

Promoting the First Generation Women Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka: A lesson from India

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ABSTRACT. The women entrepreneurs of Sri Lanka were victims of war. They did not become entrepreneurs out of choice; they became entrepreneurs as a result of war, in their pursuit of supporting themselves and their families. Majority of them were in business for the first time as they lost their husbands and/or children to the war and saw business as a means to end and their success in the venture is making a balance between family and work. These women were educated with a minimum level education and were involved in businesses such as livestock farming, services and craft/textile which did not require a high capital outlay and expert skills and knowledge of the business.

While the international attention has somewhat shifted elsewhere, the international community are still trying to play a constructive role in building up a post-war Sri Lanka. What is more difficult to know- is what strategies (long and short term) exists for development in Sri Lanka? How will the civilians more particularly women start a new life after the camps and how will they become self-sufficient? In this context the present paper entitled "Promoting the First Generation Women Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka: A lesson from India" is a modest attempt to unearth the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs in retail trade. By taking a sample of 281 women and 161 men retail-traders from India, the results confirm the fact that, though women retail-traders face a lot of problems in transacting their business, still there exists a better scope for growth.

The findings of this research are important for several reasons. The women entrepreneurs of the Sri Lanka, like anywhere in the world are powerful driving force for the economic development of the country. The findings of the study will certainly pave the way for the upliftment of socio-economic status of first generation women entrepreneurs in war-torn areas of Sri Lanka.

Key Words: Retailing, Tribal Women and Markets.

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