



Role of Women in Entrepreneurship

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INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship has gained worldwide recognition as a powerful force for economic growth, social empowerment, and inclusive development. Women entrepreneurs do not just earn income; they create jobs, develop new ideas, and drive social change. By engaging in entrepreneurial activities, women contribute to national revenue, enhance family well-being, and foster community development. In a developing nation like India, where gender gaps remain significant, women entrepreneurship is crucial for promoting gender equality, reducing poverty, and advancing overall socio-economic development. Encouraging women to start their own businesses is vital for reaching sustainable development goals.



Open Access

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Article History

Received: 16. 12.2025

Revised: 21. 12.2025

Accepted: 26. 12.2025

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Concept of Women Entrepreneurship

Women entrepreneurship refers to the process where women start, organize, manage, and operate businesses on their own or together. This aims for economic independence and self-reliance. It covers a wide range of businesses, from small local ventures to large tech startups. Women entrepreneurs work in sectors like agriculture, food processing, textiles, education, healthcare, information technology, and services. The concept highlights not only the need for income but also the importance of women's empowerment, leadership, and active involvement in economic decision-making.

Importance of Women in Entrepreneurship

Economic Growth and Employment Generation

Women entrepreneurs play a significant role in economic growth by starting businesses that boost productivity and create jobs. Many women-led companies hire other women, increasing female workforce participation and lowering unemployment in local and regional areas.

Women Empowerment

Entrepreneurship empowers women by giving them financial independence, confidence, and decision-making power. It allows women to have more control over their lives, engage in household and community decisions, and achieve social recognition.

Reduction of Poverty and Inequality

The income generated by women-led enterprises improves household earnings and living conditions. Women often invest their income in education, nutrition, healthcare, and family welfare, contributing to the reduction of long-term poverty and social inequality.

Innovation and Diversification

Women entrepreneurs bring fresh ideas, creativity, and unique problem-solving skills to their businesses. Their involvement fosters product variety, the development of tailored services, and the introduction of sustainable and socially responsible business practices.

Balanced Regional Development

Many women entrepreneurs operate in rural and semi-urban regions, contributing to more balanced development. Their businesses help utilize local resources, reduce urban migration, and support regional growth inclusively.

Areas of Women Entrepreneurship

Women entrepreneurs engage in various economic activities. In agriculture and related fields, women participate in organic farming, mushroom cultivation, dairy farming, poultry, beekeeping, seed production, and nursery management. In food processing, they produce items like pickles, jams, baked goods, spices, and ready-to-eat meals. Handloom and handicraft work—such as weaving, embroidery, pottery, and traditional crafts—also provides job opportunities for many women. Micro and small businesses like tailoring shops, beauty salons, and boutiques are common in urban and semi-urban settings. Additionally, women increasingly contribute to the service sector, including education, healthcare, daycare services, event management, and hospitality. More recently, women have started to explore digital and startup opportunities in e-commerce, online marketing, online education, and agri-tech ventures.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

Limited Access to Finance

Women entrepreneurs often struggle to access loans because of a lack of collateral, limited credit history, and insufficient knowledge about financial programs. This makes it harder for them to start or grow their businesses.

Socio-Cultural Barriers

Traditional patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, and family obligations restrict women's mobility and willingness to take risks. Often, the lack of support from family and society discourages women from pursuing their entrepreneurial goals.

Lack of Education and Skills

Limited access to education and training facilities affects women's ability to run businesses effectively. Gaps in business management, marketing, and digital skills can hinder business sustainability.

Market Constraints

Women entrepreneurs face issues related to market access, branding, networking, and competition. Limited exposure to formal markets can lower their profitability and growth potential.

Legal and Institutional Barriers

Complicated regulations, lack of awareness about legal rights, and bureaucratic obstacles pose additional challenges, especially for women in the informal sector.

Government Initiatives Supporting Women Entrepreneurship in India

The Government of India has introduced numerous programs to support women entrepreneurship. The Stand-Up India Scheme encourages women to establish new businesses by providing bank loans. The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana offers financial support under different categories. Mahila E-Haat provides an online platform for women entrepreneurs to sell their products. The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) assists women through self-help groups and livelihood initiatives. The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) by NITI Aayog provides mentoring, networking, and funding support. Startup India gives special incentives and resources for women-led startups, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

Role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

Self-Help Groups play a crucial role in promoting women entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas. These groups help improve access to savings and loans, enhance skills through training, and encourage collective decision-making. They also boost women's negotiating power and access to markets, helping them establish and sustain small businesses effectively.

Role of Education and Training

Education and training are vital for boosting women's entrepreneurial skills. Programs in entrepreneurial education, vocational training, digital literacy, and skill development provide women with essential technical and management abilities. Additional services like incubation centers, mentorship programs, and field visits further assist women entrepreneurs in adopting new technologies and improving their business performance.

Success Stories and Impact

Across India, women entrepreneurs have shown incredible resilience and leadership. From rural women running agriculture-based businesses to urban women leading innovative startups, their success stories inspire others and create positive socio-economic change. These entrepreneurs have contributed to creating jobs, developing communities, and driving social progress.

Future Prospects

With growing digitalization, policy support, and increased awareness, women entrepreneurship

has outstanding potential for growth. Increasing focus on technology use, access to money, market integration, skills development, and gender-sensitive policies will further boost women's involvement in entrepreneurship. Supporting women-led ideas and startups will be essential for shaping the future economy.

CONCLUSION

The role of women in entrepreneurship is vital for achieving sustainable and inclusive development. Empowering women entrepreneurs leads to economic growth, social fairness, and national progress. Building a supportive environment through education, financial assistance, policy changes, institutional support, and positive societal shifts is crucial for realizing the full potential of women entrepreneurship and ensuring the overall development of the nation.

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