

## ≈ SUMMARY ≈

**INSPIRATIONAL PARABLES: ETHNIC MINORITY INDIAN  
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN NEW ZEALAND***Edwina Pio**Faculty of Business, Auckland University of Technology***Principal Topic**

This study focuses on inspirational parables as a pathway towards a communication theory of entrepreneurship, particularly for minority ethnic women. The focal point for this study is Indian women entrepreneurs, who form part of the 1.7% of Indians in the New Zealand population of approximately four million. The first Indian men who came to New Zealand in the late 19th century were eventually followed by Indian women. Hence today, Indian women from the early settler families who are second and third generation, as well as the new settlers who have come to New Zealand after changes in the immigration policy from 1987, form the source group for this study. The early settlers primarily came from rural areas of India (Gujarat and Punjab), due to famine and drought, whereas many of the recent migrants hail from the mega cities of Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi who come to New Zealand in search for a better quality of life for themselves and especially for their children. Indian women entrepreneurs in New Zealand have been an understudied group, and this study, which is part of a larger project on Indian women in work and enterprise in New Zealand, is a step towards bringing the experiences of these women into the domain of academic scholarship. New Zealand is a country built on immigration, and there is a rich storehouse of oral and written stories, myths, fables, tales and parables of the Maori, Anglo-Saxon, Pacific Islanders, African, Arab, Chinese and Indian peoples. This study seeks to foreground inspirational parables of Indian women entrepreneurs in New Zealand with the aim of sharing and transferring stories for current women entrepreneurs, other Indian women migrants who may be contemplating entrepreneurship, for use in mentoring ethnic minority women, as well as serving as role models for young Indian women in New Zealand. The theoretical perspective is that of mixed embeddedness where institutional structures and the entrepreneurs play out their parables in the complexity of the political, psychological, social and economic arenas.

**Methodology/Key Propositions**

The methodology for this study is qualitative with in-depth interviews used to access the life stories of the women. The interviews utilized a biographical approach with the intent to capture the lived-in and lived-through sedimented experiences of the women. Thus each participant was asked to first picture in their mind's eye and then verbally sketch their story about their enterprise. This was guided along by open ended questions on the nature of the business, the choice points along the way and how the woman perceived success. Snowball sampling facilitated access to the fifteen women interviewed, all of whom were either New Zealand citizens or permanent residents in the host country. The interviews lasted from 45 to 180 minutes and they were audio taped along with extensive note taking. Content and theme analysis followed from the data set which included interview transcripts, field notes, observations and an audit trail.

The key propositions were the:

1. impact of ethnicity on entrepreneurial choice,
2. nature of the enterprise and the entrepreneurial trajectory as a minority women entrepreneur, and
3. description of success.

Ethnic epistemologies were used to situate the stories of these minority women in their own cultural context as well as the reality of being enfolded in the dominant gaze of the majority culture.

### **Results and Implications**

The findings from the qualitative study portray the importance of family traditions, the significance of male figures in the woman's life - particularly within the Indian culture which is primarily patriarchal, the role of the mother figure, and blocked mobility in the labour market. Three dominant, often intersecting themes from the women's entrepreneurial experiences form the hub around which the inspirational parables revolve:

1. Compassionate Care (here the woman employs co-ethnics, facilitates the movement of migrants in the host country, along with primary importance to family commitments)
2. Engaging Economics (the woman's focus is on making money and the growth of her enterprise)
3. Passionate Past-time (the conversion of the woman's hobby and innate or learned skill into her business)

Limits of this study include the small sample size, lack of triangulation and the focus exclusively on successful women entrepreneurs. Future research could include longitudinal studies on ethnic minority women's entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs who do not succeed, in addition to the impact of policy frameworks and conditions for nurturing nascent entrepreneurs, as well as the effect of entrepreneurial training for ethnic minority migrant youth. This study contributes to the literature on entrepreneurship by seeking to explicate inspirational parables of minority ethnic women, and through this analysis move towards a communication theory of entrepreneurship. The significance of such parables is underscored by the fact that visible minority ethnic women due to their surface level discriminators are often an invisible component in the broad entrepreneurship policies and frameworks of the receiving country.

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