



Analysis Of Availability Of Infrastructural Facilities That Support Women Entrepreneurs In Uttarakhand

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Abstract: Infrastructure plays a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial activities and sustaining vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems. Infrastructure supports entrepreneurship by providing the physical, digital, financial, social, and policy foundations necessary for businesses to thrive. By investing in infrastructure development and creating conducive environments for entrepreneurial activities, policymakers, investors, and stakeholders can stimulate economic growth, job creation, and innovation-driven prosperity. The aim of this study is to examine the availability of infrastructural facilities that support entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand. The research is based on descriptive and exploratory research. The data was collected from 190 women entrepreneurs. Snow ball sampling techniques have been used by the researcher to collect the data from the respondents. This study is based on primary as well as secondary data. One of the biggest obstacles facing female entrepreneurs is the absence of markets in hilly locations, inadequate internet speed, power outages, and road access. The majority of respondents have two to four hours of piped water available to them, but they do not have consistent access to water, which might result in insufficient supplies for daily needs, agriculture, and animals. Additionally, healthcare facilities are not within a 5-to 10-kilometer radius, and businesses, especially those in rural locations, suffer from slow internet connectivity and speed.

Index Terms - : Infrastructure, Entrepreneurship, economic growth, job creation, Descriptive and Exploratory research

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship stands as a cornerstone of economic growth, innovation, and job creation in societies worldwide. However, the journey of an entrepreneur is fraught with challenges, from navigating regulatory hurdles to accessing crucial resources. In this landscape, the role of infrastructure emerges as pivotal, providing the foundational support necessary for entrepreneurial endeavors to flourish.

At its core, infrastructure encompasses the physical, digital, financial, and social frameworks that underpin economic activities. Physical infrastructure, including transportation networks, energy systems, and commercial spaces, forms the backbone of entrepreneurial operations. Efficient transportation systems reduce logistical costs and facilitate the movement of goods, enabling entrepreneurs to access broader markets and deliver products swiftly. Similarly, reliable energy infrastructure ensures uninterrupted business operations, fostering productivity and innovation.

In the digital era, robust digital infrastructure has become indispensable for entrepreneurial success. High-speed internet connectivity, digital platforms, and e-commerce solutions empower entrepreneurs to reach customers globally, conduct transactions seamlessly, and leverage data-driven insights for business growth. Furthermore, digital infrastructure democratizes entrepreneurship by lowering barriers to entry and enabling innovative business models to thrive in the digital marketplace. Financial infrastructure plays a crucial role in providing entrepreneurs with the necessary capital and financial services to fuel their

ventures. Access to banking services, venture capital, and alternative financing mechanisms such as crowdfunding platforms empowers entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into reality and scale their businesses. Moreover, supportive financial infrastructure, including credit reporting systems and microfinance institutions, fosters financial inclusion and promotes entrepreneurship among underserved communities.

Entrepreneurship serves as a vital engine for economic growth and development, and empowering women entrepreneurs is crucial for achieving inclusive and sustainable progress. In Uttarakhand, a state known for its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, women entrepreneurs face unique challenges and opportunities. To unlock their full potential and foster a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, it is essential to develop and enhance infrastructural facilities that specifically support women in business. Uttarakhand's diverse landscape offers immense opportunities in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, handicrafts, and renewable energy. However, women entrepreneurs often encounter barriers such as limited access to capital, inadequate training and mentorship, and insufficient networking opportunities. Addressing these challenges through targeted infrastructural development can create an enabling environment for women to start, sustain, and grow their businesses. Empowering women entrepreneurs not only enhances their individual livelihoods but also drives broader community upliftment, fostering a more inclusive and prosperous Uttarakhand. The main purpose of this study is to examine the availability of infrastructural facility that support women entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mahanta M. and Sultana P. (2018) Entrepreneurship is a vital part of the economy, and women entrepreneurs in Sonitpur, Assam, are thriving despite limited infrastructure facilities. Despite challenges such as inadequate business premises, lack of skills, and difficulty maintaining a balance between business and family, women are embracing entrepreneurship. With increased literacy rates, awareness, and self-employment, women are engaging in various activities. However, laws and regulations related to women's employment are insufficient, and discrimination still exists. Common problems faced by women entrepreneurs include lack of finance, business knowledge, training, family support, self-confidence, marketing issues, and awareness. The government should prioritize providing adequate infrastructure, training, and financial assistance to women on a large scale to positively impact women's entrepreneurship and sustainable economies.

Azmi K. and Azmi R. (2023). This article examines the impact of infrastructure on entrepreneurship growth, focusing on policy and public assistance initiatives. It suggests that integrating infrastructure into public policies can encourage entrepreneurial growth. The study uses the PMG-ARDL approach and the "TEA" proxy to assess the influence of infrastructure features on entrepreneurial dynamism in BRICS nations. The research suggests that public policy should prioritize planning and enhancing infrastructure to stimulate the entrepreneurial environment.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Objectives of the study

To know the Socio-economic status of women entrepreneurs in Uttarakhand.

To Examine the availability of infrastructural facilities that support women entrepreneurs in Uttarakhand.

3.2. Research Design

This research is based on descriptive and exploratory in nature.

3.3. Sampling Procedure

For the purpose of the present study, six districts of Uttarakhand were selected, comprising three districts from the Kumaon region—Bageshwar, Almora, and Nainital—and three districts from the Garhwal region—Dehradun, Haridwar, and Chamoli.

A multistage cluster sampling technique was adopted for the selection of respondents. In the first stage, districts were selected by considering their geographical and developmental characteristics, ensuring the inclusion of one hilly, one semi-urban, and one urban district from each region. In the second stage, blocks were selected from the chosen districts. From each district, two blocks were selected, out of which one developed and one underdeveloped block were deliberately chosen to ensure balanced representation.

In the third stage, women entrepreneurs from the selected blocks were identified and selected using the snowball sampling technique, as many women entrepreneurs operate in informal settings and are not easily identifiable through official records.

The sample size for the study consisted of 190 women entrepreneurs, which was considered adequate for achieving the objectives of the research.

3.4. Sources of Data

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Primary Data:

Primary data were collected by the researcher personally with the help of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to women entrepreneurs to gather firsthand information regarding their socio-economic background and the availability of infrastructural facilities supporting women entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data were collected from various published and unpublished sources such as research journals, books, dissertations, newspapers, government reports, and relevant websites. These sources were used to support the theoretical framework of the study and to gain insights from existing literature.

3.5. Limitation of the study

The present study is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, the study is confined to only twelve blocks across six selected districts of Uttarakhand. Therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the entire state or to women entrepreneurs in other regions.

Secondly, the results of the study are entirely based on the responses provided by the sample respondents. As the data were collected through a questionnaire, there is a possibility of personal bias, subjectivity, or inaccuracies in the responses given by the respondents, which may affect the overall findings of the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic profile of women

Table 1 presented the Demographic profile of women respondents

Variables	Classification	Entrepreneur	Percentage (%)
Age	21-30 years	52	27.36
	31-40 years	98	51.57
	41-50 years	34	17.89
	Above 51 years	6	3.15
	Total	190	100
Marital Status	Married	135	71.05
	Unmarried	44	23.16
	Widow	9	4.74
	Divorced	2	1.05
	Total	190	100
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	3	1.58
	Below Metric	7	3.68
	Metric	16	8.42
	Intermediate	33	17.37
	Graduate	94	49.47
	Professional/Masters	37	19.47

	Other	-	-
	Total	190	100
Type of Family	Nuclear Family	113	59.47
	Joint Family	77	40.53
	Total	190	100
Area of Living	Rural	86	45.26
	Semi Urban	40	21.05
	Urban	64	33.68
Monthly Family Income		190	100
	Below 15,000	18	9.47
	15,000-30,000	46	24.21
	30,000-45,000	83	43.68
	45,000-60,000	25	13.16
	Above 60,000	18	9.47
	Total	190	100

Source: Primary data

The demographic profile of 190 women entrepreneurs in Uttarakhand indicates that entrepreneurship is predominantly undertaken by women in the economically active age group, with most respondents belonging to the 31–40 years category. A significant majority of the women entrepreneurs are married, suggesting the presence of family support in entrepreneurial activities.

The educational profile reveals that most respondents are well educated, with a large proportion holding graduate and postgraduate or professional qualifications, highlighting the important role of education in promoting women entrepreneurship. The dominance of nuclear families suggests greater independence in decision-making among women entrepreneurs.

Area-wise distribution shows notable participation from rural areas, reflecting growing entrepreneurial activity among rural women despite infrastructural challenges. Income analysis indicates that most women entrepreneurs belong to middle-income households. Overall, the table reflects that women entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand is mainly driven by educated, married women from economically active age groups and middle-income backgrounds.

4.2. Availability of Marketing and Other Infrastructure Facilities

The development and expansion of business firms are heavily reliant on the availability and quality of infrastructure facilities. This study focuses on examining the infrastructure in a selected district of Uttarakhand, emphasizing eight critical parameters. These parameters provide a comprehensive understanding of the support system available to businesses, particularly those managed by women entrepreneurs, who offer firsthand insights into the infrastructural challenges and opportunities. The parameters examined are: Availability of marketing, availability of roads, quality of roads and transportation networks, reliable electricity supply, availability of piped water supply, accessibility of healthcare facilities, availability of post offices and banks, speed and connectivity of the internet.

Table 4.2: Availability of Infrastructural facilities

Availability of infrastructural facilities	No. Of Respondents (190)	Percentage
Availability of Marketing (within a distance of 5 kilometers)		
Yes	75	39.47
No	115	60.53
Availability of Road(within a distance of 5 km)		
Yes	109	54.21
No	81	42.63
Quality of Road and Transportation Networks		
Poor	117	61.57
Average	42	22.11
Good	23	12.11
Excellent	8	4.21
Reliable Electricity Supply		
Yes	101	53.16
No	89	46.84
Availability of Piped water supply		
0-2 hours per day	34	17.89
2-4 hours per day	98	51.57
4-6 hours per day	39	20.53
More than 6 hours	19	10
Accessibility of healthcare facilities within 5 to 10 km distance		
Yes	93	48.95
No	97	51.05
Availability of Post office and banks (within a distance of 5 kilometers)		
Yes	138	72.63
No	52	27.37
Internet Connectivity		
Very Poor	35	18.42
Poor	48	25.26
Average	64	33.68
Good	25	13.16
Excellent	18	9.47

Source: Primary Data

A significant majority (60.53%) of women entrepreneurs reported that markets are not available within a 5-kilometer radius of their location. Consequently, they must travel 15 to 30 kilometers, incurring daily transportation costs of 60 to 70 rupees. This additional expense reduces their profitability and restricts their business activities to the local community. The absence of nearby markets is a major issue, particularly in hilly areas. Regarding road connectivity, 42.63% of respondents indicated their villages are not connected by roads, while 54.21% responded positively. In districts like Bageshwar, Chamoli, and Almora, some villages are more than 10 kilometers from the nearest road, posing a significant obstacle for entrepreneurs aiming to grow their businesses. The quality of roads and transport networks was rated poorly by 61.57% of respondents. Additionally, 22.11% rated it as average, 12.11% as good, and only 4.21% as excellent. The poor quality of roads, especially in rural areas, hampers business operations as some villages lack proper road connections and transport facilities. Reliable electricity supply was reported by 53.16% of the women entrepreneurs, while 46.84% experienced frequent power outages. In rural areas, power outages can last 6 to 7 hours, sometimes extending to two or three days, adversely affecting business operations. Access to piped water for two to four hours daily was reported by 51.57% of respondents. Only 10% have access to piped water for more than six hours daily, while 20.53% receive it for four to six hours, and 17.89% for one to two hours. The unreliable water supply impacts agricultural activities, animal husbandry, and daily necessities. Healthcare facilities are not accessible within a 5 to 10-kilometer radius for 51.05% of women entrepreneurs, while 48.95% have access. The lack of nearby healthcare services is a significant concern for many villages. A majority (73%) of women entrepreneurs reported having access to post offices

and banks within a 5-kilometer radius, while 27% indicated these facilities are not available nearby. This access is crucial for financial transactions and communication. Internet speed and connectivity were rated as average by 33.68% of respondents. Only 9.47% rated it as good, 25.26% as poor, and 18.42% as extremely poor. Poor internet connectivity hinders business operations, especially for those seeking to engage in online business activities.

V. FINDINGS

The majority of 190 entrepreneurs are aged 31-40, with 51.57% aged between 31-40 and 27.36% aged 21-30. The majority are married, with 71% being single. The majority have a graduation certificate, followed by master's and professional degrees, intermediate diplomas, metric degrees, and no formal education. Most live in joint or nuclear households, with 33.68% in urban and 45.26% in rural areas. The majority of women entrepreneurs have monthly family incomes between Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 45,000.

The study found that a majority of female entrepreneurs in Uttarakhand face challenges in selling their products due to the lack of markets within a 5-kilometer radius, poor road and transportation networks, and inadequate electricity supply. The majority of respondents reported that their areas are not connected by roads, with some being more than 10 kilometers from the nearest road. The quality of road and transport networks is poor, particularly in hilly areas. The availability of piped water is also limited, with only a small percentage having access for more than six hours a day. Healthcare facilities are not available in most villages within a 5- to 10-kilometer distance, and post offices and banks are not accessible within 5 kilometers of their places. Internet speed and connectivity are also poor, with most areas having average or poor connectivity, especially in rural areas. These issues negatively impact the businesses of women entrepreneurs, who may struggle to conduct online transactions due to connectivity issues.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

- Develop online platforms for business registration, compliance, and access to government services.
- Improve the road, rail, and air connectivity to facilitate the movement of goods and people.
- Create platforms for entrepreneurs to connect, share ideas, and collaborate.
- Create co-working spaces in smaller towns and rural areas to encourage entrepreneurship outside urban centers, equipped with basic amenities and internet access.
- Invest in expanding high-speed internet access to rural and remote areas to ensure that all entrepreneurs have the digital connectivity needed to operate their businesses.

VII. CONCLUSION

Empowering women entrepreneurs is crucial for economic growth and development. In Uttarakhand, women entrepreneurs face various challenges in running their business enterprises. Enhancing infrastructural facilities can unlock their potential and foster a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, overcoming barriers like limited capital access and inadequate training. Infrastructure is critical to promoting entrepreneurial activities and maintaining vibrant business ecosystems. Infrastructure promotes entrepreneurship by providing the physical, digital, financial, social, and policy frameworks required for enterprises to succeed. Policymakers, investors, and stakeholders may promote economic growth, job creation, and innovation-driven prosperity by investing in infrastructure development and fostering favourable circumstances for entrepreneurial activities. The purpose of this study is to investigate the existence of infrastructure amenities that promote entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand. Data was collected from 190 female entrepreneurs. The researcher employed snowball sampling procedures to acquire data from respondents. This study draws on both primary and secondary data. The majority of 190 entrepreneurs are aged 31-40, married, with formal education, and live in joint or nuclear households. Women entrepreneurs have monthly family incomes between Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 45,000. They come from middle-class backgrounds and rely on family support. The study further reveals that female entrepreneurs in Uttarakhand face challenges in selling their products due to lack of markets, poor road and transportation networks, and inadequate electricity supply. The lack of access to healthcare facilities, post offices, and banks, as well as poor internet speed and connectivity, negatively impacts their businesses and hinders

online transactions. For the development of women entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand the government should focus on improving the infrastructural facilities in Uttarakhand.

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