



Women Entrepreneurship and Its Contributions Economic Development

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Abstract:

Women's entrepreneurship has grown rapidly, gaining widespread acceptance among industries. Women make a major contribution to entrepreneurial activity and economic development in terms of employment generation, GDP growth, poverty reduction and social inclusion. According to a study, women's entrepreneurial motivation determines the impact on entrepreneurial success. The entrepreneurial motivational variables include ambition, independence, government subsidies, and work satisfaction. In present scenario, it becomes necessary to analyze and explore the concept of women entrepreneurs and to focus on their role in the Indian economy and their contributions towards self-reliant India. While the route of entrepreneurship itself is fraught with difficulties like fundraising, financing to marketing, training, creativity, govt. backing, idea generation, and many more different problems experienced by women entrepreneurs. But they manage to survive and succeed with their hard work, diligence and perseverance. This paper explains the success stories of different women entrepreneurs around the world, how they got success in their respective fields by facing different problems.

Keywords: *Success factors, India, women entrepreneur, Problems, Challenges*

Introduction:

Being women, everyone should feel proud of themselves. Looking in to every field of life, as it may be managing of corporations or managing of household things or sports world, women's success stories are sky –high Most of the women's are born with entrepreneurial skills and are known for it. Women's are embedded with patience, perseverance, risk-taking attitude, hard work, etc. and these are the qualities of entrepreneurs. In this seminar, highlight has been thrown on the stories of those women who after facing various struggles in their life and work environment came up with their own solutions to problems and as such, they emerged as successful women entrepreneurs.

Following are the objectives of the study:

- To understand the concept of women entrepreneurship.
- To understand the role of women entrepreneurs in development of Indian economy.
- To discuss the future paradigm for women entrepreneurs.

Background of Women Entrepreneurship in India:

Background of Women Entrepreneurship in Innovation, social change, and economic expansion are all significantly influenced by entrepreneurship.

In this dynamic, women entrepreneurs are essential because they foster innovation, job creation, and sustainable business practices. Due

to social norm changes, economic empowerment initiatives, and educational improvements, women's involvement in entrepreneurship has steadily increased in India. Women are still under-represented in the business ecosystem, nonetheless, in spite of these developments. Women entrepreneurship in India has evolved from necessity-driven, home-based micro-enterprises to a significant driver of economic growth, with 58% of women entrepreneurs aged 20–30 starting businesses, often driven by education and improved financial access. While historically restricted by patriarchal norms, women now increasingly lead in technology, retail, and manufacturing, contributing significantly to employment and innovation. Women entrepreneurs in India, comprising roughly 20% of the MSME sector, are crucial for economic growth but face challenges like limited financing, socio-cultural barriers, and dual responsibilities. While urban women lead in technology/non-traditional sectors, rural women often engage in handicrafts. Government schemes like MUDRA, Stand-Up India, and NITI Aayog's WEP aim to boost these numbers, yet significant gaps in implementation persist.

Key Historical and Current Aspects:

Historical Context: Traditionally, women were limited to domestic spheres. Early entrepreneurship was largely limited to home-based activities like handicrafts, tailoring, and food products ("3P's: Pickle, Powder, and Pappad").

Evolutionary Shift: Post-1991 liberalization, and specifically since the 2000s, women transitioned from, "3P's" to "3E's" (Energy, Electronics, and Engineering), according to Zenith International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research.

Current Status: Women-owned enterprises make up around 13.76% of total establishments,

with roughly 8.05 million establishments run by women, notes Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation.

Key Drivers & Support: Increased education, societal shifts, and government initiatives such as the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), Stand-Up India, and Mudra loans are fostering growth.

Challenges: Despite progress, significant barriers remain, including limited access to financing, societal prejudices, lack of direct property ownership, and balancing traditional caretaking roles.

Key Aspects of Women Entrepreneurship in India:

Status & Contribution: Women are moving from job seekers to job providers, contributing significantly to GDP, though many enterprises remain small or micro-sized.

Challenges:

Key barriers include lack of financial independence, reluctance of family to support, limited mobility, and traditional societal attitudes "Women Entrepreneurship in India NITI Aayog report 2023"

Government Support: Programs like MUDRA Yojana, Stand-Up India, and PMEGP have been launched to offer financial assistance and foster women-led startups.

Key Reports & Data:

NITI Aayog (2023): Discusses the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and the need to bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship.

ResearchGate (2024): Highlights the "dual responsibility" barrier and need for training.

Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI): Analyzes self-employment trends among females.

Top Entrepreneurs (2025): Jayshree Ullal (Arista Network) and Radha Vembu (Zoho) are highlighted as leading self-made, high-wealth, female entrepreneurs.

According to NITI Aayog's 2023 reports, specifically "Decoding Government Support to Women Entrepreneurs in India," women own roughly 20% of India's 63 million MSMEs, yet only 14% of Indian women are engaged in entrepreneurship. Key barriers include limited access to formal credit, inadequate digital skills, and social constraints.

Key Findings & Initiatives:

Low Formal Participation: Despite making up 13.76% of all business establishments, women-led enterprises are heavily concentrated in the micro and informal sectors.

Credit Gap: Only 1% of women entrepreneurs borrow from financial institutions, with 79% relying on self-financing.

NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP): As of 2023, WEP functions as a public-private partnership, mapping 70 central and 433 state schemes to support women in areas like financial inclusion, marketing, and mentorship.

Goal: The reports highlight that accelerating women's entrepreneurship could create over 30 million enterprises and 150-170 million jobs.

Progress: 2023 saw increased focus on leveraging digital platforms to help women move from being borrowers to becoming builders of businesses, according to NITI Aayog. this

The 2023 research underscores the need for enhancing gender-sensitive support systems, improving access to credit, and strengthening the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) to foster inclusive growth.

Key Sectors with Women's Participation:

Women are increasingly driving economic growth through participation in sectors like textile manufacturing, food processing, handicrafts, and services such as healthcare, education, and beauty. While rural women are heavily involved in agriculture and dairy, urban women are expanding into e-commerce, fintech, and manufacturing. Initiatives like Mudra Yojana (68% women beneficiaries) and startup support are boosting entrepreneurship.

Key Sectors with High Women's Participation:

Services Sector: Healthcare, education, beauty, and wellness are major employers, with women making up 65% of healthcare workers globally.

Textiles and Apparel: A significant manufacturing sub-sector with high female employment, including garments and handicrafts.

Agriculture and Allied Sectors: Crucial for rural women, supported by the National Livestock Mission (NLM) and fisheries development.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs): Women are leading MSMEs in retail, food processing, and beauty, with over 89 lakh additional jobs created by them between FY21-FY23.

Technology and Startups: Nearly 50% of DPIIT-registered startups have at least one woman director.

Newer Areas: Increased participation in logistics, warehousing, and, with the NAMO Drone Didi scheme, in agriculture technology.

Key Drivers of Participation:

Government Schemes: PM Mudra Yojana (loans), PM SVANidhi (street vendors), and SHG-led initiatives.

Skill Training: Focus on training, such as in the Fisheries sector and Digital literacy, increases participation.

Corporate & Policy Support: Expansion of maternity benefits, childcare, and safe workplaces.

Challenges and Areas for Growth:

Low Representation in Leadership: Only about 6.8% of firms have a woman top manager.

Informal Sector Dominance: Many women work in insecure, low-paying, and informal roles, such as domestic work.

Unpaid Work: Women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.

The study focuses on extensive study of Secondary data collected from various books, National & International Journals, newspapers, publications from various websites which focused on various aspects of Women Entrepreneurship.

Importance of women entrepreneurship:

1. The Importance of Women's Economic Independence A core condition to women's security is to cease their dependence and helplessness, whose key factor is to invest women with power: at individual level, to support the creation of their autonomy and economic independence, and at the social level, to promote their equal access to political, social power and to the power enabling the forming of opinion. The author would subsequently like to talk of the female entrepreneurship activity, which provides women with earnings obtained in their own right (Bernhardt, 2000) [1], at the same time, confirms their ability to independently prosper, reduces their insecurity with regard to the ability of taking care of their children, hence encouraging other women as well to strive to assume their autonomy in personal, economic, even political sense, to make independent decisions, to stand up for themselves and their environment. Namely, the author is convinced whereby, compared with work-performance as employees, based on adjustment to the patriarchal set of values

organizational hierarchies, it is a higher proportion of women becoming entrepreneurs, the strengthening of their enterprises that can strengthen the women's proportionate participation in the decision-making of societies. The economic independence of female entrepreneurs, the deploying of their self-assertion skills, their assuming responsibility for themselves, their own sort will able for an ever-increasing number of women to recognize their own skills, strength, to acquire economic independence, and to present for society the values that go beyond the patriarchal set of values: the welfare of children and other helpless persons, caregiving, preserving the environmental and security. For women, one of the principal traps of patriarchal society is the message whereby women's security is created by men, whilst in our era, the main source of jeopardy, the source of global problems is precisely the subsistence of the patriarchal set of values based on women's subordination. The key element of social, economic, and environmental sustainability is to extend the women's personal autonomy, their rights, to strengthen their ventures.

2. Inequalities Between Genders in the Business Sector The extension of female roles, occurred in the last century, did not bring along the transformation of male roles: the distribution of domestic roles is still determined by the model of male breadwinner. The necessity or need to earn money is still a secondary social expedition in the case of women. However, due to the female life cycle and roles different from the male ones, compliance with the family obligations is especially emphatic for women in certain life phases, which adversely affects their paid work performance, their chances to acquire earnings. The female life strategies offered by society belong essentially to three well-separable groups in terms of participating in the world of labour:

dependent existence, combination strategy, career strategy. Part of the women not taking up a paid job actively contribute to the development of their husband's/ partner's venture, they subordinate their personal development, livelihood to the bread wineer activity of the head of the family. Their environment, but even often they also view themselves as the helper of their husband/partner, eventually even if they hold formally also an ownership stake in their husbands' firm, based on which they could acquire earnings in their own right.

3. Gender-based Stereotypes Determining the Entrepreneurial Activity of Women The business sector is essentially dominated by men to this day, the role model of entrepreneurs is conceived as male by the majority of society to this day. Namely, education that stresses and supports the different qualities, skills of boys and girls, and training that prepares for the traditional gender roles, does not strengthen the qualities necessary to launch a venture-willingness to assume a risk, independence, self-confidence-in the case of girls, or less than in the case of boys. According to socialization and the stereotyping views confirmed by the media, women are- as they say- "emotional beings", it is almost like declaring that venture is not a field for women, since women are not tough enough for business. Women interiorize the gender-based stereotypes, they determine their choice of career, career ideas, expectations of earnings, requirements for financial independence at a lower level compared with men,

Literature Review:

1. Rupashree Baral, Chitra Dey, Subhashri Manavazhagan, and S Kamalini (2023) in their paper aim to organize the existing empirical research on women entrepreneurs (WEs) in India, highlight the research areas that have not received attention, and present opportunities for future

research. The authors arrived at four main themes underlying the empirical research on WEs: success factors for WEs, challenges faced by WEs, factors that attract and motivate WEs, and performance measures for WEs. While challenges and success factors have received attention from researchers, there is a distinct lack of papers on factors that attract or motivate women entrepreneurs and performance measures. The main gaps identified were a lack of theoretical basis in studies, reliance on interview and survey-based methodology, and a lack of context-specific studies.

2. Alistair Anderson and Funmi Ojediran (2022) stated that the purpose of their paper is to review the literature on women's entrepreneurship in emerging economies. This is a thematic review to identify patterns and trends to better understand this literature. From the analysis, this study offers ideas for useful and theoretically informed research. In addition, this paper proposes the concept of restricted agency that helps to explain the practice. This paper finds the literature tends towards descriptive papers. Few papers make substantial contributions to theory. Many papers reported the barriers women to encounter, reporting general and typical processes of responding to obstacles and the implications for practice. Interestingly this study perceives overcoming and sometimes using, the cultural and physical restraints of gendered entrepreneurship. This paper proposes the concept of restricted agency explaining the gendering of entrepreneurs and explaining what they can do. Moreover, the concept helps explain why and what. Most promising theoretically, is how the application of this agency is slowly and contextually differently changing the rules of the game.

3. Sucheta Agarwal, Usha Lenka International Journal of Social Economics 45 (7), 1042-1057, (2018) in their study underscores the diversified profile of women entrepreneurs, spanning

different age groups and demographic backgrounds, while also acknowledging the various challenges they face, both gender-specific and gender-neutral. Entrepreneurial activity in India is observed to be concentrated in specific states, indicating geographical disparities. The review emphasizes the urgent need for policy interventions to create an environment conducive to women's entrepreneurship, aiming to address barriers and foster inclusivity. Overall, the findings underscore the potential of women entrepreneurs to contribute significantly to economic growth and development in India. Efforts to support and empower women entrepreneurs are crucial for harnessing their capabilities and promoting equitable economic progress

4. The article "Women Entrepreneurship in India: Problems and Prospects" by Kalpana Koneru, available at SSRN 3110340, (2017), explores the challenges and opportunities faced by educated Indian women in entrepreneurship within the context of a traditionally male-dominated society. Despite entrenched social norms, Indian women have made significant strides in various fields, including business, showcasing their determination and ability to compete alongside men. The author highlights the evolving societal landscape, marked by increased educational attainment among women and their aspirations for better living standards, which have necessitated a shift in women's lifestyles. Successful female entrepreneurs are portrayed as assertive, persuasive, and willing to take risks, relying on hard work, diligence, and perseverance to navigate and thrive in a competitive business environment.

5. Neha Tiwari Amity Journal of Entrepreneurship 2 (1), 47-60, (2017) The article discusses the emergence and challenges of women entrepreneurship in India. It highlights the societal and economic benefits of women's

participation in entrepreneurship while acknowledging the persistent limitations they face. The study aims to analyze the prevalence and dynamics of women entrepreneurship in India by reviewing existing literature and analyzing government and global databases. It identifies women entrepreneurs as a diverse group facing both gender-specific and gender-neutral challenges. The article emphasizes the need for policy interventions to create a supportive environment for women entrepreneurs in India, particularly in states with low entrepreneurial activity.

Conclusion:

Women entrepreneurship in India has witnessed a transformative journey, evolving from traditional roles to breaking barriers in diverse sectors. Despite challenges, women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to the economy, fostering innovation and empowering communities. The government has shown its support by taking several steps for the encouragement of women entrepreneurs in the 7th five-year plan, the 8th five-year plan, and the 9th five-year plan.

However, it's essential to acknowledge the persistent challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in India. Gender biases, lack of education, social barriers, limited access to funding, societal expectations, lack of self-confidence, etc.,

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