

# Women Entrepreneurs in India: A Study of Opportunities and Challenges

Vaishnavi Sharma

Research Scholar, School of Business

Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

Dr. Mamta Gaur

Professor, School of Business

Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

## **ABSTRACT**

Woman constitutes the family, which leads to the development of society and Nation. The social and economic development of women is necessary for the overall economic advancement of any society or a country. Entrepreneurship comprises venture activities that are the center of the recognition of various opportunities, creativity, and innovation in the production process and development of new business models and ventures. Entrepreneurship plays a major role in developing society of a fast-developing country like India.

In comparison to other countries, the event of women entrepreneurship is extremely low in India, especially in rural areas. However, middle-class women aren't too eager to alter their roles because of fear of social backlash. The growth is more visible among high families in urban areas. Rural women frequently have primary responsibility for agricultural production, additionally to domestic responsibilities and childcare. In developing countries like India where the economic status of women is extremely pathetic especially in rural areas and opportunities of earning are very less.

For establishing self-esteem and recognition in society, women are attracted to entrepreneurship. To sustain within the competitive market, businesses administered by women are mainly hooked into internal resources and their capabilities supported which they struggle to compete with the external environment.

The present paper endeavors to study the opportunities and challenges of women entrepreneurs. The study aims to analyze the factors that encourage women entrepreneurs. This study is based on secondary data collected from previous research papers, journals given by various research scholars, blogs, and websites. This study concludes that women entrepreneurs should be provided with special training facilities to overcome challenges and for developing their skills and talents.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, challenges, women entrepreneur, opportunities, women Empowerment, Economy, skill development, society.

## INTRODUCTION

### DEFINITIONS

#### • ENTREPRENEUR:

Entrepreneurs are a highly respected group in the developed world. They are the key to economic development. History is full of instances of individual entrepreneurs whose creativity has led to the industrialization of many nations. It conjures up visions of active, purposeful men and women accomplishing a wide variety of significant deeds. An entrepreneur is an important 'change agent' in every society. He bridges the gap between plan and execution.

#### • ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Entrepreneurship is neither a science nor an art. It is a practice and a key to economic development. But, as in all practices, like medicine or engineering, for instance, knowledge in entrepreneurship is a means to an end. It is not a 'flash of genius' but purposeful tasks that can be organized into systematic work. Etymologically, the term entrepreneur is derived from the French word entrepreneur who means to undertake. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines an entrepreneur as "an individual who bears the risk of operating a business in the face of uncertainty about future conditions".

Empowerment of women is important as their thoughts and their value systems cause the enhancement of an honest family, good society, and ultimately an honest nation. It is a well-known fact that women have played and continue to play a key role in the conservation of basic life support systems such as land, water, flora, and fauna. Women play a binary role, as a homemaker and as an income producer. They suffer from being economically and socially imperceptible. There is unceasing inequality and vulnerability faced by women in all fields like education, socio-economic, political, health care, etc. Today educated women do not want to restrict their lives in the four walls of the house. They need equal respect from their partners and family. However, women have to go a long way to achieve equal rights and position as their partners because traditions are deeply rooted in Indian society where the sociological set up has been a male-dominated one. Women are considered as the weaker sex and always made to depend on men in their family and outside world, throughout their life. They are not treated equally. While at least half the brainpower on earth belongs to women, But still women remains the world's most underutilized resource. Despite all the social barriers they standstill from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their achievements in their respective field. The transformation of the social structure of Indian society, in terms of increased educational status of women and the need for better living, obliged a change in the lifestyle of Indian women. Potential to learn quickly from her abilities, her persuasiveness, style of problem-solving, willingness to take risks, capacity to motivate people, knowing how to win and lose fluently are the strengths of the women Entrepreneurs. Women constitute nearly one half of the world's population having expansive potential but being unutilized for the economic development of the nation. The Indian situation is not an exception for this. The 2001 census of India estimated 0.53 million females against a complete population of 1.02 million. In India, women have remained as an untended section of the workforce. They were not considered equal to men. Women's access to land ownership is very limited. Illiteracy is another major reason why women are lagging behind men. Although small businesses owned by women have traditionally focused on fashion, food, tutoring fond and other services sector, but now women entrepreneurs are moving swiftly into construction, manufacturing, and other industrial fields. Women-owned businesses are now increasing in the economics of all countries. The hidden potential of women has gradually been changing with the increasing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. It means women have the knowledge, potential, skill, creativity, and adaptability to run a business venture successfully. Women entrepreneur is a person who accepts challenges to meet her personal need and become economically independent. There are religious, cultural, economic, social, and other factors existing in the society which are responsible for the emergence of the entrepreneurs.

#### • Women Entrepreneurs:

Women Entrepreneurship means not only an act of business ownership, but it also boosts the economy for everyone, and the empowered women can crash scarcity - not only for themselves, but for their families, societies, and countries too. The policymaker cannot ignore the reality that ladies are now a promising economic force. The modern world as well as the democratic economy is now balanced by the participation of both Men and Women.

Women entrepreneurs have been rising in all the segments of the economy which is more than 25% of all types of business. As per center for Women's Business Research, 2009 women entrepreneurs were increasing twice as fast as the other business from 1997 to 2002. During the 2008 economic depression, 5% of high potential women and 4% of high potential men left their employment to establish their business venture.

### TYPES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR

Women entrepreneurs be made as:

•**Chance Entrepreneurs:** These entrepreneurs start a business without any plans, goals, or plans. They turn out to snatch the opportunities and chances which they come-across.

•**Forced Entrepreneurs:** These entrepreneurs start a business due to some mishappening in their families like divorce, accident, or death of husband or father.

•**Created Entrepreneurs:** These entrepreneurs are properly recognized, motivated, inspired, and developed through EDPs as a part of a strategy to develop women as proficient entrepreneurs.

### ROLE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In traditional society, a woman's role is naturally restricted to the family. Since she is the bearer of children, she is fully occupied with her duties as a mother and housewife. This is no small feat, since the normal household could also be described as both a production and a consumption unit. The man's responsibility is to provide the household with the raw materials, but women convert them into consumable products, under unstable housing conditions, and employing rudimentary methods. Many factors like urbanization, technical progress, woman's education, etc., have exceedingly changed these conditions, even in developing countries like India. Gradually starting with the metropolitan areas and going back, the woman's role at home has become a little lighter due to technical progress. The production side of women's work at home is slowly decreasing, leading to a reduction of woman's role at home. Contemporary India is still predominantly a traditional society based on the norms of patriarchy. The extent and therefore the sort of female participation and what it means for her position within the family and society are closely determined by her location within the matrix of the family status hierarchy and the strata of economic. However, due to the growth of industrialization, urbanization, education and democratic system in the country, the tradition-bound Indian society is now undergoing a change and women are now seeking gainful employment in several fields in increasing numbers.

Women Entrepreneurship States	No of Units Registered	Rank	No of Women Entrepreneurs	Rank	Percentage
Tamil Nadu	9,618	1	2,930	2	30.36
Uttar Pradesh	7,980	2	3,180	1	39.84
Kerala	5,487	3	2,135	3	38.91
Punjab	4,791	4	1,618	4	33.77
Maharashtra	4,339	5	1,394	6	32.12
Gujarat	3,872	6	1,538	5	39.72
Karnataka	3,822	7	1,026	7	26.82
Madhya Pradesh	2,967	8	842	8	28.38
Other States and UTC	14,576	9	4,185	9	28.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,452</b>		<b>18,848</b>		<b>32.82</b>

Table : discloses that Tamil Nadu is the state first out of the total number of units registered in India. Regarding the number of women entrepreneurs in India, the first place goes to UP followed by Tamil Nadu which grasps the second place. It is understood from the table that Tamil Nadu has taken more efforts to improve the development and growth of women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu with the help of financial institutions and government agencies.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

**Bowen&Hisrich, (1986)**, evaluated and differentiated various research studies done on entrepreneurship and ladies entrepreneurship. It concludes various studies during this way that female entrepreneurs are quite well educated generally but management skills are missing, high in an indoor locus of control, more masculine, or instrumental than other women in their values likely to possess had entrepreneurial fathers, relatively likely to possess firstborn or only children, unlikely to start a business in traditionally male-dominated industries & experiencing a requirement of additional managerial training.

**Tovo, (1991)**, observed that self-employed women faced many hurdles in small scale business thanks to limited access to plug, resources, and capital. it's also evaluated that an outsized number of small enterprises serve one market segment which causes high competition to be fierce and costs to below. So, the products of small businesses immensely hooked into a limited number of wholesalers and suppliers. That's why women entrepreneurs economically vulnerable and exposing her to exploitation.

**Papisetty Rama &MohanaRao,(2004 )**, found within the research study that prime labor mobility, inadequate infrastructure, death of electricity, and delayed understanding of debtors were the most issues faced by women entrepreneurs.

**Damwad, (2007)**, discusses the experiences, initiatives & problems faced at five Nordic countries like Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland & Sweden towards women entrepreneurship. It considerably identifies few hurdles like financing, lack of data &skills in professional life, markets & entrepreneurial activity, work-life balance including lack of growth, and most significantly women as other groups are heterogeneous. The study compares early-stage entrepreneurial male & female activity among Nordic countries with an equivalent of the USA. Various programs & schemes are compared which are developed by Nordic countries & agencies that provide support to them.

**Singh, (2008)**, describes and identifies the explanations, factors that influence the entry of women in entrepreneurship. He illustrates issues & challenges and explains the hindrance within the growth of women entrepreneurship are mainly lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs, family responsibility, social denial as women entrepreneurs, gender discrimination, lack of network, low priority given by bankers to supply loans to women entrepreneurs. He recommended some measures like unlocking institutional framework, promoting micro-enterprises, projecting & pulling to grow & support the winners etc. Study prescribes for ensuring synergy among women related ministry, economic ministry & social & welfare development ministry of the govt of India.

**Lall&Sahai, (2008)**, conducted a study of multi-dimensional issues &challenges of women entrepreneurship& closed corporation. The study describes Psychographic variables just like the entrepreneurial challenges, degree of commitment and expansion plan, supported demographic variables. Data are collected by stratified sampling &convenience sampling from women entrepreneurs working within the populated area of Lucknow. The study also explains the business owner's characteristics as self-perception Entrepreneurial intensity, self-esteem, and operational problem for plans for growth & expansion.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper conceptual and Descriptive. The secondary data haven collected from different articles, journals, scholars, blogs, websites, etc.

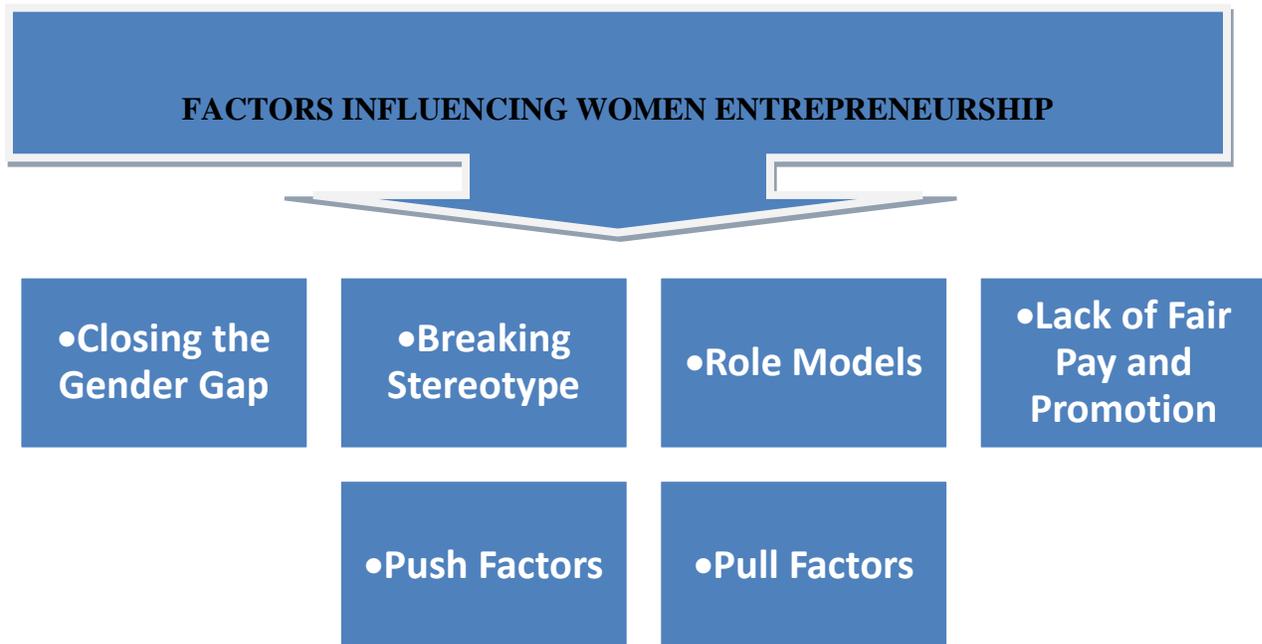
### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To ascertain the factors which encourage women to become entrepreneurs
- To explore the opportunities and challenges for women entrepreneurs.

## ANALYSIS

### FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship has its supremacy and advantages, but it is not free of barriers. It is observed that there are a large number of factors influence and contribute to the emergence of women entrepreneurship. Some of the factors are analyzed based on past studies which are as follows:



### Closing the Gender Gap

There are not just a few areas where women are the new and upcoming faces. This phenomenon is growing in many other fields. One of the attributing factors is the moderation of the gender gap. The separation in the allotment of different roles to each separate gender is melting quickly. The roles defined by society in the past are no longer troubling women.

The drive is fueled by the transforming attitude towards women in society as they are rising to challenges, problems, standing steadily against the wrong. The gap is now closing, it surprises few that women are the leaders of future businesses, but women still have to struggle to grab equal opportunities as men, but the race to win is a very close now, as women having greater chances to succeed.

**• Breaking Stereotype**

It's not only the comparison with men that has hampered the development and success of women until very recently. Previously, the numerous amount of stereotypes associated with women have limited them to their homes or inferior roles. However, women fought bravely against those stereotypes, broke the glass ceiling, and flew with majestic wings of courage and success.

The community had imposed various roles on women so there used to be a very few professions for women to choose from. With the possibility to break these stereotypes, women have reevaluated their roles. They no longer stick to the occupation that society expected them to stick to.

**• Role Models**

Mostly all of us have people who we look up as a positive example. They can be anyone who we know and interact and can be a part of our personal lives or someone famous who we never met or don't know personally. Contented with the emerging women who take on the authority to motivate and inspire young women, the responsibility of a role model has increased crucially. With successful women entrepreneurs like Sheryl Sandberg, Indra Nooyi, Melinda Gates, Oprah Winfrey, Angela Merkel, and Cher Wang motivating and influencing women around the world to fly and take the wheel in their hands.

**• Lack of Fair Pay and Promotion**

Women who are working as employees face many challenges, and the most common issue is the lack of fair pay and promotions. This is ruminative of the values and stereotypes that prevail in a business and the culture sustained by the management. The majority of women have complained about the problem but it continues to be a hindrance for women.

In expectations of not losing their jobs, women don't stand and fight against these unfair barriers. There are very few women willing to risk everything in an attempt to break these walls, but some do rise against the unfair pay and pursue building their ventures instead.

**• Push Factors**

Push factors include situations that push women to earn a living a method or the opposite. These are the situations when women don't have a choice but to earn, like the death of the breadwinner of the family, a sudden fall in the income, or a family income that is too low.

In such circumstances, some women have to work whether they are happy doing it or not. They'll do what it takes to care for their families. For some women, the solution is to push past barriers and build their firms.

**• Pull Factors**

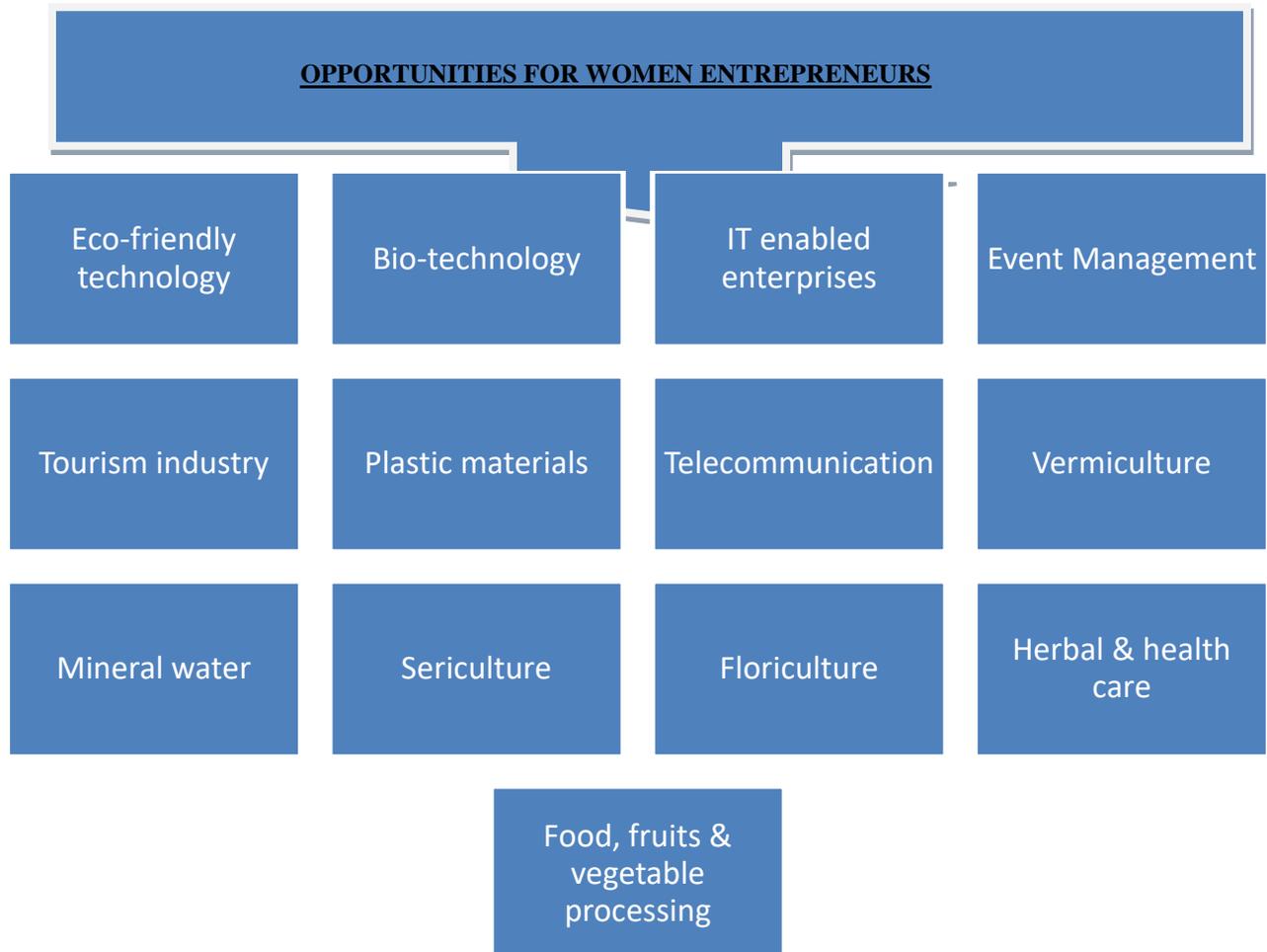
Pull factors attract women to the planet of business. They are the influences that motivate women and make them want to compete. A woman's desire to gain recognition, respect, importance, social status, and economic independence are some common pull factors. In addition to those factors, the Feminism movement is additionally influencing many ladies to prove that ladies can stand shoulder to shoulder with men and to cause a change in the perception of women and their roles, rights, and freedoms.

With an attitude of, "What men can do, women can do better," women are poised to run the world. Armed with naturally better social skills and increasing opportunities for higher levels of education, women don't get to recoil from starting something of their own and making it a success.

Giving men a run their money, women have emerged because of the modern-day heroes within the business world, boosting the slacking economy and creating jobs. The ever-growing number of women entrepreneurs will still grow, and ladies in business are here to remain. The wheels have been set in motion and there's no looking back from this trends.

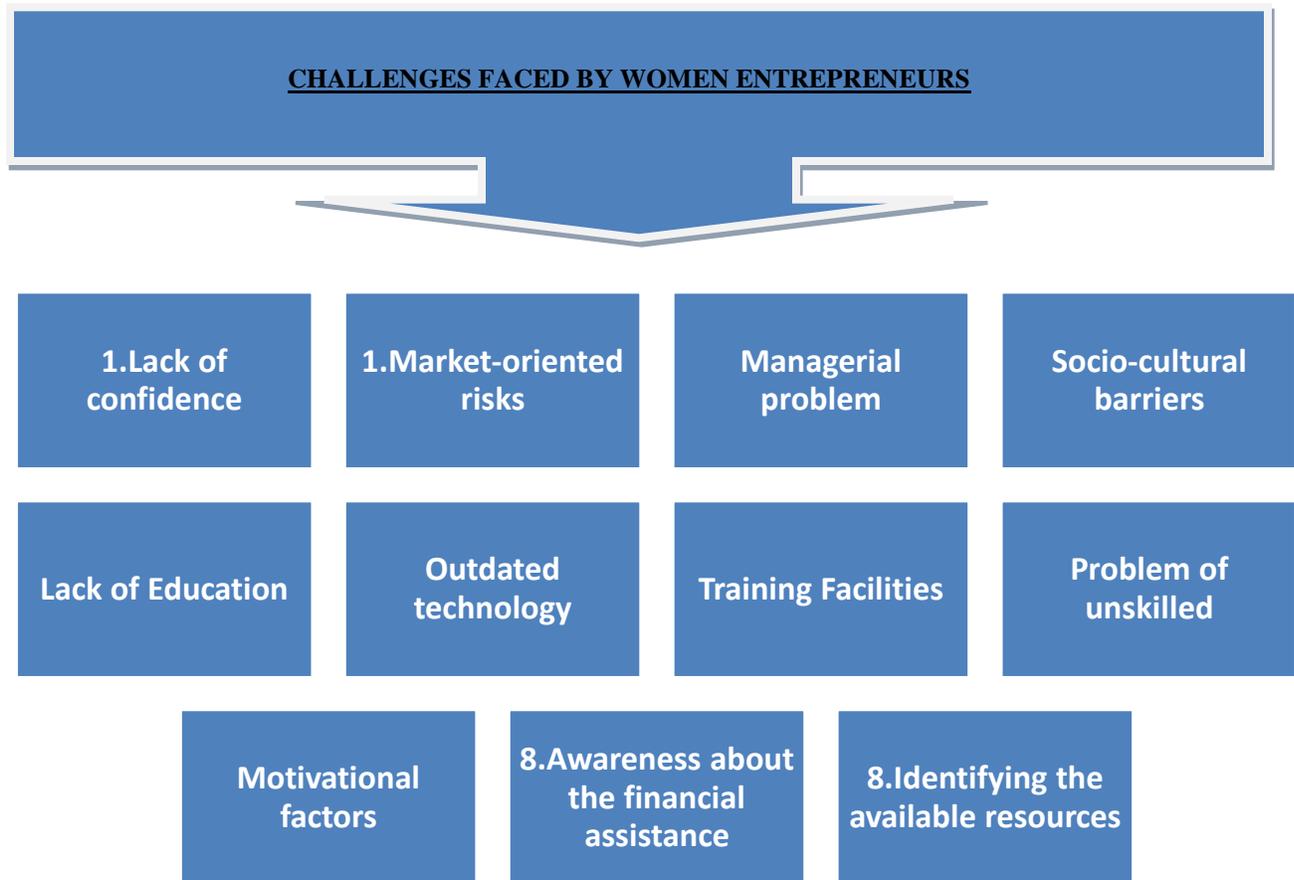
### A. OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women entrepreneurs are the prime caretakers and contribute to the social well-being to tap the opportunities in entrepreneurship. They have a lot of responsibilities towards social betterment. Nowadays women entrepreneurs are performing extremely fantastic. Some of the opportunities are analyzed based on previous research.



## B. CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

It has been observed that women face a lot of issues, challenges, struggles, and obstacles in their personal life. When they turn into a venture they have to go through many problems for every success. Efforts are made by them so that they can be recognized positively. Some of the challenges are as follows:



- **Lack of Confidence**

It is popular in India when any women-run business it is her family members who stand beside her, also there are some cases found where women are entrepreneurs on just papers and her business is run by the male member of her family this happens due to existence of male ego and she is not allowed to work which again causes lack of confidence in her. This number is decreasing as women are facing and coping with such challenges with the coming years but still, this exists somewhere that causes challenges for women entrepreneurs because they are forced to feel that they do not possess enough skills.

- **Lack of Education:**

When we talk about India's women illiteracy, there is still a 60 percent illiteracy rate of women in India. Illiteracy does not hinder women in establishing a business but they face problems in running it because due to

illiteracy they lack knowledge about business, technologies, skills required, and certain developments that are needed to be changed on time.

- **Socio-Cultural Barriers –**

In-country like India it is believed and at some places forced for women to take them home as its priority. The women faces family and personal obligation which stop them from doing business in the outside world. Although there have been more than 60 percent families now who are allowing them to go and work outside the house but they are expected to handle both family and office together which creates a burden on her and become difficult for her to manage things together, due to such pressures she is not able to work well as entrepreneurs.

- **Market-Oriented Risks**

As women face mobility issues in the market they mostly depend on middleman which increases expenses also they are not able to capture and understand the market so well which hinders them to understand the market changes causing them to not able to cope up with services.

- **Outdated Technology:**

There are business which is small in size as they lack enough capital and capacity forcing them to have no or minute changes in technologies due to which these organizations do not develop with the development and this hinders the quality of products.

- **Motivational Factors**

Women requires a lot of self-motivation to be an entrepreneur. As women have faced and are pressurized to understand that they lack in establishing such business. running and developing them need a high amount of motivation so that they adapt to changes and feel motivated to take risks.

- **Problem of Unskilled:**

Women entrepreneurship if is located in backward areas or say rural areas it is easy for them to find unskilled labor but it makes it difficult for them to have skilled workers. If any business lacks skilled labor than it faces productivity, deterioration of quality, an increase in wastages, and a rise in other overhead costs that harm the profitability.

- **Identifying the available resources**

Women faces problem in collecting and managing resources such as assets, mankind and business materials. They are not able to understand the marketing and financial needs because of a lack of education, technically unsound and professionally unqualified. there are many associations, institutions, and the schemes available from the government side to run women entrepreneurs which are needed to be understood by the women so that they can be effectively and efficiently used by such entrepreneurs.

- **Awareness about the financial assistance**

Various institutions provide financial help to the women business in the form of incentives, loans, schemes, etc. about which women entrepreneurs are not still aware which hinders the development of their business.

- **Training Facilities:**

Women require training facilities to understand and run entrepreneurship in good sense. Such facilities are not easily available in rural areas which hinders them to feel good in understanding and developing their skills and knowledge.

### CONCLUSION

From the various Articles and research papers considered various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. These incorporate balance between career and family, male-dominated society, socio-cultural hurdles, illiteracy, lack of marketing and entrepreneurial skills lack of financial assistance, death of technical knowledge, lack of self-confidence as well as mobility constraints. Now women are trying to come out of the load of housework and give way to their imagination, creativity, and entrepreneurship. Social and political evolutions in India have also been accountable for determining the role of women in a changing society. The government Policies, schemes have provided measures and encouraged women entrepreneurs. Today women are showing interest to involve in Entrepreneurship.

Through this paper, it is analyzed that the development of women entrepreneurship is a challenging outlook in India. It is also found that Indian women are unaware and incapable of utilizing the opportunities availed by the government and other agencies for the development of women entrepreneurship. Despite these challenges, the Government is helping women with various schemes and policies. But still, there is need of improvement in initiatives and contributions which could be taken into deliberation for evolution and development of women as an entrepreneur by providing them with special training facilities for developing their knowledge, talents and skill

### REFERENCES

- [1] Sushma K. C. (2007). Analysis of Entrepreneurship Development of Women through EDP Trainings. Thesis Master of Science, Department of Agricultural Extension Education Dharwad Agriculture University, Karnataka.
- [2] Goyal, Meenu, and Parkash, Jai. (2011). Women Entrepreneurship in India-Pr
- [3] Shankarnarayna (2007), "Entrepreneurship: The Spirit of Tomorrow", Research Paper at Seminar, Abeda Inamdar Senior College, Pune.
- [4] Dr. Devarapalli gondola Rao (2018): Growth and development of women entrepreneurs in India challenges and empowerment **Volume 3; Issue 1; January 2018; Page No. 235-242**
- [5] Brush,c. (1992). "research on women business owners: past trends a new perspective and future directions", entrepreneurship theory and practice 16(4), 5-30.
- [6]Segal, G.; Borgia, D. and Schoenfeld, J. (2005). The Motivation to become an Entrepreneur. International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research, 11(1): 42-57.
- [7]Singh, Surinder Pal, (2008), The Emergence Of Women-owned Businesses As An Economic Force In India, presented at Special Conference in Indian School of Business, Hyderabad of the Strategic Management Society, December 12-14, 2008.
- [8]SHABBIR, A., & Di Gregorio, S. (1996). An examination of the relationship between women's personal goals and structural factors influencing their decision to start a business: The case of Pakistan. Journal of Business Venturing, 11(6), 507-529. 48. WHEELER, C. (1995).
- [9]Decarlo, J. F; Lyons, P. R. (1979), A comparison of selected personal characteristics of minority & non-minority female entrepreneurs. Journal of Small Business Management, Morgantown, v. 17, n. 4, p. 222-229.
- [10]Gaur, G.D., and J.L. Singh (Article), (2002) – The Growth of the informal sector in developing economy with special reference to India in the book – Women in Unorganized sector: The concept of unorganized
- [11]Vinze M (1987), 'Women Entrepreneurs in India: A Socio-Economic Study of Delhi,1975- 85', Mittal Publication, Delhi

[12] Advani, S. (2013). Back to Basics: Businessman vs Entrepreneur. Allen, S., and Truman, C. (1993). Women in Business: Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs. Routledge: London. annual global entrepreneurship symposium. sector: Problems and prospects” Delhi: Sunrise Publication. Page- 173-174.

[13] Dhameja, S. K. (2002). Women Entrepreneurs: Opportunities, performance, and problems. India: Deep and Deep Publications.

[14] Gichuki, C. N., Mulu-Mutuku, M., & Kinuthia, L. N. (2014). Performance of women-owned enterprises accessing credit from village credit and savings associations in Kenya. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 4(1)

[15] Goyal, P., & Yadav, V. (2014). To be or not to be a woman entrepreneur in a developing country? *Psychosociological Issues in Human Resource Management*, 2(2), 68–78

[16] Henry, C., Foss, L., & Ahl, H. (2016). Gender and entrepreneurship research- A review of Methodological approaches. *International Small Business Journal*, 34(3), 217–241

[17] Hughes, K. D., Jennings, J. E., Brush, C. G., Carter, S., & Welter, F. (2012). Extending women's entrepreneurship research in new directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 36, 429–442

[18] Jennings, J. E., & Brush, C. G. (2013). Research on women entrepreneurs: challenges to the broader entrepreneurship literature? *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 663–715.

#### Websites

<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/06/women-will-rule-the-world>

<http://www.imer.com/>

<http://www.smallindustryindia.com./ssiindia/census/sumryes.htm>

<http://www.smallindustryindia.com/>

<http://www.forbes.com/>

<http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/small/Sm-Z/Women-Entrepreneurs.html>

<http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/small/Sm-Z/Women-Entrepreneurs.html>