

An Investigation of Challenges and Opportunities for Indian Women Entrepreneur

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Abstract

Due to deeply rooted customs and a male-dominated sociocultural structure, Indian women face significant challenges in achieving equal rights and roles. In any economy, entrepreneurs are essential because they use their abilities and initiative to foresee demands and provide novel ideas to the market. Someone who takes on challenging jobs to attain financial independence and personal needs is considered a woman entrepreneur. Although many women possess this trait, they are unaware of their true potential since they have never been given the chance to display their skills. Mothers bear a greater responsibility in India for caring for their families and nurturing their children. Women are often the ones in families who are responsible for efficiently organizing a variety of activities without experiencing difficulties. The current study is concerned with the issues and difficulties encountered by Indian women business owners. Despite the women's empowerment movement in our nation, women still lag when it comes to operating businesses. The primary problem is the lack of an environment that encourages entrepreneurship, but women also face social, cultural, and financial obstacles. Despite their aptitude and talent, women lack access to opportunities, knowledge, and education. The male-female competitiveness, women's family responsibilities, gender inequity, financial difficulties, and low risk-taking mentality are a few of the main issues noted. To support women's enterprises in maintaining favourable working conditions, the State and Central governments have launched some empowerment initiatives.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Empowerment, Initiatives, Women Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurial Environment, working condition, gender equity.

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Introduction:

Entrepreneurship promotes growth and wealth, it has a substantial positive correlation with any economy's ability to flourish economically (Baumol et al., 2007 and Schramm, 2006). Women are becoming more and more entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations during the past few decades. A woman entrepreneur is an individual who establishes and runs any business a woman entrepreneur typically does it with a great deal of initiative and risk (Gaur et al., 2018). Because women are more goal-oriented, objective, adaptable, tolerant, creative, pragmatic, lively, and passionate than their male counterparts, they regulate fashion differently. Female entrepreneurs have a significant positive impact on reducing poverty, raising per capita income, and creating jobs (Aguirre, D. et al., 2012, Ogidi, A. E., 2014 & Kumar, S. M. et al. 2013). An increasing body of research suggests that women might play a major role in entrepreneurship and economic growth (Sarfaraz et al., 2014). Women have emerged as

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today's most remarkable and inspirational entrepreneurs, even though entrepreneurship has historically been a male-dominated field from very early on. Nowadays, women have emerged as entrepreneurs and understood that working with men is the only way to secure their potential and the survival of their families. Women are thought to make up 10% of all entrepreneurs in India at the moment, and this number is expected to climb annually. In five more years, women will probably make up 20% of the entrepreneurial workforce if current trends continue (Saidapur et al., 2012). This is because women are no longer the only gender involved in entrepreneurship (Marlow, 2002). Globally, women

only make about 29% of top executive roles (IBR, 2020).

Women's education has undoubtedly greatly increased their confidence and encouraged them to assist others and pursue new business opportunities. Despite geographic limitations, there are notable disparities between the actual situation on the ground and. Although there are still options for women to pursue jobs in business, these prospects are still underdeveloped and require attention because of the general notion that women are emotionally and physically weaker than men (Wennekers, 1999).

Literature Review

Numerous studies on women's entrepreneurship were reviewed by Bowen & Hisrich (1986). The results demonstrated that, although frequently having superior educational backgrounds, female entrepreneurs lack the requisite managerial skills, have a more internal locus of control than other women, and are more likely to have had fathers who were also business owners. The backgrounds and experiences of men and women entrepreneurs are presented in depth by Cohoon et al. (2010). Based on primary data acquired through surveys of established and successful women entrepreneurs, the research was created. The study determined the primary drivers for women to pursue entrepreneurship. The elements that were discovered were the desire to advance in life, accumulate riches, and profit from one's business ideas. The difficulties have less to do with gender and more to do with entrepreneurship. Research indicates that the majority of women start their businesses. On the contrary, Sarfaraz et al. (2014) gender equality and women entrepreneurs are statistically related. They have examined the relationship between women's entrepreneurial activity and gender-related economic development using a correlation study. Furthermore, the researcher used a DEMATEL approach (Raghuvanshi et al., 2017) to examine the barriers that women face while attempting to pursue entrepreneurship. The present study examines potential victims among previous research and identifies impediments. According to G. Palaniappan et al. (2012), women enter the corporate world mostly for the reasons of their abilities, knowledge, acceptability, and flexibility.

Thus, García P. & Capitán (2016) use a prospective study to address factors that support the growth of female entrepreneurship. The objective of their research is to determine which environmental factors when seen from a gender viewpoint, support and foster female innovation. They have presented qualitative research that thoroughly examines ten interviews that were evaluated based on their relationship-based content.

Bahl (2012) focuses on the treatment of female entrepreneurs in rural India. Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are offered to assist women who want to run prosperous businesses. This paper's primary goal is to investigate the Indian government's policy on women.

Rao (2019) India's profoundly embedded patriarchal social structure is one of the primary causes of the country's poor growth for female entrepreneurs. In addition to making, it harder for women to succeed in the business sector, traditional gender norms and expectations frequently restrict women's access to opportunities and resources, such as financing and education. Bano (2023) Despite this, relatively few women work in such senior roles for large corporations. Women entrepreneurs should have the support of their male counterparts, colleagues, and families to help them achieve both personal and organizational goals. This will provide them the confidence they need to continue on their journey for prosperity, success, and advancement. To provide them the place in the sphere of entrepreneurship that they deserve, however, more extensive efforts must be made. There is more work to be done in this area because the government-sponsored development efforts have only helped a tiny portion of society.

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report (2022–2023)

GEM is an international collaboration of academic scholars that focuses on studying entrepreneurial activity and motivation worldwide. Babson College co-founded GEM in 1999. Three national income levels, five worldwide regions, and 49 nations are all examined in its yearly women's report. It also focuses on important GEM indicators, such as gender variations in participation rates at different stages of the

entrepreneurial life cycle. Some of the most important statistical findings from the GEM Women's Entrepreneurship Report are as follows:

- Compared to one in five males, one in six women stated they intended to launch a business soon. Women's aspirations to launch their own businesses were greatest in low-income nations (28.2%) and lowest in high-income nations (11%).
- Compared to one in eight males, one in ten women were just beginning a business. With Guatemala (28.2%) and Colombia (26.1%) topping the globe, low-income nations (13.3%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (21.2%) had the highest starting rates for women.
- As per the GEM research, women made up one in four high-growth entrepreneurs worldwide, with larger percentages in low-income nations (one in three) and North America (two in five). Most of the innovative entrepreneurs in Togo (58.7%), Indonesia (55.3%), Romania (54.5%), Colombia (53.3%), and Iran (52%), additionally almost two-fifths of entrepreneurs servicing foreign markets in Latin America and Caribbean (43.1%) and Europe (41.3%), are women.
- In 2022, both men (40.1%) and women (48.6%) saw most of the startup activity worldwide in the wholesale/retail sector. Nevertheless, with just 2.3% of the women working in the information and communications technology sector compared to 5.3% of males, Women engaged in notably less active than men in this field, which receives the majority of venture capital investment worldwide.
- Almost half of business owners worldwide, both male and female, stated they intended to use new digital tools. But in contrast to men, women were more likely to claim that digital technologies weren't required for running their enterprises. Compared to fewer than 25% of women in high-income nations, over half of women in low-income countries claimed digital tools were not essential for running their businesses.

Need and Relevance of The Research

Nowadays, it is acknowledged that a society's level of progress may be determined by looking at the economic standing of its women. Since women are in a period of professional growth when they are considering several career options, the study focuses on them as potential future sources of female entrepreneurs. These women entrepreneurs may become important contributors to India's economic growth with the correct support from their families, communities, and government.

Objective of the Study

- To explore the challenges or issues faced by Indian women entrepreneurs.
- To know the current scheme of government to mitigate the issues that Indian women entrepreneurs encounter.

Research Methodology

The study's main objective is to conduct a broad analysis of secondary data that has been gathered from several books, national and international journals, and publications from websites that have published articles on multiple facets of women entrepreneurs

Problems and Obstacles Faced by Female Entrepreneurs

Issue with finances

Women have to put in a lot of work to raise money. Women do not possess any assets or securities in their names; instead, they utilize them. It is likely the case that women are morally, financially, and physically dependent on males. Their only sources of income are their savings and small loans from friends, spouses, and kids.

Dominance of Men

Women are subjugated by men in both their familial and professional lives. Women still need to acquire permission from males before participating in any kind of sports; if this isn't taken into account, women may not

have the same rights as men.

Lack of Education

Among the most significant qualifications for a modern entrepreneur is having previously managed a profitable company. An entrepreneur can make up for their lack of knowledge in company management by obtaining a business management degree or by gaining professional expertise in the field. Sadly, women's education is not given the priority it deserves in India. Because of this, a large number of aspiring female business owners lack the training necessary to operate a profitable company.

Social Acknowledgment

Nowadays, society does not give women marketers much credit since it expects them to take care of their families, close friends, and home responsibilities like cooking and cleaning.

Marketing

Women are unable to adequately market their products and services to males. A female does not cover the entire market since she does not travel as frequently or every day as males do.

Technology management

In the changing processes and politics of India's society, media, non-governmental organizations, private institutions, and presidency (both center and kingdom), technology governance plays a critical role in development and advancement.

Policies by the Government for Women Entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs should have the support of their male colleagues, families, and peers to help them achieve both personal and organizational goals. This will allow them to go forward with confidence along the path to success, development, and wealth.

Mudra Yojana

A government program designed to encourage entrepreneurship and give small and micro businesses

financial help, with an emphasis on female entrepreneurs in particular.

Mudra loans for women include reduced interest rates, simple terms, and no collateral requirements for loans up to ₹10 lakhs.

Stand-Up India plan

By offering bank loans for the creation of greenfield firms, this plan encourages entrepreneurship among women and underprivileged groups. Each bank branch aims to target at least one woman and one borrower from a scheduled caste (SC) or scheduled tribe. From ₹10 lakhs to ₹1 crore, loans are available.

Mahila Coir Yojana

Offer affordable spinning equipment and teach women in skill development to empower them. Apart from a 25% margin money subsidy on project costs, female entrepreneurs can receive up to a 75% reimbursement for COIR processing equipment costs. The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) provides micro and small businesses with finance without the need for collateral. Under the initiative, any qualifying borrower can receive loan facilities up to ₹200 lakhs, which is handled by the loan Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE). Businesses run and/or controlled by women are guaranteed 85% of the total.

The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

Promoted microenterprises intending to create jobs. The program offers funding support for starting new businesses and growing current ones. This project can help female businesses.

The Ministry of MSME launched the Udyam Shakti Portal, which helps social entrepreneurship by providing support with company development, facilities for incubation, training courses, mentorship, and market research. initiatives up to ₹25 lakhs in total cost are acceptable, with service-based initiatives costing no more than ₹10 lakhs.

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurs has implemented a program called Economic Empowerment of Women Enterprises and Start-up by Women, which offers female micro-entrepreneurs an incubation and acceleration program. It presently operates in places like Assam, Rajasthan, and Telangana and seeks to expand and start new enterprises.

Trade-Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD):

Offers funding, development, training, and counseling to women to empower them economically. To motivate women to start their businesses, the Government of India provides grants to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for up to 30% of the project's total cost.

Suggestions and Conclusion

India is a country where males predominate, and women are expected to be economically and socially reliant on men. Numerous issues beset women entrepreneurs throughout both the startup and operation phases of their businesses. For businesswomen in particular, government initiatives to encourage female entrepreneurship and financial assistance are crucial. Associations for women entrepreneurs, educational programs, and support from a range of organizations are employed to make sure that the social stigma attached to female entrepreneurs also applies to women joining the business sector. Government programs supporting women entrepreneurs need to be promoted more effectively, and new financial initiatives must be launched to enable women to launch their firms.

Lack of funding, limited freedom of movement, and the requirement to fulfill dual responsibilities at work and home. Furthermore, the proliferation of information technology and technological advancements has lessened the issue of women entrepreneurs. The growth of women entrepreneurs may be significantly accelerated by providing additional financial institutions, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations with assistance for diverse women entrepreneurs around the nation.

Consequently, women possess the ability and will to establish, maintain, and oversee their businesses in a very methodical way. To assist these women, in

reaching new heights in their entrepreneurial endeavors, society at large—and family members in particular—must provide the proper support and encouragement. With the correct support from the government, community, and family, these women entrepreneurs may become an integral component of the country's economy and advance India's economic standing.

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