

Issues and Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs: A Study on Women Entrepreneurs in Shimoga District, Karnataka State, India

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is always very challenging due to the various risks it offers and the challenge is even immense to the women entrepreneurs. Recent governmental initiatives and evolving societal attitudes have significantly strengthened the support for women's entrepreneurship, recognizing its long-deserved importance. However even in the present scenario women entrepreneurs are facing number of issues and challenges. This research paper investigates the myriad issues and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Shimoga District, Karnataka, India. Employing a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 100 women entrepreneurs, the study identifies significant barriers such as limited access to finance, societal norms, and inadequate support networks. Data analysis includes Pearson's correlation analysis, chi-square tests, and descriptive statistics revealing critical insights into the factors influencing women's entrepreneurial success. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance the entrepreneurial environment for women in the region.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Challenges, Shimoga District, Karnataka, India, Entrepreneurship, Barriers

1. Introduction

Women's entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a key driver of economic development and job creation, particularly in developing regions. In India, women entrepreneurs have substantial potential, yet they often face unique challenges that impede their business endeavours. Shimoga District, located in Karnataka State, is no exception. Despite progressive policies and a growing emphasis on women's empowerment, women entrepreneurs in this region grapple with various issues, including limited access to financial resources, societal expectations, and lack of institutional support.

Addressing these challenges is essential for crafting strategies that empower women

entrepreneurs and enhance their impact on the economy. This study aims to shed light on the specific barriers faced by women in Shimoga, providing a foundation for future research and policy formulation. The analysis incorporates quantitative data from a structured questionnaire, focusing on key demographic factors, barriers to entrepreneurship, and recommendations for improvement.

2. Literature Review

The literature surrounding women entrepreneurs in India highlights a variety of challenges that hinder their potential:

1. **Gupta, V., & Singh, N. (2019):** This study highlights systemic barriers women face in entrepreneurship,

including cultural norms and access to finance. It emphasizes that societal expectations often restrict women's entrepreneurial ambitions, making it essential to address these cultural barriers.

2. **Kabeer, N. (2016):** Kabeer's research highlights the importance of economic empowerment for women, emphasizing that financial independence is vital to their overall empowerment. In India, limited access to credit and investment opportunities remains a significant barrier to women's entrepreneurial pursuits.
3. **Singh, A. (2020):** Singh identifies various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, such as discrimination in business settings and insufficient access to markets. The study underscores the importance of creating supportive environments to foster women's entrepreneurship.
4. **Sharma, R. (2021):** Sharma discusses the impact of education on women's entrepreneurship. Research shows that educational background plays a crucial role in women's capacity to launch and sustain successful businesses, underscoring the importance of tailored educational programs.
5. **Nanda, R., & Sorensen, J. (2010):** This research explores the gender gap in entrepreneurship, illustrating how women often receive less funding and support compared to men. It calls for policies that ensure equal access to resources and networks for women entrepreneurs.

The existing literature underscores the pressing need to address these challenges to enhance women's participation in

entrepreneurship, particularly in regions like Shimoga.

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the key issues and challenges confronted by women entrepreneurs in Shimoga District.
2. To analyze the impact of socio-economic factors on their entrepreneurial activities.
3. To assess the availability of incentives for women entrepreneurs and their effects.
4. To explore difficulties in network building and work-life balance.
5. To analyze the correlation between asset availability and access to capital.
6. To recommend practical recommendations for strengthening support for women entrepreneurs in the region.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design was utilized to explore the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Shimoga District.

4.2 Sampling Frame

The study targeted women entrepreneurs registered with local business associations, self-help groups, and informal networks in Shimoga.

4.3 Sampling Method

A simple random sampling method was employed to select a sample size of 100 participants, ensuring a diverse representation across various sectors of entrepreneurship.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Age group of the respondents:

Demographic Variable	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Age Group		
18-25	20	20
26-35	40	40
36-45	25	25
46 and above	15	15
TOTAL	100	100

Major part of sample respondents fall within the 26 to 35 age group, with 25% belonging to the 36 to 45 age group.

Table 2: Educational Qualification of the respondents:

Educational Qualification		
Below Graduate	35	35
Graduate	40	40
Post-Graduate	25	25
Total	100	100

Most of the respondents hold a graduate degree, followed by those with a postgraduate degree, while 35% have educational qualifications below graduation.

Table 3: Business Sector to which Women Entrepreneurs are involved

Business Sector		
Manufacturing	10	10
Services	50	50
Retail	40	40
Total	100	100

Above data specifies that half of the respondents (50%) work in the service sector, 40% are employed in the retail sector, and

only a small number are involved in the manufacturing sector.

5.2 Chi-Square Test

To examine the relationship between educational background and access to finance, a chi-square test was conducted. The results indicated a significant association ($\chi^2 = 15.67, p < 0.01$), suggesting that higher educational qualifications correlate with better access to financial resources.

Furthermore, the chi-square test was conducted to assess the relationship between the availability of physical assets (such as land and buildings) and access to capital. The findings revealed a significant association ($\chi^2 = 12.34, p < 0.05$), indicating that women with physical assets were more likely to have improved access to financial resources.

5.3 Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis assessed the strength and direction of relationships between variables, such as education level and business success, as well as asset availability and access to capital. The results showed a positive correlation between education levels and business success ($r = 0.65, p < 0.01$), as well as a significant correlation between asset availability and access to capital ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$).

6. Findings of the Study

The study uncovered several critical challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Shimoga District:

- **Access to Finance:** A significant majority (65%) expressed challenges in securing financial support, underscoring the need for enhanced credit facilities. Many women reported that traditional banks often demand collateral that they are unable to provide.

- **Societal Norms:** Cultural expectations were cited by 70% of respondents as a major barrier, restricting women's ability to engage fully in entrepreneurial activities. These norms often dictate their roles primarily as caregivers, limiting their time and opportunities for business.
- **Lack of Support Networks:** Many participants (55%) indicated a lack of mentorship and networking opportunities as a challenge, affecting their business growth and sustainability. Women entrepreneurs frequently face barriers to accessing informal networks that offer essential business advice and opportunities.
- **Education and Skill Development:** The analysis revealed that 60% of the women had limited business education, impacting their confidence and business acumen. This knowledge gap was linked to reduced innovation and competitiveness within their businesses.
- **Incentives for Women Entrepreneurs:** When asked about the availability of incentives, only 40% of sample participants have opined that suitable support and incentives were provided by the government and local authorities, indicating a gap that needs to be addressed.
- **Network Building Difficulties:** 75% of respondents reported challenges in building professional networks, attributing this to societal norms and a lack of platforms dedicated to women entrepreneurs.
- **Work-Life Balance:** 80% of respondents indicated difficulties in achieving work-life balance, primarily due to familial responsibilities and societal expectations.

7. Conclusion

This research highlights the pressing challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Shimoga District, Karnataka. The findings indicate that access to finance, societal norms, and inadequate support systems significantly hinder women's entrepreneurial success. The study also reveals that ownership of physical assets positively influences access to capital, and there is a critical need for better incentives and support for women entrepreneurs. To create an inclusive entrepreneurial environment, targeted interventions are essential, including enhanced access to financial resources, educational programs, and the development of strong support networks. Addressing these challenges will empower women entrepreneurs and contribute to the region's overall economic development.

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