ii) Male domination in family (iii) family obligations (iv) male - female competition (v) sceptical attitude of financial institutions and (vi) working capital shortages (ArakeriShanta, 2013).

The problems faced by women entrepreneurs are: lack of self - confidence, non-availability of finance, lack of managerial skills, lack of knowledge about availability of raw materials, etc. (Kothawale C. (2013).

**Style of managing** - Female tended to have an autocratic style of management (Sehwartz, 1979). Women can well manage their household work as well their workplace deadlines (Singh and Raina, 2013).

**Relationships** - There was some association between entrepreneurial characteristics and financial performance (Mc Clung and Parker,1986). Entrepreneurial success depends on psychological factors such as self-concept, managerial competence, work-stress and business commitment (Ehigie and Umoren, 2003).

**Suggested policy measures** - Policy measures required are: Vocational training for women, women entrepreneurship guidance cell, provision of micro -credit / finance by financial institutions, industrial estates, and incentives to women entrepreneurs (Kothawale C. 2013).

#### **Anuradha Krishnamoorthy (Social services firm)**

She has been an entrepreneur for the past 8 years. She holds a post graduate degree in social work. She runs two ventures

1. Krea, - It provides market research services. She works along with her spouse
2. Can Do – It is aBPO firm run by her.

Kreawas started in the year 2008 and Can Do was set up in the year 2012. Can Do is a CSR initiative of KreaeKnowledge Pvt Limited. It provides training and employment for people with disabilities. Can do serves as a career launch pad for them. Training is given in skills such as telecalling, desk research, data entry, phone etiquette, scanning, etc.

**Motivation:** The motivation to support people with disabilities arose in her when she observed in her Krea team, the work of two visually challenged people. She found them more disciplined and committed to their work and contributed to the productivity of firm by their efficiency. Anu started Can Doto reach out to more such talented people.

**Role of Husband:** She started her entrepreneurial journey by joining her spouse, Mr PravinShekar, who is a serial entrepreneur. He has been her mainspring of motivation.

**Problems:** The success of Can Do is dependent on the way the prospective employers' share her view that people with disabilities can be competent employees. She faced two kinds of employers:

1. Those who would like to hire persons with disabilities in order to offer lesser pay but demand work of normal persons.
2. Those who hire them with sympathy and assign some unimportant jobs. They may not give them challenging jobs and offer promotions.

**Success:** Can do has been featured in DD Podhigai and publications such as Deccan Chronicle, The New Indian Express and Mylapore Times. Can Dohas good online and social media presence.

Having found the need for creating right environment of trust and confidence in disabled persons, she relied on public relations approach. She employs people with disabilities as brand ambassadors. She feels that the best way to market is to get word-of-mouth references from her existing clients. She always insists her prospective clients to visit her at work to see their inclusive workplace which is an important factor of her success. She has never let her pricing low which has helped her to earn fair profits.

## **2. Dr RenitaRajan (Cosmetic dermatology services)**

**Dr RenitaRajan**, is a Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist at Dr RenitaRajan Skin & Hair Clinic, Chennai. She started this venture at the age of 28 after obtaining her Masters in Dermatology, Venereology and Leprosy [MD(DVL)] from the prestigious Christian Medical College, Vellore, and also obtained her DNB degree in the speciality.

**Motivation:** To excel in profession of her choice, with a degree of freedom has been her motivation in starting the clinic. Accordingly, the values she carries in her business are comprehensive exposure to dermatological medicine, excellent patient care with a confident approach and an orientation towards research. She constantly strives to update her knowledge and technical know-how in order to be able to give the best treatment to patients who seek her care. She has been trained in **Cosmetic Dermatology and Dermato Surgery** - non surgical facelift, lip sculpting, Botulinum toxin and fillers, in Singapore and in several workshops across India

**Problems:** When she initially started her practice, she faced lot of problems.

### ***i) Financing***

Financing was the first problem she encountered, which on later years she managed with the help of her family and friends

**ii) Securing licences and materials**

Negotiating with government officials and vendors were the other important hurdles she faced in her venture. The officials are bureaucratic and corrupt. Vendors are sceptical and less cooperative.

**iii) Developing her own brand**

She felt that she was lacking in the areas of ability to market her business in her initial days. She had overcome this problem with her talent, commitment and hard work.

**iv) Baby care**

She got married in the year 2006 and is blessed with a baby girl during 2014. She has a baby-sitting support at home and she has also arranged a special room for her kid in the clinic adjacent to her room with all baby care facilities so that she can take care of the kid during her consulting hours too if needed.

**Role of Husband:** Her husband is not a doctor. He is into emotional photography. He has been very supportive and is playing an excellent role to make Renita to shine in her business. He has helped in many ways such as funding the business, setting up the unit, designing the clinic in an aesthetic way, etc.

**Success:** She has devised a unique tool to improve the aesthetic outcome and yield in hair transplant surgeries, which innovation has been published in the **Journal of Cosmetic and Aesthetic Surgery**. She has contributed a chapter to the textbook, 'FUNDAMENTALS OF GLOBAL HIV MEDICINE', and has published articles in national and international academic journals. She is also the co-author of the chapter on 'Ages in Dermatology' in the IADVL undergraduate textbook for Dermatology.

Dr RenitaRajan was awarded at the **Young Dermatologist's Forum**, COSDERMINDIA 2014 (organised by the Cosmetic Dermatology Society of India), for her innovation in increasing safety while treating under eye dark circles with hyaluronic acid fillers. Her innovation in acne surgery was shortlisted for the **Innovators Award** at the ACSICON 2014 (organised by the Association of Cutaneous Surgeons of India).

As a result of her success, Dr RenitaRajan Skin & Hair Clinic, has been rated as the **Best Skin Clinic in Chennai** for elective procedures, by the Times of India All India Lifestyle Hospital and Clinic Ranking Survey 2015.

Membership in associations: She has been associated with Sri Ramachandra University, **Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists, European Society for Cosmetic and Aesthetic Dermatology, The Cosmetic Dermatology Society of India, Association of Cutaneous Surgeons India**, and the Women's Dermatologic Society.

**Social service :** Apart from her career, Dr RenitaRajan also coordinates projects aimed at education of under privileged children, for HUGS India (Help Us Go to School), an NGO which works towards taking education in a holistic form to children who are most in need of it. She has served in Kenya, as a medical volunteer with Medicins Sans Frontieres – Belgium, in a bid to understand health care in resource poor settings.

**Sustaining factors:** She takes exceptional care in providing services to customers. Customer satisfaction and word of mouth advertising are key for sustaining her enterprise.

### **3. NithyaBalaji (Cab hire services)**

NithyaBalaji started a logistics business named V V Care logistica in the year 2008. She began to offer CAB services to software industries like CTS, CSS, etc. She initially purchased 4 cabs with an initial investment of 12 lakhs.

**Motivation:** She started her enterprise after being a home maker for more than 10 years. She was not exposed to any industry as she entered her family life soon after her graduation. It is her zeal to earn for the family and support of the family especially her husband that motivated her to enter into the business.

**Problems:** Within a short span of time, she started growing due to two important reasons.

#### **(a) Raising demand**

The increased demand for this service in the industry and her way of approach to cater to the needs were the key reasons to her success. She was not able to meet the increased demand with her own cabs. She entered into tie ups with small cab owners and also started hiring call drivers for her enterprise. From zero, her monthly income swelled to Rs 25 lakhs.

#### **(b) Tight cash flow**

Her expenditures were for filling petrol / diesel in cabs and giving payments to the cab owners cum drivers. It takes minimum 6 months for a bill to be honoured in the corporate world. Hence, she had to opt for a working capital loan with City Union Bank. Initially, she was sanctioned with a loan of 5 lakhs under the scheme CGFT. The loan started growing with her business and at one point of time she had to offer her house as collateral and her loan was enhanced to Rs 1 crore. She had to operate only with the loan amount as this was her only option of cash flow. The loan amount started getting accumulated in all these years and due to the ceiling in the loan she could not get enhancement further and she had to cease the orders which she was getting from the corporates which made her to face sudden turbulence in her venture.

#### **(c) Dealing with drivers**

The other major problem relates to the way the cab drivers cum owners function in relation to safety and punctuality.

She had to ensure safety of the employees travelling in these cabs especially night shifts. In case of female employees special care is essential and this has made her to slog day and night. For every delay in pick up by the driver she was laid penalty by the corporates and this made her to incur huge losses in her venture.

**Role of husband:** Her husband was into day job when she started the business. Slowly, he had to moon light the firm as the business needed his support when it started growing. At one point of time, his presence was required for full time and hence he quit his job to focus into the business. His support is remarkable at all times.

**Success:** “From a home maker to a well-established entrepreneur” is her success. She has also bagged “Best Business Plan Award” from ISB – Women Entrepreneur Program and a couple of “Best logistics partner awards” in the corporate world. “As long as I can provide safe travel to my customers I can run the business” says Nithya. Profit coupled with safety, are the measures of sustainability of the enterprises.

### **5. Lakshmi (Dress designer)**

Her firm is named as “Sri Lakshmi Designers”.

**Motivation:** Lakshmi was a typical home maker who never dreamt of starting her venture till she discovered her passion for designing dresses.

The idea of starting her own enterprise took shape after she was blessed with a second girl child. To dress her child in different ways, she learnt tailoring and started imitating variety of ready-made dresses. After sometime, she became innovative in designing dresses for her child. The dresses attracted her neighbours and she initiated her venture in the year 2000 targeting local families.

**Role of husband:** “Support from my husband was the main secret of success” she says.

**Problems:** Work life balance and brand building are the challenges.

**(a) Work life balance**

During the initial days, work life balance was her major problem. Especially during festivals and peak seasons she was not able to focus on the family side and children had to compromise for the sake of her business in many circumstances. As the years passed, work life balancing problem became less bothering.

**(b) Brand building**

The next challenge she faced was developing the brand name, earning the goodwill of the customer.

**(c) Price-quality**

Another problem she faces is in relation to fixing the price. Managing the employees and maintaining the same quality for so many years has been a real challenge for her all the time.

**Success:** At present, she has a market share of around 60%. She has not undergone any specific training for tailoring or designing or draping. But she is one of the top designers in her locality at present. She is offering job opportunities for more than 25 tailors who are not able to get orders by their own. “As long as I can be innovative in offering designs to customers, I can be successful in my business” observed Lakshmi.

**6. Pushpa(Goods carrier)**

Pushpa holds a degree in Commerce. She runs a logistics service firm named “Team Athreya”. It offers transportation services for companies like Boxer and Micromax to transport the finished goods from the factories to warehouses. She is into this business for the past 15 years. She also runs a mass mailing services firm as an ancillary for this venture.

**Motivation:** She started her career with a logistics company as an executive and understood her passion and flavour in the industry. Within the period of 6 months wherein she was working with the company, she got an interest to start her own of such a kind of company. Soon after her marriage, she had to quit her day job and she also felt that she can no more work with a company due to her family commitments and decided to start her own venture to enjoy the benefits of working on her desirable time and be her own boss.

**Problems:** The major issues she has faced in her entrepreneurial journey can be listed as follows.

At personal level, she feels bad occasionally that she could not upgrade her qualification as she has to keep her focus on the business all the time.

Relating to the business, ensuring safe delivery of the products from the factory to the warehouse was a major issue as lot of thefts could be possible and she is liable to pay compensation. She is overcoming this problem by deputing reliable persons.

She is not able to take up the same services with other companies who are dealing with the same product. This limits the growth of her business horizontally.

The corporate customers do not settle accounts immediately after the transactions. She has to wait for 3 to 4 months. Due to this she has to borrow funds at interest from outside to initiate the entire transaction.

**Role of husband:** Though her husband is running a different business, he is helping her in her business with regard to funding and getting loans from bank when required. He has been her backbone and a guide in her business in every step.

**Success: Her** strengths are confidence, inter personal skills and go getter attitude, with which she is able to cope with problems in her business. The secret of success is the credibility she has earned from her customers who are the corporate players in the market. She also mentions that she has never missed out a single opportunity which has come into her way and made her reach out to this stage in her professional life.

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