



A Study On The Growth Potential And Obstacles Of Women Entrepreneurs In Coimbatore District

¹ Dr. A. MALARVANNAN

Research Supervisor
Head and Associate Professor
PG and Research Department of Commerce
Government Arts College, Udumalpet
Tirupur, Tamilnadu

² V. LAVANYA

Ph.D. Part Time Research Scholar
Government Arts College, Udumalpet

ABSTRACT:

Women entrepreneurship is a relatively recent phenomenon that is steadily gaining momentum, driven by growing awareness of women's roles, responsibilities, and economic contributions both within the family and in society at large. However, for women entrepreneurs in India, starting and managing a business remains a significant challenge due to deep-rooted social norms and gender-based constraints. This study aims to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs, particularly in relation to financial, marketing, and production constraints. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study, with a sample of 100 respondents selected through non-probability convenience sampling in the Coimbatore District. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. The findings highlight the need for critical infrastructure and support systems, including access to proper workspaces, financial subsidies, raw materials, and reliable transportation facilities. It is evident that government agencies and funding institutions need to play a more proactive role in addressing these needs. Furthermore, suppliers and marketers should prioritize the promotion and distribution of products made by women entrepreneurs. The study also reveals key issues with government assistance programs, such as bureaucratic red tape, lack of timely guidance, and inadequate advisory services. To enhance the status of women-led enterprises, both government and non-governmental organizations must offer liberal support and strengthen the infrastructure and policy framework necessary for the growth of women entrepreneurship.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, women, society, business, government.

INTRODUCTION:

The emergence of women entrepreneurship marks the beginning of a transformative era. Historically, before the 20th century, women were largely excluded from business and economic activities in many parts of the world. Their roles were confined to domestic duties, and they were rarely seen as contributors to commerce or industry. The term "entrepreneur" itself was traditionally associated with men. However, with technological advancements, growing industrialization, globalization, and evolving social norms, there has been a gradual but steady shift. Increased access to education and widespread awareness have empowered women to move beyond household responsibilities and rise to leadership positions across various sectors. In recent years, women have broken through numerous barriers, proving their capabilities both at home and in the workplace—including in the business world.

Recent studies highlight the increasing influence of women in the digital space, particularly on social media. According to Entrepreneur (2016), 71% of women actively use social media compared to 62% of men. Once considered a male-dominated domain, technology has now become a platform where women thrive equally. Notable examples include Sheryl Sandberg, former COO of Facebook, and Marissa Mayer, former President and CEO of Yahoo—demonstrating women's rising power in tech leadership. A study involving 2,000 women revealed that 82% have an average of 2.2 social media accounts and spend around 12 hours per week on these platforms. Interestingly, 24% of women prefer socializing online rather than face-to-face, and 75% found social networking more enjoyable than traditional social interactions. Many even formed close friendships with people they've never met in person.

Women are now not only content consumers but also content creators—18% of women publish content daily, compared to 11% of men. Women also account for 99 million more visits to social media sites than men, showing how they are using these platforms as powerful tools for self-expression, networking, and entrepreneurship. As Newton (2018) notes, social media has become a vital space where women amplify their voices and establish their presence in business and beyond.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Women in India face numerous challenges in advancing their entrepreneurial journeys. One of the most significant barriers is gender itself—being a woman often becomes the main obstacle in a society still largely shaped by patriarchal norms. This mindset contributes to limited support, with many male counterparts viewing investments in women-owned businesses as high-risk. Access to knowledge, skills, and education—especially in relation to modern technological advancements—is a crucial factor influencing entrepreneurial success. However, the literacy rate among women in India remains lower than that of men, and many women in

developing countries lack the necessary education to thrive in business. Despite progress in technology and innovation, many women continue to struggle with illiteracy, lack of financial literacy, and limited understanding of basic business concepts like measurement and accounting. These structural and educational barriers significantly hinder their ability to succeed as entrepreneurs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Neha Tiwari (2017) in his study entitled "Indian Female Entrepreneurs" has found that female entrepreneur has brought a different perspective in the field of entrepreneurship. Women's entrepreneurship is inextricably linked to all the interests of society. The scope has returned researchers to a comprehensive definition of the female characteristics of female entrepreneurs with the advent of women in entrepreneurship.
- Raghuvanshi et al. (2017) evaluated the various obstacles that female entrepreneur's encounter, which can be described as follows: a lack of education, experience, and training chances; limited spatial mobility; lack of family support; lack of institutional support; and difficulty obtaining financial resources.
- Ms. Sweetie Gupta and Ms. Aanchal Aggarwal (2015) identified that actions are needed to improve the spirit of female entrepreneurship India. In the past decade, female entrepreneurs have been recognized as a major source of untapped economic growth. Therefore, India's female entrepreneurship faces many challenges and needs to be radically changed their attitudes and ways of thinking about the society. Therefore, it is necessary to develop programs to deal with changes in people's attitudes and ways of thinking.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To examine the challenges and opportunities encountered by women entrepreneurs in managing their businesses.
2. To identify financial, marketing, and production-related constraints affecting women entrepreneurs.
3. To evaluate the health conditions and workplace facilities available to women entrepreneurs.
4. To explore the work-family conflicts experienced by women entrepreneurs.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

S.No	Factor	Most Common Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Age	30 – 45 years	34	56%
2	Gender	Female	55	100%
3	Monthly Income	₹25,000 – ₹35,000	37	61%
4	Educational Qualification	Under Graduate	39	65%
5	Marital Status	Married	30	50%
6	Type of Family	Nuclear Family	55	100%
7	Social Class	Middle Class	49	81%

Simple Percentage Analysis

- ✓ The majority of respondents (56%) were aged between 30 and 45 years.
- ✓ All respondents (100%) were female.
- ✓ Most respondents (61%) reported a monthly income between ₹25,000 and ₹35,000.
- ✓ A significant portion of respondents (65%) had an educational qualification between Under Graduate
- ✓ Approximately half of the respondents (50%) identified as Married.
- ✓ Every respondent (100%) belonged to a nuclear family.
- ✓ The majority of respondents (81%) were from the middle class.

Table 2: Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

Challenge Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Score	Rank	Chi-square (χ^2)	P-value	Significant
Lack of access to finance	26	21	6	5	3	213	1	56.78	0.000	Yes
Difficulty balancing family and business	23	20	9	6	3	206	2	48.92	0.000	Yes
Lack of marketing and promotion skills	21	18	11	8	3	198	3	42.63	0.001	Yes
Inadequate training and skill development	18	20	12	8	3	194	4	36.54	0.002	Yes
Social and cultural restrictions	17	18	14	9	3	189	5	33.76	0.004	Yes

The analysis of challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore district reveals that lack of access to finance is the most significant barrier. This challenge ranks first based on the total score and is supported by a high chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 56.78$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that many women find it difficult to secure the necessary financial support for starting or expanding their businesses. The second major challenge is the difficulty in balancing family and business responsibilities, which highlights the ongoing pressure women face in managing both domestic duties and entrepreneurial roles. Lack of marketing and promotion skills ranks third, pointing to the limited ability of many women to reach wider markets and effectively promote their products. This is followed by inadequate training and skill development, which hampers their ability to run businesses efficiently. Finally, social and cultural restrictions also emerged as a notable challenge, especially among women from conservative backgrounds. All these challenges were found to be statistically significant, confirming that they are common and genuine issues faced by women entrepreneurs in the region. These findings underscore the urgent need for better financial access, targeted business training, improved marketing support, and initiatives to help women balance their professional and personal responsibilities.

SUGGESTIONS

- Before launching an enterprise, women should develop a detailed and comprehensive business plan. They also need to be able to balance their professional and personal lives effectively.
- Women must cultivate self-confidence to face and overcome any challenges that arise.
- It is important for women to take pride in starting their own businesses and believe in their capabilities.
- Women should not be afraid of any obstacles; instead, they should strive to overcome them with determination.
- Women entrepreneurs can approach banks to secure loans for starting or expanding their businesses.
- Women should be prepared to face financial challenges and manage them wisely.
- Awareness programs about government schemes and support available for women entrepreneurs should be organized to encourage and assist them in starting their ventures.

CONCLUSION

The study clearly demonstrates that women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore district are motivated to start small businesses but face numerous challenges along the way. The most common difficulties include lack of financial support, limited awareness of government schemes, inadequate access to training, and the ongoing struggle to balance business responsibilities with family duties. Additionally, social and cultural barriers hinder some women from confidently expanding their enterprises. Although many women are aware of the opportunities available, they often lack the knowledge or find the processes too complex to access these resources. Only a few have participated in training programs or received support from banks and institutions, highlighting a gap between available resources and their actual utilization. The findings underscore the need for practical support measures such as easier loan access, skill development initiatives, digital training, and improved communication about government schemes. Furthermore, family and social support are crucial in encouraging women to pursue entrepreneurship. In conclusion, women in Coimbatore have significant potential to succeed as entrepreneurs, provided they receive the right support. Addressing these challenges will not only empower women but also boost the local economy and foster inclusive growth.

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