

Unveiling The Nexus: Challenges Faced By Women Entrepreneurs And Pathways To Empowerment

Monika^{1*}, Dr. Amit Kumar²

^{1*}Research Scholar School of Commerce & Management, Om Sterling Global University, Hisar

²Associate Professor, School of Commerce & Management, Om Sterling Global University, Hisar

***Corresponding Author:** Monika, Research Scholar

*School of Commerce & Management, Om Sterling Global University, Hisar

Abstract

In contemporary India, there exists a departure from traditional gender roles as women are increasingly encouraged to pursue diverse interests and professional opportunities, thereby fostering a climate of gender equality in the workforce. This shift is underpinned by a societal recognition of women's dynamic status, characterized by ambitious aspirations necessitating significant lifestyle adaptations. Economic imperatives, notably the inflationary pressures on essential commodities, have catalyzed efforts to involve women in financial endeavors to support their families. Consequently, women are actively preparing themselves to navigate challenges and exhibit capabilities beyond conventional domestic roles, including proficient performance in sales occupations. Historically relegated primarily to consumer roles, women are now being acknowledged for their entrepreneurial acumen, with exemplars of successful enterprise serving as role models for aspiring female entrepreneurs. Despite constituting nearly half of India's population, women remain underrepresented in the labor force, underscoring the persistence of gender disparities in employment participation rates.

Keywords: Growth, Women, Entrepreneurs, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Status of Women Entrepreneurs in India

The significant role of private corporations in shaping contemporary society underscores a crucial aspect within this context. India's position as one of the lowest-performing nations in women's entrepreneurship, as identified by the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (GEDI) in a comprehensive global business venture review conducted in July 2013, warrants attention. Within this evaluation, India ranked sixteenth among seventeen nations considered, marginally surpassing Uganda. India's comparative performance was notably inferior to several countries, including Turkey, Morocco, and Egypt. A critical observation revealed that the accessibility of higher education opportunities for women in India was notably deficient compared to the majority of nations worldwide. This finding substantiates concerns regarding the quality and availability of educational resources for women in India vis-à-vis global standards.

Presently, opportunities for female entrepreneurs to engage in significant firms and innovation-focused industries are notably limited. Even within companies with smaller workforces, there persists a dearth of female representation in managerial and executive roles. As evidenced by data from the third all-India census of Small-Scale Industries, a mere 10.11 percent of micro and small firms are owned by women, with a further 9.46 percent being led by women. These statistics were obtained through surveys conducted in India as part of the census process for small-scale enterprises.

Despite a global uptick in female entrepreneurship, these entrepreneurs confront substantial challenges hindering the growth of their ventures. Notable obstacles include financial constraints, societal norms, time limitations, expertise deficiencies, and constrained access to educational and training resources. These impediments underscore the multifaceted barriers faced by female entrepreneurs as they strive to establish and expand their enterprises.

Expansion of Women Entrepreneurship in the Indian Context

Indian women have been increasingly encouraged to engage in financial activities to support their families, driven by the escalating costs of essential goods. They are preparing to confront challenges, overcome obstacles, and assert their capacity to contribute to society not only as consumers but also as successful entrepreneurs. Historically relegated to consumer roles, women have demonstrated their entrepreneurial prowess through numerous real-life examples, although their representation remains disproportionately low in the business sector despite comprising nearly half of India's population. This discrepancy underscores enduring gender biases that have historically hindered women's entrepreneurial development. (2008, Shiva Malik and Taranjit Kaur Rao, January)

Women in business have traditionally encountered less encouragement compared to men in nurturing their entrepreneurial skills. They often exhibit reticence due to deep-seated familial responsibilities, compounded by societal perceptions that deem them as feeble and burdensome dependents. Despite these challenges, historical evidence from the 1960s reveals instances of women initiating home-based enterprises as sole proprietors, demonstrating their commitment to self-employment despite prevailing obstacles. Notably, during this era, the number of working women in business was alarmingly low, underscoring the need for greater support and recognition of women's entrepreneurial endeavors. (Nicole Seymour, Rabu, June 11th, 2008)

Factors Influencing Women's Entrepreneurial Engagement

Due to the removal of systemic barriers, women have exhibited success across various sectors. The increasing presence of women in the workforce in India has resulted in a notable rise in their involvement in culinary activities, particularly in tasks related to the preparation of "3 P's": pickle, powder, and pappad. However, with improved access to education over time, women have gradually shifted their focus towards contemporary domains represented by the "three E's": energy, electronics, and engineering. Within the business sphere, women often possess advantages in terms of information accessibility, adaptability, and skillsets, which significantly influence their preference for corporate environment.

Obstacles Encountered by Female Entrepreneurs

The Obstacles encountered by women entrepreneurs are multifaceted, spanning various domains. Firstly, the intricate balance between professional endeavors and familial responsibilities poses a significant hurdle, prevalent across both developed and developing nations. Women, statistically more inclined towards primary caregiving roles for their children and elderly relatives, often find it arduous to allocate sufficient time and resources to their enterprises. Additionally, gender disparities persist in educational attainment, wherein women may demonstrate commendable achievements in foundational and supplementary education but frequently lack the comprehensive spectrum of professional skills and experience requisite for establishing highly impactful ventures, thereby impeding business growth.

Financial constraints further exacerbate the predicament, particularly for seasoned entrepreneurs aiming to re-enter the entrepreneurial arena after prolonged hiatuses. Regulatory impediments, such as the inability of women to acquire property in their own name due to lack of requisite identity documents or legal stipulations mandating spousal consent for crucial transactions, present formidable obstacles to women's entrepreneurial pursuits in India. Moreover, the legal framework governing family law plays a pivotal role in shaping the prospects of women-owned enterprises. Ambiguities or limitations within marriage, inheritance, and property laws may curtail women's capacity to amass wealth necessary for pursuing ambitious business goals, thus constraining their economic empowerment and mobility. The conceptualization of women's entrepreneurial ventures, as delineated by the Government of India, underscores the importance of female ownership and operational control, stipulating that a women's commercial enterprise must be majority-owned and managed by women, with at least 51% capital ownership and labor contribution. This definition, rooted in research conducted by Ranbir Singh and Dr. Nisha Raghuvanshi in 2012, elucidates the foundational criteria governing women's entrepreneurship in the Indian context.

THEORY OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The trajectory of the feminist movement can be delineated into four distinct epochs. The initial surge of activism, advocating for women's suffrage, burgeoned in the latter half of the 19th century, persisting through the early 20th century. Subsequently, the 1960s and 1970s heralded the advent of the second wave, characterized by fervent endeavors towards achieving legal and social parity for women. This was succeeded by the third wave, commencing in the 1990s, which amalgamated elements of its predecessors while reacting to their limitations. Termed "third wave feminism," this cohort of advocates endeavored to address contemporary challenges and nuances in the pursuit of gender equality.

The contemporary epoch, emblematic of the fourth wave, emerged in 2012, displaying a sustained momentum towards dismantling gendered norms and rectifying the systemic marginalization of women. Central to this phase is the concerted effort to foster gender parity across societal domains, with particular emphasis on amplifying the voices and representation of marginalized cohorts, including women of color and transgender individuals. Within the purview of contemporary discourse, it is imperative to recognize the salience of these issues within the broader socio-cultural milieu.

Aligned with the ethos of inclusivity, proponents of the fourth wave advocate for the equitable integration of diverse perspectives into legislative frameworks and societal practices. At its core, the objective of fourth-wave feminism is to effectuate substantive change by promoting the ascension of underrepresented groups to positions of influence in both

corporate and political spheres. Fundamental tenets of this movement encompass the pursuit of equitable remuneration for commensurate labor and the cultivation of equal opportunities for girls and women.

A pivotal facet of the contemporary feminist agenda entails the subversion of entrenched gender norms, advocating for the unfettered expression of emotions and bodily autonomy, as well as facilitating parental engagement in childrearing responsibilities. Additionally, the fourth wave is resolute in its advocacy for recourse and redress for individuals subjected to bullying or harassment. Paramount among its objectives is the realization of equal pay for equal work, thereby rectifying longstanding disparities entrenched within societal structures.

PROCESS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Initiating introspection serves as the foundational step towards embarking on a journey of self-evaluation, enabling individuals to gauge their personal attributes. As one progresses along this path, particularly independent women, a gradual cultivation of personal efficacy, authority, and self-reliance ensues, catalyzed by both internal deliberations and external actions under their sole purview. This evolution stems directly from the decisions they make, over which they exercise complete autonomy.

Transitioning from the initial stage to the subsequent phase involves empowering others on an interpersonal level, wherein individuals actively facilitate the empowerment of their peers. This dynamic unfolds through fostering communication and collaboration, wherein one woman's influence aids another in making informed decisions amidst prevailing circumstances.

Advancing to the third stage entails a pivot towards social action and transformational goals, marking a significant paradigm shift in approach. Collaborative efforts aimed at community improvement culminate in the formulation of strategic initiatives, epitomizing collective endeavor towards communal betterment. Participation in such endeavors not only fosters a sense of agency at individual, social, and interpersonal levels but also engenders a palpable sense of control over one's life trajectory, proving invaluable across diverse contexts.

Approaches of Women Empowerment

Women are not merely regarded as potential participants in the workforce; they are also seen as pivotal contributors to economic expansion within the framework of the welfare model. While women stand as beneficiaries of development initiatives, their active involvement in the progression of such endeavors is often overlooked.

The efficiency approach redefines the role of women from passive recipients of aid to indispensable agents of development. This paradigm shift underscores the necessity of women's engagement in developmental processes for substantive progress to be realized. By prioritizing women's participation, development efforts remain centered on their empowerment and advancement, thereby ensuring their sustained focus in developmental agendas.

Conversely, the equity approach seeks to elevate women's status and authority, aiming to bridge the gender gap and afford them equivalent rights and opportunities as men. This approach strives to achieve gender parity in legal frameworks, thereby facilitating women's equitable participation in societal and economic spheres.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate the challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs and the processes involved in women's empowerment, the objectives are:
2. To examine the socio-economic barriers hindering female entrepreneurship
3. To analyze the strategies employed by women to overcome obstacles in entrepreneurial endeavors.
4. To explore the role of education and skill development in enhancing women's economic participation; and evaluate the effectiveness of empowerment programs in promoting gender equality and socioeconomic advancement.

RESEARCH METHOD

Women are considered not only as candidates for involvement in the labour force, but also as a target for the growth of the economy under the welfare model. This perspective of women stems from the fact that women make up almost half of the population. Women are the recipients of development, but they do not take part in the process that leads to progress being made.

In essence, the efficiency approach recognizes women not as recipients of intervention but rather as essential resources in the course of the development process. This shift in perspective alters the way the approach views women. The way we think about women changes as a result of this shift in viewpoint. If there is any chance of properly going forward, it is very necessary for there to be participation from women in whatever process is now being carried out. It ensures that women will continue to be the major focus of development and functions under the presumption that if they engage in it,

they will inevitably profit from it. In other words, it assures that women will continue to be the primary focus of development. This guarantees that the well-being of women will continue to be the major focus of growth.

The equity method seeks to improve the position of women in society by boosting their status, as well as their power and authority, in the interest of bringing them up to the same level of productivity as men. It would appear that women and men are granted the same legal rights under the same circumstances.

METHODS OF SAMPLING

The utilization of sampling, denoting the deliberate selection of a subset from a larger aggregate or totality to inform judgments or conclusions, serves as a foundational mechanism for deriving inferences regarding said aggregate or totality. This process facilitates the derivation of conclusions or judgments pertaining to an aggregate or totality through the utilization of sampled data. In this investigation, non-probability sampling methods, namely convenient sampling and snowball sampling, were employed, yielding the findings delineated herein. These methodologies substantially influenced the outcomes of the study. The findings presented herein are derived from the aforementioned sampling procedures. Leveraging the knowledge and expertise of respondents deemed suitable for the study, a convenient sampling approach was adopted, thereby enabling the identification of volunteer participants whose contributions are deemed pertinent to the research pursuit.

Determination of Sample size

Table 1. Number of Enterprises of MSME Sector in India by Type in Registered Sector

Description	Micro Enterprises	Small Enterprises	Medium Enterprises	Total
No. of Enterprises in India (in lakhs)	14.75	0.66	0.03	15.54
No. of Enterprises in Haryana	42,708	2,949	35	45,692
No. of Women Enterprises in Haryana & Andhra Pradesh	4,832	387	II	5,230

Three hundred ninety-eight of the five thousand three hundred twenty units that were registered by women with the MSME-DICs in all of the state's districts are regarded as being classified as small and medium companies. The combining of all of these different Components results in the creation of the Example Frame.

According to Yamane

Formula Sample Size $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ at 95%

Confidence level Where $N =$ population size $e =$ Level of precision 5%

Hence, Sample Size = $199.498 = 200$ app.

DATA ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

This study gathered information on the participants' ages, levels of education, socioeconomic status, marital status, and family composition in order to gain a better understanding of the demographics of women who own businesses in the Indian state of Haryana.

1 Respondents group age

Table 2 Age Group of Respondents

S. No	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	Upto 30 years	32	18
2	31 - 40 years	72	41
3	41 – 50 years	56	32
4	Above 50 years	16	9
	Total	176	100

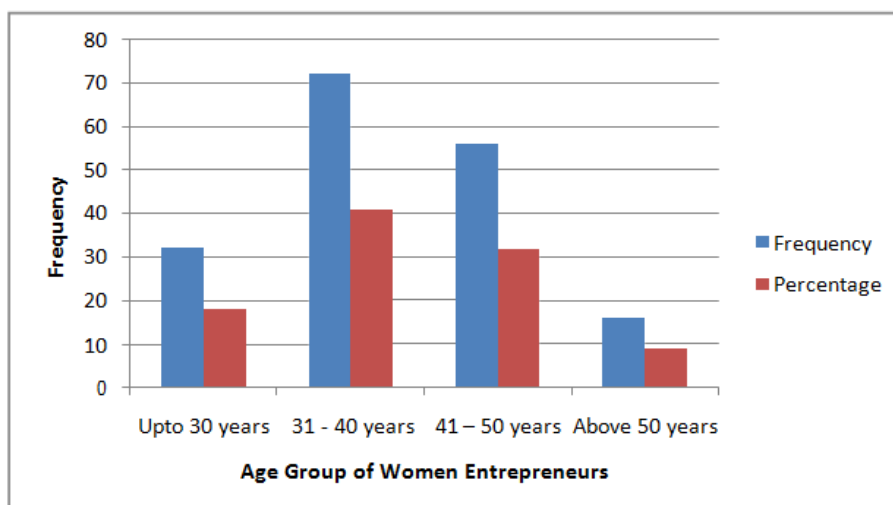


Figure 1 Age Group of Respondents

The research presented questions on the participants' ages, levels of education, socioeconomic classes, marital statuses, and descriptions of their families in order to gain a better knowledge of the basic demographics of the women company owners in Haryana. This was done in order to acquire a better understanding of the fundamental demographics of the women business owners in Haryana...

Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Commercial Activity

Chi-square tests have been utilised in order to investigate the degree of association that exists between a variety of demographic factors and the kinds of enterprises that are founded by women. The collection of factors that were examined to determine whether or not there is a link between individual traits and the economic pursuits of Haryana's female firm owners is presented in the following table..

Table 3 Chi-square analysis of the relationship between women business owners' annual income and the types of businesses they run

S.No	Annual Income of the entrepreneur *Business activities	Chi-Square	df	p	Findings	Decision
1	Size of Enterprise	42.969	9	.000	Significant	H0 is Rejected
2	Sector of activities	11.256	6	.002	Significant	H0 is Rejected
3	Experience (in Years)	24.521	9	.000	Significant	H0 is Rejected
4	Time Spent on Business	21.478	9	.000	Significant	H0 is Rejected
5	Source of Initial capital	32.547	12	.000	Significant	H0 is Rejected
6	Types of Loans	10.405	9	.012	Significant	H0 is Rejected

Upon examination of Chi-square table 4.7, it becomes apparent that a statistically significant correlation exists between the Annual Income of Women Entrepreneurs and their engagement in various activities within their firms. This correlation is observed across all six dimensions of company activity, indicating a reciprocal relationship between the annual revenue generated by women entrepreneurs and the nature of their business engagements. Hence, it is evident that the activities undertaken by an entrepreneur within their company are closely linked to the financial performance of the business on an annual basis.

iv) The total amount of variation that may be attributed to socioeconomic factors

The factors that can be extracted from the analysis are listed in table 4.16, along with their eigenvalues, the percentage of the total variance that can be attributed to each factor, and the cumulative variance, which includes the variance of the current factor as well as the variance of all of the factors that came before it. The results make it abundantly evident that the first component is responsible for 48.319% of the variation, whilst the second element is responsible for 11.244% of the variation. The other factors have an extremely little impact on the final result..

Table 4 Overall Explanatory Power of Socioeconomic Conditions

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Swns of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.349	48.319	48.319	4.349	48.319	48.319	2.764	30.716	30.716
2	1.012	11.244	59.563	1.012	11.244	59.563	2.596	28.846	59.563
3	.810	8.998	68.560						
4	.706	7.850	76.410						
5	.649	7.207	83.616						
6	.503	5.594	89.211						
7	.418	4.647	93.858						
8	.322	3.575	97.433						
9	.231	2.567	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

v) Socioeconomic Factors Scatter Diagram

A graph that depicts how the eigen values are related to each of the components makes up the screen plot. By utilizing the graph, one is able to determine how many of the system's components should be kept in place. It is possible that the location of the point of interest might be discovered at the juncture where the curve begins to straighten out. It is feasible to observe, between components 2 and 3, that the curve undergoes a slow shift towards being flatter. This change may be seen visually. In addition to this, it is essential to take into account the fact that the eigen value of component 4 is less than 1, and as a direct consequence of this, only two of the elements have been maintained. The whole variation could be explained to the extent of 59.563 percent by the two components, with 48.319 percent being assigned to one component and 11.244 percent being associated to the other component.

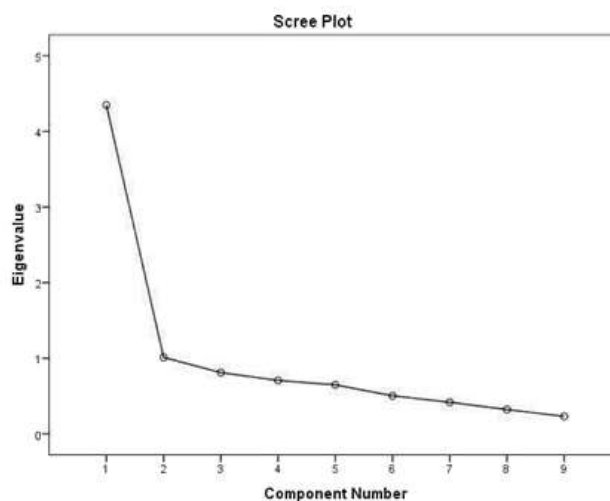


Figure 2 Socioeconomic Factors Scatter Diagram

CONCLUSION

The escalation in the cost of living has catalyzed an influx of Indian women into the workforce, driven by the imperative to provide for their families. These women are poised to demonstrate their multifaceted capabilities beyond mere consumption, aiming to excel as producers in contemporary society. Throughout history, numerous women have demonstrated entrepreneurial acumen, establishing and nurturing prosperous enterprises. Despite constituting nearly half

of India's 1.3 billion population, women remain underrepresented within the broader business community. Authors: Shiva Malik and Taranjit Kaur Rao; January 2008.

Historically, women in business have encountered disparities in support compared to their male counterparts, often prioritizing familial obligations and exhibiting a propensity for self-reliance. Entrepreneurship serves as a pivotal driver of economic vitality, generating novel avenues of growth and rejuvenation within national economies. In India, the burgeoning landscape of female entrepreneurship underscores its salience in bolstering the country's economic landscape, with women transitioning from job seekers to job creators amidst expanding opportunities.

The growth of women's business ownership in Haryana is contingent upon a myriad of factors encompassing social, economic, motivational, and personality dynamics, alongside supportive governmental and organizational policies. However, despite concerted efforts by the Haryana government, challenges persist in translating policy frameworks into tangible benefits for female entrepreneurs, particularly in rural and urban domains. A notable proportion of female business owners in Haryana find themselves ineligible for state-sponsored initiatives and infrastructural enhancements tailored to women in business, thereby impeding their productivity and overall success.

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