

Gender Issues in Entrepreneurship: Back to Nature

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Email : thesar2005@yahoo.co.id, evi.thesar77@gmail.com**Abstract**

Gender issues in entrepreneurship come from the women's eagerness to get better treatment in their life especially when it compares to men's. It seems to make misconception and misbelieve among the women in the developing countries. The misconception and misbelieve has urged the women to fight in gaining the higher positions in any fields than men's. This spirit has made some problems in families and marriages. This paper has a purpose to drive the gender issues back to the nature of woman without humiliating women's ability to conduct a business. This paper will describe the woman's potential things to implement in entrepreneurship without having to ignore the nature.

The nature of woman in this paper is based on Bible study especially from the books of Genesis 2 (LAI, Jakarta, 1994) and Proverbs 31 (Yayasan Kalam Hidup, Bandung, 1983, 2003) and other related references. The other data is taken from dialogue in small groups of 5 married women, include the housewife, career woman and entrepreneur woman. The dialogue discusses about the nature of woman, the potential things of the woman that valuable for directing a business and how an entrepreneur woman should manage herself and family in her limited time.

This paper, which is arranged conceptually, intends to make an overview that women are welcome to be an entrepreneur, but they should remember their nature, so they will be a totally success women in their life by completing their responsibilities in business and family.

Keywords: gender issues, nature of woman, entrepreneur woman

Introduction

Gender issues come from the eagerness of the women to have the same level with men. This issue is controversial until now. Some will agree, the others no. It usually issues in career cases. When a woman takes a full time job, it will be contrary with the condition that she, if she's married, has to be a good mother for her children, and good wife for her husband. It made the women jealously react. They want the same level with men in every field, especially in business.

Today, so many married women take the full time jobs or have their own successful business, for many reasons. Some say, the career make them enriched, and for her existence admitted. But, others have different opinion, because they think that women must stay at home to manage her home well. So the debate will not be completely stopped, because of the differences.

The nature of women, actually can be the mediator in that debate, if the women themselves do not mind to set their mind backward in the beginning God created woman. In Genesis, the position of woman and man are not comparison. But the woman has a influential position, as a helper, taken from ribs of man (NIV, 1996:27). So, it will be ironic if women claim the equality in rights and positions with the men, because the nature has given each unique role to enrich other.

This paper, again, does not want to sharpen the debate, but intends to make an overview that a career woman or woman that runs her own business is welcome because she has characters that support her entrepreneurship. However, they have to remember their responsibility to her family.

Conceptual Background

Empowering this paper, the writer used the Biblical study based on Bible (Genesis and Proverbs books) and other references. The biblical study will be divided into two (2) parts, those are, nature of woman and the basic abilities of a woman related to entrepreneurship skills.

1. Nature of woman

- a. Taken from Genesis book (NIV, 1996:27), the first woman in the world was Eve (Heva, latin) means woman. Eve came from Adam's ribs. Eve became a helper of Adam (the first man in the world). The position of Adam and Eve was equal. Adam was not stronger, more powerful and more special than Eve. They complemented and needed each other. They had the same goal. As a woman, Eve had the same intellectual ability as Adam (NIV, 1996:27).
- b. According to the Bible, Eve is the suitable helper for Adam (the first man). Suitable helper to do the creativity things in the world God has made.

- c. Eve is precious one for Adam (Douglas, JD, 1982:372-373), became the suitable helper to live together. It means God created them not to make them work individually, but to be united in doing things, without competition.
2. The Eve's character (Nggebu, 2003:33-37)
 - a. Helper
Eve was the first helper for man that gave a help. Her position was not under the man, but beside, equal and needed each other.
 - b. Easy to be tempted
The devil tried to tempt Eve, and Eve was able to be tempted.
 - c. The cause of sin syndrome in this world
After the fall of the first man and woman, human is always tempted in flesh, eyes and life boast.
 - d. Reluctant
After fall in to sin, they were reluctant. So they made for themselves clothes.
 - e. Not sadness resistant
The first sadness, Eve felt sad when Abel was killed by his brother, Cain.
 - f. Submit to her husband
"He (Adam) will over you" (NIV, Genesis, 28). It gave Eve the responsibility to help, at the same time, she had to submit herself to his rule. It does not mean to give a chance to the husbands (men) to treat women carelessly. But, like human have to submit themselves to their Creator, so that's why, Eve had the same responsibility. Eve's rule was to fulfill her responsibility to close to Adam.
3. What can we learn from Eve's life
Eve's presence to help Adam is the God's mandate. God's idea to create Eve was not to place Eve under Adam. But the problem we are facing now is that the teamwork fails. It means that both man and woman do not do the rule well. It drives the gender issues.

If we discuss about the gender issues in entrepreneurship, we do not need to be pessimistic woman. Actually, woman herself has profitable characters that applicable to conduct a business. In her book, Gien Karssen (1982, translated edition) exposed 12 characters to be a success woman in her family field. But in this paper, the characters based on Bible (Proverbs 31), will be related them to entrepreneur characters. These are the characters:

1. Choice
"A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies"
Both married or unmarried woman have great responsibility. They are influential to their circumstances wherever they are. Woman, both in family and business field has to make choices everyday. When she is able to make a wise decision over the choices, she's success in this case.
2. She is worth far more than rubies.
The right self concept is needed to be an entrepreneur. If a woman can find her identity and right view of herself, she can handle the problem confidently. If she underestimates herself, she will be doubtful to make a decision. In business field, of course, she can not be like this.
3. By God's grace
"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised"
The character of a woman appears from her performance, not from her modern clothes or good looking. Inner beauty is more important in business. Although a woman has a good looking, but her performance is not good, she won't be successful. The characters should be humble, sympathize, and hospital. In business, a woman can do more if she has them.
4. Suitable friend
"Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value"
A good woman must be believable, at least for her husband. When her husband, as a closest person, believes in her, it's not impossible to other people believe in her too. The trust is very important in business.
5. Positive influence
"She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life"

A woman has a big influence where ever she is. She can be both good and bad influence. But in business, a good influence brings more profit to our business. A good influence of a woman will make he business runs well and proper to its rule.

6. Working attitude

“She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.”

“She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.”

“She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come”

Basically, a woman has a diligent character. In Proverbs 31 (NIV), we can see implicitly that a woman has characters to be a good entrepreneur that is diligent, optimistic, and loyalty. These are important in business which has to compete.

7. Working in Vision

“She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar”

A woman is detailed thinking. That’ s why she can have a clear vision in doing things. Of course, it’s important in business. Because a business can not run well without a vision. A vision will lead people to do things orderly, so we do not have to spend more useless time, energy or thought.

8. Time and money management

“She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls”

“She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night”

“She watches over the affairs of her house hold and does not eat the bread of idleness”

A good woman is a good manager, a good entrepreneur. In her position as a wife, a mother even a single, she can be a praised woman if she can do these things, both in business and family. Those are:

- Thinking :

She can do some things in almost the same time. A marriage woman has a multitasking sense. More over, if she is also working full time. She will think about not only her household duties and but also her duties in work place. Even, sometimes, she still has time to take care of other people, by joining social work or just help individually to certain people she knows.

- Learning

A successful woman is a woman who likes to learn things from her life and other people. In business, we can also learn from our failure. By learning from life and everything around us, we can be wiser. Especially, in business, a woman can learn how to face a failure, how to gain profit, and so on.

- Planning

No business runs without planning. Because of her intuition and detailed thinking, a woman actually can be a better planner than a man. A plan can be in financial or time.

9. Loving

“She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy”

A woman has a kind heart to people. Generally, a woman is people oriented. That’s why, the jobs in relation with people is usually handled by a woman. But her generosity is not only in this field. In her house, in relation with he family, husband and children, a woman should the same kindness.

10. Beauty and creativity

“She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple”

A woman has a creativity sense. It makes a lot of entrepreneur woman have a lot new idea what to produce. With her sense of beauty, a woman can make the simple things more beautiful. This is very profitable in business.

11. wisdom and teaching

“She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue”

A woman is graced to be wise and good teaching skill. That’s why a teacher is usually a woman. Her motherhood supports her skill in teaching. And her detailed thought leads her to be wise, because, before deciding something, she will try to find information. This makes a woman usually has a better wisdom.

12. More than other woman

“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all”

A business woman, will be successful if her husband (if married) and family see her as a good woman both in house and workplace. Her husband and family are the great supporter for her doing things. That’s why, although a woman is successful in business, but if she can not handle her family as well as in business, she is not completely in a success.

Research Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative research method, by the focus group as the instrument. The focus group consists of 5 married women. The three of them are career woman and the rest are a pure housewife and a housewife that is entrepreneur. The discussion is about gender issues in business or entrepreneurship. The discussion is an hour length.

Analysis

The results of the discussion in focus group are:

1. They agree that gender issues have changed in to the wrong direction. Coming from the eagerness of woman to be equal to man has changed to be how to defeat man's authority, by feminism movement. In Indonesia, we had a woman hero that struggled for the issues. Her name was RA Kartini. She is the woman emancipation hero. But, the original issue from her was just to make an equal right to have good education, not to defeat man. The focus group intends to make sure that the emancipation or gender issue put itself in right order. The changing of the paradigm makes the situation worse, as woman today claim more than she should. We agree that a woman should fight for her rights in law, education, health, work, etc. But the discussion underlines the fight should be arranged in peaceful ways. And the focus group believes, even though woman gets a different treatment, it does not mean that they have to react contrarily. The difference in treatment is naturally caused.
2. They agree that women today are welcome to be entrepreneurs or business woman and career woman. Basically, the focus group supports the women with ability in conducting a business. They underlined women's characters those are profitable in business field, such as detailed, optimistic, creative, loving and so on. That's why the focus group that contains of working women is not mind if a married woman works fulltime out of home. But, they intend to open a new way to an effective woman both in family and work place. However, a married woman is a wife and a mother. They should put her family as a first priority before work. At least, it has to balance.
3. The focus group agrees that the woman does not need to fight for the equity in gender issues, especially in business field. They believe that woman, without fighting for the equity has more strength than man. Each man and woman has own responsibility in doing things. If one grab other's rule, the situation won't be better, but getting worse. Because God has put the specific function in each. A woman is a helper for a man. A man, as a leader, needs support from the woman. Actually, without woman's support, man can not do things well. That's why, we have to be proud in being a woman.
4. The most important issues, that the focus group wants to solve is about the difference treatment in workplace between man and woman. The difference will be a problem, if only based on gender, not based on capability, quality or competency. In case, if a woman has better capability than man, the leader in work place should treat a woman better too. The focus group does not agree with the idea which says that woman is weak. Actually, woman is not weak, but the nature that she has to bear a baby, pregnant and has menstruation every month makes her seems to be weak. Woman can be multitasking. She can think a lot of things almost in the same time better than man. The focus group intends to open mind that a woman in her limitation physically has a great potential talent in leadership. So that's why, they have no rejection to woman's leadership, as far as the woman herself still appreciate the man.
5. The focus group noted that the woman has strength in entrepreneurship skill. Those are:
 - Her intuition leads her in to the right decision making in business.
 - Her loving sense to others makes her a lovable leader in business.
 - Her detailed sense makes her careful to count the risk.
 - Her diligence brings success to her.
 - Her ways to treat others gives her more business partners.
 - Her spiritual interest makes her wiser to face the difficulties in business field.
 - Her creativity leads her to make various products.
 - Her beauty makes her products arranged well, nicely and neatly
6. Beside the strength, the focus group also notes about the weakness that the woman should admit, that they still need help from man. Those weakness are:
 - To run the business, that needs machine and heavy equipments, the woman, physically, limited. So they need man to do this.

- To do things technically, man usually has more capability in this field. Although now, woman can do this also. But not so many woman able to do technically job well.
- Woman needs man to help her think logically. Woman usually uses her feeling, but in business, it can not be always used. That's why, woman needs man to think logically. It does not mean that woman is not logic thinker, but woman has more sensitivity sense than man which able to make a decision very subjective.

Conclusion

In order to conclude this paper, it can be summarized that woman should not underestimate to herself. She does not to fight for the right equity with man in demonstration or radically ways, because woman has things that man does not have. We can use what ever God has given well, and maximize the capabilities, talents and skill better. A radically debate just shows the weakness of woman.

When we talk about gender issues, and debate about rights equity we have to remember the nature of woman. We can look at back where the woman was created in splendor purposes, to be a helper that suitable to man. She was created to balance role of man and woman. If we realize about the nature of woman, I am sure that gender issues will not influence the entrepreneurship skill. It means that every woman has a capacity to be an entrepreneur but she has a responsibility to her family.

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