

Bakery: A Skill Based Entrepreneurship Booming in India for Women Empowerment

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Skill Based Entrepreneur, Women Empowerment, Bakery, Small Scale Industry

The food processing sector has a prominence next to no other business in the country. Initially starting a bakery business does not involve higher investment, thus making it well-paid for people who are thinking of initiating something of their own, especially the homemakers. Women constitute the backbone of any nation and prosperity of the nation depends upon the prosperity of its women. A well-developed food bakery is expected to ensure value addition, and generate employment opportunities. The current Indian bakery market is small, there is substantial potential for growth and diversification in the immediate future. The growth of bakery industry in India is led by two trends: convenience foods, and the growing demand of nutritious, healthy and tasty bakery products. Thus, the bakery industry has unquestionable potential and impact in terms of job creation and household business opportunities, together with providing a wide range of bakery products with good nutrition value at relatively cheaper prices.

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Introduction

India is one of the world's largest producers as well as consumer of food products, with the food sector playing an important role in contributing to the development of the economy. In a population of more than one billion and food constitutes major part of a consumer's budget. The food processing sector has a prominence next to no other business in the country. The importance of this sector to India's economy becomes all the more relevant, considering the fact that this sector continued to perform well, despite fall in GDP number and poor performance by many other industries, during the recession in 2008-09 (FICCI-Ernst and Young report, 2009).

Food industry in India is also seen as a potential source for driving the rural economy as it synergies between consumers, industry and agriculture. A well-developed food bakery is expected to ensure value addition, and generate employment opportunities. This is also capable of addressing the critical issue of food security and providing wholesome, nutritious food to our people (MOFPI, 2010). However, despite the continuous efforts and initiatives of the Government to provide the required stimulus to this sector, bakery activity is still at its nascent stage in India. The level of baking is currently low across the product categories. For example, the Indian bakery industry is currently dominated by bread and biscuit sectors which make up about 80 percent of the total turnover. Though the current Indian bakery market is small, there is substantial potential for growth and diversification in the immediate future. The growth of bakery industry in India is led by two trends: convenience foods, and the growing demand of nutritious, healthy and tasty bakery products.

Bakeries, have existed since the dawn of civilization in one form or the other. The bakery industry in India is a sunrise sector and offers huge potential for growth, income and jobs. It is also the largest segment of the food processing sector. Driven by rapid population growth and changing eating habits, bakery products have gained popularity in broad segments of the country (AIMS Institutes, n.d) There are around 60,000 bakeries and several pasta units and 20,000 traditional food units in India. The bakery industry is among the few processed food segment industries whose production has been increasing consistently in the country in the last few years. The changing dietary habits, globalization, improved standards of living are reason to the exponential growth in the baking industry. India is seeing a big boom in the bakery retail industry. The stature of bakery as an industry is huge within the food processing sector.

Baking Industry Trends in India

The concept of processed foods has increasing consumers because of their enhanced convenience, variety, nutritional value and taste. The challenge therefore lies in continuously developing new varieties of food items, as well as new processes that will maximize its appeal and shelf-life, and provide wholesome meals to the masses. Globalization has popularized international bakery products in India. Indian bakery companies like Britannia, Parle jee and Unibic have also increased their variety in biscuits, cookies and pastries. The baking industry produces wheat grain-based processed food which includes breads, cakes, pies, pastries, cupcakes, cookies, tarts etc. The growth in bread segment is 4-5%, due to multi-grain bread products while patisserie and chocolate segment has witnessed a growth of around 17%. India has more than 2,000 organised or semi-organised

bakeries and 1,000,000 unorganised bakeries. With the growth of the internet and exposure of the Indian clientele who are well-travelled, the expectations are steadily rising. The demand for international desserts is increasing. Thus, India is fast becoming a place where careers in baking are becoming more viable and rewarding. (Giri V.A 2016)

A lot of artisan bakers in India are taking the cake business by storming the market with unique and specialized cakes for a host of occasions. Indian market is viewing a complete makeover of cakes. The cake segment that was once restricted to birthday cakes and pastries has now expanded to include cupcakes, themed cupcakes, birthday cupcakes, fondant cakes and 3D cakes which are just some of the various options before customers (AIMS Institutes, n.d). Availability ready toppings, creams, flavors and fillings has popularized innovative trends in cake designing and baking art.

Bakery and Health Industry

The health and fitness industry has also a significant impact on developing variety in baking products. There are nutritionally rich, high fiber biscuits available in the market made from millets and whole wheat. Special health needs and allergies toward certain foods has increased the demand of high fiber, gluten-free, lactose free and sugar-free baked products in today's market. Consumer demand for healthier, less-processed bakery products continues to increase, along with demand for artisan, egg-less, allergen-free, sugar-free, non-dairy and organic baked goods. Trends in baking continue toward lighter, healthier products, and those containing allergen-free, organic, and whole-grain ingredients (AIMS Institutes, n.d).

Some additional nutrients are used primarily to improve the products' health-

supporting qualities. They include fiber, antioxidants, omega-3 oils, and vitamin and mineral fortifications, thus creating a new product from an existing one. Such modifications can be challenging to bakers as changes in formulation may require changes in equipment, processes and costs. Vegetarian bakery products are also growing in popularity. Whole grains continue to increase in popularity both because of their health benefits, tastes and textures. Whole-grain wheat flour is popular in breads and related baked goods, as are many gluten-free grains. The nutrient content of whole grains tends to be higher than that of processed grains. (AIMS Institutes, n.d)

Bakery and Women Entrepreneurs

The industry has tremendous potential in terms of job creation and home based orientated business opportunities, together with providing wide range of nutritious bakery products at relatively cheaper prices. Bakery industry is also a gender-sensitive sector with large shares of women entrepreneurs. The skill gaps regarding producing world class products is a real concern. This is primarily due to lack of infrastructure at the grass root level, lack of trained specialty instructors, lack of right exposure and insufficient exposure to world class baking. Working as a chef in the baking industry has both challenges and the rewards, just like any other profession. With a number of hotels, airline kitchens, cafes, standalone pastry shops and bakeries opening up all over India the availability of skilled pastry chefs needs to urgently match the demand. Key issues that the industry is facing include the need for improvements in technology and the availability of skilled manpower. The lack of technology and upgrading in manufacturing and packaging has been a factor affecting industry growth. Bakery operators have initiated using sophisticated equipment and technology due to

increase in competition. Hospitality industries has strong demand of bakers with fine and artistic bakery skills. Thus there is requirement of training institutes which can produce bakery skilled workers with knowledge about the bakery trade and the country's food laws, good manufacturing practice and the requirement of baking and pastry chefs with world-class training and skill sets are the need of the hour.

Women constitute the backbone of any nation. The position and status of women in any society is an index of civilization. Prosperity of the nation depends upon the prosperity of its women. Till today women in India were considered as the home makers whose responsibilities was restricted to only cooking and taking up other household chores, the world now sees them with the different eyes and a new respect. The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period of time, especially since the 1990s. Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology, increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizable employment for others and setting the trend for other women entrepreneurs in the organized sector (Meenaskshi et al 2013).

Perry Brown, the eminent educationist pertinently remarked that 'education needs to sell its benefit to the industry and start a cooperative partnership'. Thus basic principles of entrepreneur which applied the rural development are: Optimum utilization of local resources in an entrepreneurial venture by rural population - Better distributions of the farm produce results in the rural prosperity. Entrepreneurial occupation rural population to reduce discrimination and providing alternative occupations as against the rural migration. To activate such system to provide basic '6 m'- manpower, money, material,

machinery, management and market to the rural population. (Patel and Chavda, 2013)

Our democratic policies, laws, development policies, plans and programmes have all aimed at women's empowerment in different spheres. Though there has been an improvement in the status of women after India gained independence, the agenda of an empowered and self-reliant women continues to be a distant dream. The general notion among the people is that the women living in urban areas are at an advantage and enjoy far better status in comparison to the women in rural India. A strong and effective food processing sector can play a significant role in generating employment in both rural and urban areas. The scope of a baking unit is far beyond just opening new window of opportunity for employment for women; it can be instrumental in addressing to the problem of malnutrition which is widespread in India. Food and Nutrition Board (2011) brought into light that malnutrition in India continues to be at a high level with 42.5% children below the age being underweight and almost 70% being anemic. 22% children are born with low birth weight. Lack of adequate information on nutritional needs, has been identified as a major factor for the prevailing nutritional situation in the country. Child malnutrition is both the result of economic conditions and poor nutritional awareness. Training in baking using indigenous food products for enhancing nutrient contents has been recognized as one of the long-term sustainable interventions essential to tackle the problem of malnutrition and to generate awareness and to promote the nutrition status of the country.

Reducing malnutrition requires nutritious food. Poverty and food insecurity seriously constrain accessibility of nutritious diets, including high protein quality, adequate micronutrient content and bioavailability, macro-minerals and essential fatty acids, low anti-nutrient content,

and high nutrient density. Largely plant-source-based diets with few animal source and fortified foods do not meet these requirements and need to be improved by processing, fortification, and adding animal source foods, e.g. milk, or other specific nutrients (WFP, 2008). Options include using specially formulated foods blended with indigenous easily available food ingredients like multigrain flour, enriched wheat flour, soya flour etc. Whole wheat flour has good amounts of Protein, Fiber, Iron, B vitamins, Thiamin, Niacin, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Zinc. The natural alkalinity of millet flour makes it easily digestible, so it is very beneficial for people with ulcers and digestive problems. It is also believed to be one of the least allergenic varieties of flour. Nutritionally, sorghum flour is similar to corn flour, but it has a higher concentration of protein. It is gluten-free so it is an excellent choice for people who are gluten intolerant. Flour ground from soybeans is also very high in protein and low in carbohydrates. It can be added to wheat flour when making baked goods to boost the protein level. Although not much work has been done, baked food items such as biscuits, rusks, cakes etc can be made more nutritious by developing innovative recipes from indigenous products like adding soya flour, jowar flour etc.

The second category is the consumers who are prone to life-style diseases like hypertension, diabetes, over nutrition. To create healthier alternative in several baked categories we need to aim at improving nutrient profiles in a diversity of bakery products, like an improved fatty acid composition in a fat mix of indulgent products. For instance, increasing dietary fiber intake is a major challenge where bakery products are a great opportunity to help consumers increase their intake of dietary fibers by using whole grains in baking of products.

Mushrooming growth of fast food joints serving fancy bakery products like bread-butter,

pizza, burger, puff, hotdog, pastries etc. along with traditional bakery products like biscuits, cookies, cakes etc. is the indication that bakery industry has developed its own remarkable position in the industrial map of India (Kamliya, and Rema 2003). According to Datamonitor (1999) India's bakery and cereal market is worth \$1 billion, the 3rd largest in Asia Pacific after Japan and Australia. It is larger than the Chinese market, which by comparison is worth just \$ 0.93 billion. But still the per capita per year consumption of bakery product in India is roughly 1 to 2 kg as compared to 10 to 50 kg in advanced countries. The gap is thus wide and there is ample scope for increasing the production of bakery products manifold in the years to come. One of the ways to capture the developing market is by providing therapeutic bakery products because increasing health consciousness among urban people and health awareness among rural people will certainly lead to an increase in the demand for such products (Kamaliya 2000).

In our country, out of the 85,000 bakery units nearly 75,000 operate in the unorganised small-scale sector occupying 65% of the market shares (Kaur et al. 2004). Thus the future demand of bakery products has to be met only by small-scale sectors because of the Government's policy of reservation. Therefore, there is a need to develop healthy and therapeutic products using low cost technology with minimum changes in formula and procedure, which is yet suitable in their working conditions. As there is rise in demand for bakery products, India is on the lookout for more long lasting methods of baking which will be effective in maintaining the quality and freshness of the commodity. Thus, in this scenario, there is ample scope to establish and run a bakery and preservation units successfully that would cater to the daily bakery needs of population. This will further give a boost to bakery products so that they can serve as healthy snack for the society, especially for children and other vulnerable

sections of the population.

The main aim of the establishing the bakery would be to impart training in basic baking operational techniques food hygiene and packaging and marketing techniques of bakery, to cater to needs of local inhabitants. It will provide opportunity to impart knowledge and improve skill of trainee for preparing various items including common bakery products, like bread, biscuits, cookies, nankhatai, cake, khari, puff, pizza, burger, buns, toast etc through hygienic and nutritious recipes. This will create self-employment opportunity for the rural women. Due to changing food consumption patterns and changing trends the products would be prepared from indigenous products that are healthier and rich in various vitamins, minerals as well as fiber. Innovative use of multigrain flour, soya bean and other pulses, vegetable and fruit concentrate (like that of pumpkin, dates, carrot, and apple etc) will be done to make the products healthy and appealing.

The small scale bakery unit for developing self-entrepreneurship in bakery technology could be accomplished through baseline survey to explore the needs for the bakery products through and develop the products that are innovative and nutritious, to provide healthy alternatives for snacks and accomplishments. Development of a bakery unit would include infrastructure development, procurement of equipment's and raw materials. Costing of the products will be should be done keeping in mind the basic three types of cost involved in its day to day operations like food cost, labor cost and overhead cost. Product packaging and labeling must be appealing in order to attract and hold the consumer's eye and attention, and protect the product on the shelf from contamination, damage or tampering. Proper licensing from Food Safety and Standards Authority of India should be taken.

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