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# Women Entrepreneurship in Commerce: Breaking Barriers

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## Abstract

*In the contemporary era, women are assuming equal responsibilities to their male counterparts, regardless of whether they are employed in "the public or private sector". In contemporary information and global society, women's status has significantly changed from that of pastoral civilisation. Simply said, empowerment is the state of being free, equal, and having access to opportunities. Within this article, we will examine the diverse literature that has been conducted on the topic of women's entrepreneurship and its ability to overcome obstacles in the realm of commerce. It concluded that women entrepreneurship in commerce is reshaping India's economic and social landscape by breaking traditional barriers and embracing digital opportunities. Despite societal challenges and family responsibilities, women are achieving financial independence and business success across diverse sectors. The rise of e-commerce has empowered many to balance professional and personal roles from home. Their growing contributions to GDP and national income highlight their vital economic role. As women continue to challenge gender norms and gain recognition, their entrepreneurial journey serves as an inspiration for future generations. Supporting and empowering women entrepreneurs will be key to India's sustained economic progress.*

**Keywords;** Women Entrepreneurship, Women (Female) Entrepreneur, Business (Commerce), Social Landscape, Breaking Barriers, Financial Independence.

## INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is the process of starting a new business to capitalise on new opportunities. Women are now effective in entrepreneurship due to their possessing characteristics that are advantageous to its growth, which is the fundamental component. Entrepreneurship would be a better fit for women than regular work. In the present day, there is a greater number of women than ever who are engaged in entrepreneurship [1]. The women have experienced significant mental development. The nation's increasing dependence on the service industry presents a number of opportunities for women. An increasing number of Indian women have established their own enterprises over the last two decades, thereby altering the business landscape [2]. Women have recently shown an increased interest in launching their own companies. Women experience a diverse array of obstacles during the entrepreneurial process as a result of their dual roles as workers and homemakers [3]. Although they face many challenges, most Indian housewives want to start their own enterprises. They are frustrated by their dual purpose. To train female entrepreneurs, the government started a variety of programs. Women are drawn to training programs, which also help them learn new skills and improve their confidence and social attitudes [4], [5].

Women entrepreneurs are becoming more and more important in promoting innovation, social change, and global economic growth. In addition to promoting economic growth and job development, more women pursuing entrepreneurship are essential in changing gender stereotypes and strengthening local communities [6]. By engaging in business, they promote inclusive growth, contribute to gender equity, and offer a variety of viewpoints to industries that have historically been dominated by males.

But in spite of these encouraging developments, women business owners still face a distinct and intricate set of obstacles that limit their expansion and long-term viability [7]. These challenges frequently encompass persistent societal biases and gender-based discrimination, challenges in reconciling familial obligations with "business demands, inadequate mentorship and professional networks, and limited access" to financial resources and credit. Furthermore, the access to institutional support and visibility of many women-led ventures are further restricted by their operation in "informal or small-scale sectors" [8]. Despite the fact that the amount of women-owned businesses is consistently increasing, their long-term success and scalability are still constrained by "structural barriers, deep-rooted cultural expectations, and policy deficits", as evidenced by research. A multifaceted strategy is needed to address these problems, including targeted government regulations, financial inclusion programs, skill development opportunities, and the encouragement of favourable societal perceptions of women in leadership positions [9], [10].

### ***Entrepreneurship***

Economic growth depends on both industrial and human development, and entrepreneurship is a crucial component of both. Risk and uncertainty-bearing, innovation, initiation/imitation, and ideation comprise entrepreneurship. It is regarded as a critical component in contemporary production theory. The practice of entrepreneurship is widely seen as a measure of progress. Women's entrepreneurship and empowerment are the main topics of recent research. Seventy to eighty percent of entrepreneurs worldwide are men. Nonetheless, there's a growing trend of women showing an interest in starting their own businesses. A possible indicator is the rise in the prevalence of self-employment among women in numerous developing nations [11].

### ***Concept of Women Entrepreneurship***

The term "women entrepreneurship" describes the dynamic process by which women plan, launch, coordinate, and oversee commercial endeavors—often while negotiating a challenging social and institutional environment. Not only does a woman entrepreneur come up with a company concept, but she also has the vision for its long-term viability, strategic planning, and execution [12]. She takes on the risks related to enterprise development, presents innovative services or goods, capitalises on emergent opportunities, and identifies market gaps. In addition to their creative and strategic roles, women entrepreneurs play a significant role in running their companies. This include

managing supply chain coordination, marketing plans, financial planning, "customer interaction, and human resource development". They are frequently compelled to assume the roles of "leader, decision-maker, negotiator, and problem-solver", all while balancing societal and familial expectations [13]. Women entrepreneurs play a vital role in social change and economic growth by fulfilling these varied responsibilities. Diversity, flexibility, and a new outlook are what they contribute to the corporate world, and they often prioritise sustainable and community-focused company methods. Additionally, their leadership promotes greater gender equality by questioning established gender stereotypes. Women who carve out a place for themselves in the business ecosystem not only foster innovation and job development, but also open doors for next generations of female leaders [14].

### ***Evolution of women entrepreneurship in India***

Since ancient times, women have been actively involved in the economy in India. Women's roles have undergone several changes. The current trajectory of women's roles took generations to develop. Women played a significant role in the production process of "the ancient industries of India", where the family was the unit of production [15]. Women assisted in rudimentary arts and crafts like spinning and clay modelling, and they had a responsible role alongside males even in "Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa cultures" [16]. During the Vedic era, women were crucial in developing home utility needs, agricultural pursuits, and weaving. These individuals were essential in the agricultural industry and the service sector of the traditional economy. They were skilled at creating the intoxicating soma-juice. Women possessed a distinct status within the social structure and played a substantial role in the economy during the 18th century. In the worldwide distribution system, women's informal trade activities have been extensively recorded since the early 1950s. In India, women's entrepreneurship gained popularity in the late 1970s, and now, an increasing number of women are starting their own businesses in a variety of industries. Women in the 1990s were strong, capable, self-assured, and outspoken. They also had a clear notion of the projects they wanted to tackle and were successful in them [17].

### ***Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs***

#### **1. Fewer sectors are women-friendly**

Men continue to dominate India's business environment in spite of the laws and policies aimed at advancing gender equality. Men predominate in lucrative industries like manufacturing and construction, whereas the majority of

women-owned enterprises in India are in low-revenue areas, according to a research. In addition, the male-centric character of numerous industries necessitates that women operate in sectors that have historically been considered "women-friendly," including education, apparel, and cosmetic care. In essence, it severely restricts their experience, possibilities, and skills.

## **2. Lack of institutional and social support**

Families, friends, and the local community do not provide the social support that the majority of female entrepreneurs need to launch their businesses. For Indian women entrepreneurs, one of the biggest obstacles is the absence of business community mentoring. In terms of Indian institutional backing, this situation is the same. Although initiatives exist to encourage women's entrepreneurial endeavours, authorities fail to provide timely assistance or guidance to a significant number of women. Their confidence and risk-taking abilities are negatively impacted by the lack of a suitable support system.

## **3. Poor Funding Prospects**

There are significant gender disparities in India's financing scene. Investor bias and other reasons prevent women-owned businesses in the nation from obtaining finance. Just 12% of all the organisations that got investment in 2019 have more than one female founder, according to a research by Innoven Capital. "Financial institutions and banks" see women as less deserving of credit, and many angel and venture capital firms are hesitant to invest in companies run by women. Furthermore, a lot of Indian women do not own any assets or property, which presents a problem when they seek for private financing or collateral loans.

## **4. Limited mobility**

In India, women entrepreneurs encounter one of the most fundamental challenges: restricted mobility. Without concern for their safety, they are unable to travel independently or lodge in hotels for business purposes. Women in India possess fewer motorised vehicles than males, despite the fact that numerous "financially independent women" have begun to invest in automobiles. The independence of female entrepreneurs is limited by all of these issues.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

(Katiyar & Srivastava, 2024) [18] It looks at how social media, e-commerce, and digital platforms may level the

playing field for female entrepreneurs, dismantle conventional obstacles, and promote an entrepreneurial environment that is more inclusive. The challenges that women often face while establishing and maintaining their digital businesses are examined, including gender prejudices, finance availability, and juggling family obligations. Finally, by highlighting both the advancements and ongoing challenges, this abstract highlights the groundbreaking possibilities of the digital era for female entrepreneurs. In order to maximise the contributions of female "entrepreneurs to the digital economy", stakeholders may endeavour to create an atmosphere that is inclusive and empowering by comprehending these dynamics.

(Razak et al., 2024) [19] There is a general upward trend in the number of women who are engaged in economic activities. In addition, this research will pinpoint the obstacles faced by Malaysian women entrepreneurs and help them overcome them in order to investigate other business program prospects. It was predicted that three different elements would contribute to the issues faced by female entrepreneurs. There are issues with limited networking possibilities, gender prejudice, and financial access. In order to examine secondary data from several sources, this exploratory research used the qualitative technique. According to the study's findings, government agencies like "the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Cooperative Development, Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga (TEKUN), and Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AiM)" help women entrepreneurs overcome their challenges and improve their performance in economic activities.

(Sharma & Mahalwala, 2024) [20] In addition to working on socially conscious projects like healthcare and education programs, this article seeks to highlight the contribution that women entrepreneurs make to India's economic growth by creating jobs, lowering unemployment, and encouraging a variety of creative viewpoints in the business world. Additionally, it provides a concise overview of the challenges that women encounter during their entrepreneurial endeavours, as well as the government's initiatives and support to facilitate this process. In order to encourage more women to come out and pursue their ambitions and bring honours to the country, it also highlights the remarkable accomplishments and accolades of Indian women entrepreneurs on the national and international scene.

(Ahmetaj et al., 2023) [21] In a post-communist country, the primary objective of this research was to evaluate the perspectives, challenges, and driving factors of female

entrepreneurship. The findings of the study show that, although the percentage of women entrepreneurs who believe that their gender has positively impacted the growth of their businesses and the percentage of women entrepreneurs who feel discriminated against do not differ significantly, there is a positive significant difference between "the percentages of women entrepreneurs" who have received heritage from their families and those who have been supported by their partners and families. Women's entrepreneurial development is specifically addressed in relation to the diverse factors they encounter. Providing various suggestions for policymakers to consider in order to enhance Albania's entrepreneurial environment is another goal of this study.

(Kumar & Kumar, 2022) [22] Whether they are employed in "the public or private sectors", women in the contemporary world share obligations with their male colleagues. Given this, the growing proportion of women in organisations indicates that they should be considered active participants in the process of national development. This research will draw attention to the problems, challenges, and obstacles that Indian women entrepreneurs face. In an attempt to help female entrepreneurs, this also looks at government and financial assistance programs that are easily accessible. The secondary sources form the basis of the research. The study's objective is to identify the primary drivers or motivators behind the rise in female entrepreneurs and provide some relevant suggestions.

(Saraswat & Lathabahvan, 2020) [23] Because Indian culture is heavily ingrained with traditions that have a male-dominated sociological and psychological structure, educated Indian women must work hard to attain equal rights and status. The goal of this research is to raise awareness and comprehend the significance of women's entrepreneurship and its role in the rational, economic, and global growth of the globe. Women entrepreneurs are the subject of a thorough literature assessment. Finally, some of the main issues that Indian women entrepreneurs confront, their success stories, the variables that influence women entrepreneurs, and the opinions of various societal segments about women entrepreneurs have been mentioned.

(Kadambari & Chanderjeet, 2019) [24] Women dedicate themselves to the family, which in turn leads to the nation and society. Issues of gender equality and development have served as a major source of inspiration for this study on women entrepreneurs. The assumption that women entrepreneurs are important for economic development has become more important to scholars and policymakers today.

It is considered that women entrepreneurs have more obstacles while establishing and operating their businesses than their male counterparts, in addition to experiencing gender inequity. Finding different internal and external stimulating and demotivating elements is the aim of this empirical investigation. Suggests strategies for overcoming the primary challenges encountered by female entrepreneurs and provides recommendations for their mitigation.

(Shetty & Hans, 2019) [25] Today's Indian lady is defying centuries of convention by embracing the complicated lifestyle of the corporate world and starting to transition from a corporate profession into leadership and entrepreneurship. Only around 66% of start-ups in Bengaluru, the innovation hub of India, are owned by women. In this age of fast networking, digital development, and demographic shifts, we must thus investigate the cultural, natural, and other obstacles to women's entrepreneurship. In this essay, we attempt to investigate the difficulties they encounter and the effects of the shift from "women in development" to "women-led development" on their socioeconomic standing. In the aftermath of "the National Skill Development Policy and National Skill Development Mission", it also explores alternative strategies for women.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, women entrepreneurship in commerce has emerged as a transformative force in the digital age, empowering women to overcome traditional socio-economic barriers and assert their presence in diverse industries. Technological advancements and the accessibility of digital platforms have enabled women to start and manage businesses from home, ensuring both financial independence and flexibility in balancing familial responsibilities. Despite facing persistent challenges stemming from societal expectations, gender norms, and family obligations, women entrepreneurs continue to break barriers, shatter glass ceilings, and redefine success. Platforms like Amazon, Snapdeal, and Flipkart have played a pivotal role in this shift by offering women the tools and market access needed to thrive. The achievements of Indian women entrepreneurs, through national recognition and awards, not only highlight their individual success stories but also emphasize their collective contribution to the country's economic growth and social transformation. Their participation significantly influences India's GDP and promotes diversity in the business landscape. As India moves forward in its economic journey, fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial environment and providing



continued support to women entrepreneurs will be crucial. Their resilience, innovation, and leadership are shaping a future where gender equality in entrepreneurship becomes a norm, rather than an exception.

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