

Emerging women ...

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1.35% divorced and 0.48% were separated. Regarding previous occupations of Women entrepreneurs, the largest number (64.64%) were only housewives before they entered into their careers as entrepreneurs, 17.49% were students, 7.83% were in service, 1.84% belonged to other occupations and 3.86% were unemployed. The largest segment 77.87% belonged to nuclear families, while 15.36% belonged to joint or extended families. The most common motivating factor was to add to family income (47.25%). Majority had proprietorship of business (85.41%) in the Small Enterprise sector. Some in the Medium Enterprise sector had Family Ownership, Partnership or were share holders in Companies. 4.54% Directors in their business, 2.90% were Managing Directors in their firms. 2.80% were Chairmen of the Companies. 3.96% worked as managers of the enterprises while 0.39% held various other positions in the business enterprises.

Women today have ventured towards agricultural activities since it has been observed that male farmers in many places are shifting towards various other professions due receiving less return from agriculture. This has resulted in women's participation in not only cultivating crops in the fields but also planting vegetables, participating in storage and also marketing of crops and vegetables. This is a new area of activity for the women in the rural areas but this arrangement has brought in a new vigour for women's agricultural performance.

Women were restrained from many traditional activities in early times. Hand weaving, clay product making in turning bowls, are now regularly produced by women along with the male



PHOTO: STAR

family-members of the households. However marketing of these products are usually performed by the males. Hand weaving has now emerged through women, and handloom products, textiles and saris are now woven and marketed by women in Tangail, Manipur of Sylhet and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, preserving age-old traditions and weaving procedures.

Women participate more in SME

products than large industrial items due to lack of finance, knowledge and other related requisites.

Women entrepreneurs in SME are involved in manufacturing, export, import, and sale of items. Other activities involve preservation, packaging, production, advertisement, event management, food preparation, stitching, embroidery, beautification, beautician and skin care and utility services as

door to door supply. Publicity of women's products is undertaken through advertisements, brochures, banners and leaflets.

New areas for business have emerged with training, business meets, foreign trade participation. Women have ventured to produce items previously manufactured only by men. These include manufacture of cosmetics, ready-made garments, preserved food, packaging,

printing, batik works, wax items, wood crafts, bamboo works etc.

Heritage is preserved in and maintained in SME products, especially in terms of designs, product style, colour composition and shape identification. Cultural norms and dignity are focused with household items, which have been carried on for generations in particular areas or

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