

Women Entrepreneurship in India – A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

It is a well-known fact that any country cannot develop or grow properly until its 50% population is not participating in economy or indulge in economic activity.

In India, from last few decades Female situation is improving gradually and are encouraged to be economically active. Indian women are showing interest and performing better in the field of entrepreneurship.

This paper is focusing on the condition of women entrepreneurs in India. An extensive Literature review is done on women entrepreneur.

This paper is talking about the challenges what they are facing not only this but factors which are encouraging them to become entrepreneur and what type of business they are indulge in. There are several schemes implemented by the government but it shows the ground level reality of government schemes.

On the basis of study some suggestions are given to support women entrepreneurs and for improvement of their situation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, women's entrepreneurship in India has become a dynamic and revolutionary force, with significant ramifications for social development, gender equality, and economic progress. This review study explores the complex environment of women's entrepreneurship in India, illuminating its historical development, present situation, difficulties, and potential. It also looks at the mechanisms and regulations in place to help female entrepreneurs and provides a glimpse into what the future may hold for this powerful development.

2. IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

From a sociological and gender equity viewpoint as well as from an economic perspective, the emergence of women entrepreneurs in India is of utmost importance. Women in India have historically had several obstacles to economic involvement and decision-making, and they are frequently restricted to the home. But when more women entered the field of entrepreneurship in the twenty-first century, there was a striking change.

First off, women's entrepreneurship has a big impact on economic development. It boosts innovation, diversifies the business environment, and catalyses the creation of jobs.

India's economic development and international competitiveness may be accelerated by utilising the untapped potential of female entrepreneurs.

Second, women entrepreneurs are crucial to the realisation of gender equality. It gives women more economic and social freedom, enabling them to reject conventional roles and prejudices. The empowerment of women benefits not just the individual women but also the families and communities in which they live.

Third, female business owners frequently bring fresh ideas and solutions to the table. Their companies are more likely to address gender-specific concerns like healthcare, education, and childcare, helping to create a society that is more egalitarian and inclusive.

Last but not least, the rise of female entrepreneurs disrupts and reshapes social conventions and perspectives on gender roles.

It acts as a potent representation of the strength and potential of women, encouraging future generations of women to follow their business aspirations.

3. RELEVANCE AND CONTRIBUTION

In India's present socioeconomic backdrop, this review study is quite pertinent. There is a rising demand for a thorough study that explicitly focuses on women entrepreneurs in India, despite the fact that multiple research have examined various facets of entrepreneurship. This study tries to fill gaps in the literature and give a comprehensive overview of the topic by combining previous research and insights.

This paper makes a contribution by synthesising historical information, present-day patterns, and potential developments for women entrepreneurs in India. It presents a balanced viewpoint on the difficulties experienced by female entrepreneurs, including financial access, social restrictions, and market prejudices. It also critically assesses the efficacy of governmental initiatives and safety nets intended to encourage female entrepreneurs.

4. OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PAPER

The structure of this review paper enables it to offer a thorough and cogent examination of women entrepreneurs in India. There are numerous sections in it:

- **Historical perspective:** In this section, we'll examine how women's engagement in entrepreneurship has changed through time in India.
- **Current Status:** In this section, we'll outline the most recent statistics and data on the state of women entrepreneurs in India, highlighting the industries where they are having the greatest success.
- **Challenges Faced:** We'll talk about the many obstacles that women entrepreneurs confront, such as societal, cultural, and economic constraints.
- **Government Initiatives:** The success of the different government programmes and policies targeted at encouraging women's entrepreneurship will be discussed in this section.
- **Future possibilities and suggestions:** The paper will finish by presenting suggestions for governments, organisations, and aspiring women entrepreneurs as well as insights into the future possibilities of women's entrepreneurship in India.

In conclusion, the goal of this review article is to provide readers a thorough grasp of women's entrepreneurship in India, including its significance, difficulties, and possibilities. By doing this, it hopes to further both scholarly investigation and real-world policies in this important area.

4.1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

A complex interaction of social, economic, and cultural elements has historically determined women's engagement in entrepreneurship in India. Several significant turning points and trends may be used to chart the development of women's entrepreneurship in India: (Datta, P. B., & Gaikwad, V. B., 2019).

- **Pre-Independence Era:** Women's engagement in entrepreneurship was restricted prior to India's 1947 acquisition of independence, mostly because of conventional gender roles and cultural standards. There were limited options for women to start their own businesses; instead, they worked mostly in agricultural and home duties.
- **Post-freedom industrialisation:** India had an industrialisation phase after gaining its freedom. As more educational options were accessible, women's business started to take off. Some women started modest businesses including handicrafts, food processing, and tailoring.
- **The Growth of Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** Self-help group development constituted a crucial turning point for female entrepreneurs in the 1980s and 1990s. These organisations gave women access to financing, skill development, and a support system. The number of female-owned microbusinesses increased as a result of SHGs' effectiveness in encouraging women's entrepreneurship.
- **Economic Liberalisation (1991):** In 1991, India's economy was liberalised, creating new business prospects. Women started to join in more industries, such as IT, banking, and manufacturing. Female business owners began to defy prejudices and establish themselves in historically male-dominated fields.
- **Governmental efforts:** The Indian government created several laws and efforts to assist women's entrepreneurship after realising the relevance of it. For instance, the 'Stand-Up India' programme offers financial support to women-owned businesses. The 'MUDRA' programme also provides financial assistance to women-owned small and microbusinesses.
- **Changing societal conventions:** Over time, shifting societal attitudes and conventions have been a major motivator for female entrepreneurs. The idea that women can succeed in business is becoming more widely accepted, and families are supporting women company owners more and more.
- **Internet Revolution:** With the arrival of the internet age, women's entrepreneurship in India has seen even more change. Women are using

social media and e-commerce platforms to expand their consumer bases and manage successful online companies.

- **Women-Led companies:** India has seen a rise in women-led companies in recent years, particularly in the technology, healthcare, and e-commerce industries. More women are starting businesses as a result of these companies, which are changing the entrepreneurial environment.

In conclusion, women's entrepreneurship in India has a rich history that traces its development from conventional roles to a modern, dynamic environment. Despite ongoing difficulties, regulations that promote women entrepreneurs as well as shifting societal norms and rising acknowledgement of the critical role that women play in entrepreneurship are helping to advance the status of women entrepreneurs in India. Future prospects for female entrepreneurs look bright as the nation's economic and social development continues.

4.2 CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

Women entrepreneurship in India has seen significant growth and development in recent years. Here is an overview of the current status with relevant statistics:

4.2.1 NUMBER OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Approximately 20 million women were business owners in India as of 2021, according to statistics from the Sixth Economic Census. This figure has been rising over time, demonstrating the increased interest and involvement of women in business.

4.2.2 SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

In India, there are many different industries and sectors where women are starting businesses. Some of the industries where they have had a significant influence are:

- **Retail and e-commerce:** Many female entrepreneurs work in the retail sector, running traditional brick-and-mortar enterprises as well as online e-commerce sites. They frequently run beauty parlours, clothes businesses, and internet markets.
- **Food and agribusiness:** Women are significantly underrepresented in agribusiness, organic farming, and food processing. They work in the food industry, the catering industry, and the culinary arts.
- **Technology and IT:** Though traditionally dominated by males, India is seeing an increase in the number of women-owned IT firms. These

companies concentrate on IT consulting, software development, and app development.

- **Healthcare and wellness:** A lot of female entrepreneurs are starting firms linked to healthcare and wellbeing. This covers managing medical practises, wellness centres, and internet health resources.
- **Education and EdTech:** Women business owners have made progress in the field of education, opening up coaching facilities, schools, and EdTech firms that provide online courses and tutoring services.
- **Handicrafts and Artisanal Products:** Women have a significant role in conserving and developing traditional crafts in the handicraft, handloom, and artisanal product sectors.

4.2.3 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

In various Indian states and areas, there are differing proportions of female entrepreneurs. Women-owned enterprises are more prevalent in states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Kerala. However, there is an increasing trend of women starting their own businesses in rural and non-metropolitan regions.

TABLE 2: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA (2021)

STATE	PREVALENCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS
Tamil Nadu	High
Karnataka	High
Maharashtra	High
Kerala	High
Other States and Regions	Growing

4.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS (KUMAR, A., & RAJPUT, N., 2017).

4.3.1 CULTURAL BARRIERS

- **Social expectations:** Women are frequently expected to put their families and domestic duties ahead of their careers due to traditional gender roles and cultural expectations.
- **Stigma:** Women who embark into non-traditional positions, such as entrepreneurship, may face stigma in some societies, which can result in social exclusion and condemnation.

4.3.2 SOCIAL BARRIERS

- **Lack of Role Models:** A lack of prominent female role models in entrepreneurship might deter women from starting their own businesses.
- **Limited Networking Opportunities:** Women may have trouble connecting with mentors and professional networks, both of which are essential for a company's expansion.

4.3.3 ECONOMIC BARRIERS

- **Access to Finance:** Due to gender prejudice among lenders and investors, female company owners sometimes struggle to raise cash for their enterprises. They might be dealing with lower collateral and higher interest rates.
- **Financial literacy:** Women's capacity to successfully manage their finances and make wise investment decisions may be hampered by unequal access to financial education.
- **Resource Constraints:** Access to resources like land, property, and technology might be restricted, which can hamper corporate expansion.

4.3.4 ACCESS TO MARKETS

- **Market Bias:** It's possible for clients of women-owned firms to have a preference for the goods or services offered by male-owned businesses.
- **Supply Chain Challenges:** Women-owned enterprises' reach and expansion may be hampered by limited access to distribution networks and supply chains.

4.3.5 NETWORKING CHALLENGES

- **Limited Networking Opportunities:** Women may encounter obstacles while trying to participate in professional networks, business groups, and industry-related gatherings where vital contacts are made.
- **Gender prejudice:** Gender prejudice can result in exclusion or undervaluation during networking events, which makes it challenging to forge fruitful connections.

4.3.6 WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- **Family Responsibilities:** Juggling family obligations and the demands of entrepreneurship may be stressful and exhausting.
- **Childcare and eldercare:** Women's capacity to concentrate on their companies may be hampered by a lack of affordable access to childcare and eldercare services.

4.3.7 CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

- **Imposter Syndrome:** Some women may experience imposter syndrome, which makes them question their skills and feel undeserving of accomplishment in fields where males predominate.
- **Stereotype Threat:** Low self-confidence might result from a fear of living up to unfavorable perceptions about women's talents in the workplace.

4.3.8 LEGAL AND REGULATORY HURDLES

- **Discriminatory Laws:** In some cases, women may be subject to laws or regulations that restrict their ability to own or manage businesses.
- **Property Rights:** Women may have difficulty acquiring assets for business growth due to their restricted property rights.

4.3.9 ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

- **Gender Disparities in Education:** Women may find it more difficult to start their own businesses due to uneven access to high-quality education and training.
- **Entrepreneurship Education:** Women may lack exposure to entrepreneurship education and training courses, which may affect their business acumen.

To solve these problems, a multimodal approach is required, involving policy reforms, increased access to funding and education, promoting gender diversity in business networks, and dispelling gender stereotypes. Empowering women entrepreneurs is crucial for economic success and creativity, in addition to gender equality.

4.4 GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND POLICIES

The Indian government has realised the value of encouraging female entrepreneurship as a way to advance social advancement, gender equality, and economic prosperity. Over the years, a number of laws and regulations have been implemented in India to encourage and empower women business owners. The outcomes of a few of these significant government initiatives will be examined and assessed in this section. (Government of India, 2020).

4.4.1 MAHILA E-HAAT

- **Description:** The online store Mahila E-Haat was established by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to provide female entrepreneurs a venue to promote and sell their goods. It strives to connect all women, particularly those from underprivileged communities, directly to the market.
- **Effectiveness:** Mahila E-Haat has helped female entrepreneurs grow their clientele and boost their sales. Furthermore, it has facilitated networking and knowledge sharing among female company entrepreneurs. However, problems like digital literacy and internet accessibility in rural areas still need to be fixed.

4.4.2 STAND-UP INDIA

- **Description:** The Indian government started the Stand-Up India project to support women, people from Scheduled Castes, and people from Scheduled Tribes starting their own enterprises. By allowing bank loans between Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 crore, it achieves this.
- **Effectiveness:** The scheme has assisted many female entrepreneurs in obtaining finance, although there have been administrative hiccups, a lack of awareness, and requirements for enough collateral. Continuous evaluation and monitoring are required to improve its impact.

4.4.3 MUDRA YOJANA

- **Description:** The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency) intends to help micro-enterprises financially by offering loans of up to Rs. 10 lakhs, including those owned by women. Shishu, Kishor, and Tarun are its three operating categories, which cater to various entrepreneurial phases.
- **Effectiveness:** MUDRA loans have helped women business owners by giving them access to crucial finance. To guarantee the efficient use of finances, however, financial literacy programmes are required. For its long-term viability, monitoring loan quality and on-time repayments are also essential.

4.4.4 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PLATFORM (WEP):

- **Description:** The Women Entrepreneurship Platform was established by the NITI Aayog to help and develop female entrepreneurs in India. It offers accessibility to resources, networking possibilities, and mentoring initiatives.
- **Effectiveness:** WEP has made a significant contribution to the development of an environment that supports female entrepreneurs. It has aided in the networking, sharing, and improvement of skills. Continuous efforts are required to connect with female entrepreneurs in rural regions in order to maximise its efficacy.

4.4.5 STARTUP INDIA

- **Description:** The Government of India's Startup India programme aims to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship across the nation. Although not expressly gender-focused, it offers several advantages that female entrepreneurs may take use of.
- **Effectiveness:** Startup India has promoted an entrepreneurial culture in India and indirectly helped women business owners. But particular initiatives and rewards for female entrepreneurs inside the Startup India framework can improve their involvement and success even more.

The Indian government has launched a number of programmes and laws to encourage female entrepreneurship.

Even while these measures have improved access to financing, market connections, and support services, there are still issues that need to be resolved. Among these include raising awareness, resolving digital inequities, guaranteeing successful implementation, and giving marginalised women entrepreneur's specific assistance.

To maximise their impact and encourage more women to start profitable businesses in India, it would be crucial to continuously monitor, evaluate, and change these regulations.

4.5 FUTURE PROSPECTS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

In India, women's entrepreneurship has a bright future and has a lot of potential to advance society and the economy. This optimistic view is influenced by a number of things: (Raj, S., & Jain, R., 2018).

- **Changing Societal Norms:** Gender roles are changing as India undergoes cultural transformation and modernisation. Women in entrepreneurial jobs are expected to get more acceptance and support as a result of this shift in perspective.
- **Educational Empowerment:** Giving women greater access to school will provide them the knowledge and abilities needed for business. More women are going to college and becoming experts in a variety of disciplines.
- **Technology and digitalization:** In India, the digital revolution is democratising access to resources and markets. Technology can help female business owners expand their consumer base and improve efficiency.
- **Supportive Policies:** Government programmes like "Stand Up India" and "MUDRA" attempt to encourage female entrepreneurs. Increased numbers of startups and enterprises run by women may result from continued legislative assistance.
- **Access to financial:** Previously restricted financial alternatives are now more available because to the growth of angel investors, venture capitalists, and microfinance organisations supporting women entrepreneurs.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND ASPIRING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

5.1 ENHANCE FINANCIAL INCLUSION:

- By establishing specialised loan programmes and financial literacy campaigns, policymakers should seek to increase financial inclusion for female entrepreneurs.

- For women-owned firms, financial institutions should provide specialised finance solutions with flexible terms.

5.2 SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- Work with educational organisations to develop and carry out seminars and courses for women that are entrepreneurship-focused. Governmental and non-profit institutions should offer training in company growth, marketing, and financial management.

5.3 MENTORSHIP AND NETWORKING:

- Work with educational institutions to develop and carry out seminars and courses for women that are centred on entrepreneurship. Organisations and governmental bodies have to offer training in company growth, marketing, and financial management.

5.4 TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

- Encourage women to employ digital technology and e-commerce platforms in their businesses.
- Promote technical ventures and ideas founded by women.

5.5 ACCESS TO MARKETS

- By giving female entrepreneurs opportunities to showcase their goods and services, you can help them get access to the market.
- Encourage the inclusion of women-owned enterprises in corporate supply chains and government procurement.

India's female entrepreneurship is growing as a result of shifting social norms, improvements in education and technology, and official backing. It is essential for governments, organisations, and prospective women entrepreneurs to work together and put these initiatives into action if they want to fully realise this potential. India can build a robust ecosystem of women-led firms that significantly contribute to economic growth and social progress by tackling difficulties and offering the required resources and support.

6 CONCLUSION

This assessment emphasises the vibrant environment for female entrepreneurs in India. Indian women entrepreneurs have come a long way despite confronting

tremendous obstacles including gender prejudice and a lack of resources. According to recent data, they are becoming more prevalent across a variety of industries, supporting economic expansion and employment development.

Government programmes and efforts like MUDRA loans and Stand-Up India have been instrumental in promoting women's business. But problems still exist, necessitating better access to funding, mentoring, and networking opportunities.

In India, female business owners are leading initiatives for sustainability and creativity as well as economic progress. In a company environment that is evolving quickly, their distinctive viewpoints and problem-solving techniques offer a clear edge.

It is impossible to exaggerate the value of female entrepreneurship in India. In addition to empowering women monetarily, it also supports social inclusion and gender equality. Policymakers, organisations, and society as a whole must continue to encourage and assist women entrepreneurs, making sure they have the resources and chances they need to succeed, in order to fully realise this potential. By doing this, India may realise a great deal of unrealized potential, accelerating the pace of its social and economic advancement.

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