



## A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR ON SOCIAL CHANGE IN MADURAI DISTRICT

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### **Abstract**

*Women entrepreneurs face several challenges in doing business, as they are required to balance dual roles involving both family responsibilities and entrepreneurial activities. Family obligations such as look after the child and the parents and in-laws significantly affect their ability to dedicate time and energy to business operations. In addition, many women entrepreneurs experience limited financial and family support, persistent gender bias in the business environment, restricted networking opportunities and reduced social engagement. To overcome these challenges, women entrepreneurs must demonstrate courage and self-confidence. They require essential skills such as capital acquisition and fund management, marketing competencies to promote and sell products, financial and digital literacy. Furthermore, soft skills including leadership, problem solving ability, decision making, adaptability and resilience are critical for sustaining and growing their enterprises. This study analyses the demographic variables of women entrepreneurs. A descriptive research design is adopted, and data are collected using a random sampling technique. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool is employed to identify differences among various categories of women entrepreneurs and variations within groups. The findings of the study highlight the key skill sets required for entrepreneurial success and identify areas where women entrepreneurs need further skill development. The study also examines strategies for achieving work life balance and evaluates the impact of skill enhancement in overcoming business hurdles and achieving long term business success.*

**Keywords:** *Women entrepreneur skill set, Decision making financial challenge, leadership, work-life balance, business success.*

### **Introduction**

Women entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful instrument for fostering social change in developing economies. Beyond economic contributions, women entrepreneurs play a transformative role in reshaping social structures by challenging traditional gender roles, enhancing women's status in society, and promoting inclusive development. The growing participation of women in entrepreneurial activities has resulted in increased self-confidence, leadership qualities, and decision-making power, thereby influencing family, community, and societal norms. In India, women entrepreneurs operate across diverse sectors such as micro, small, and medium enterprises, self-help group-based enterprises, and service-oriented businesses. Their entrepreneurial engagement has not only improved economic independence but has also contributed significantly to social change in terms of education, health awareness, gender equality, and social mobility. Despite these developments, the extent and nature of social change brought about by women entrepreneurs remain underexplored, particularly at the micro and community levels.

### **Women Entrepreneurship**

Most women are employed in corporate organizations, schools, colleges, industries, and government sectors, as society and parents often encourage them to choose these professions. These sectors are



generally preferred due to perceptions of safety, stability and comfort. Some women take on the role of homemakers, dedicating their time to managing household responsibilities. However, a growing number of women are increasingly interested in entrepreneurship, aspiring to earn income while also achieving professional independence and business success. In recent years, the government has actively encouraged women to engage in entrepreneurial activities by providing various support schemes, training programs and financial assistance.

### **Need for the Study**

Although several studies have examined women entrepreneurship from an economic perspective, limited research has focused on its broader social impact. Social change indicators such as empowerment, leadership, participation in decision-making, changes in societal attitudes, and community development have not been adequately analyzed. Moreover, regional and district-level empirical studies are scarce. Hence, there is a need to systematically examine how women entrepreneurs influence social change and identify the factors that enhance or hinder this impact.

### **Entrepreneur's Skills Overcome The Difficulties**

Women entrepreneurs can overcome business hurdles by continuously developing and strengthening their skills. Building a strong brand image and establishing goodwill within the industry are essential for long-term business sustainability. Maintaining quality standards helps enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. By effectively leveraging digital resources, women entrepreneurs can increase product visibility and reach a wider audience. Leadership ability, digital competence, and effective communication play a vital role in building customer trust, increasing sales, and improving profitability. Sound investment decision-making and the ability to address challenges proactively further contribute to business growth.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Women entrepreneurs are increasingly recognized as agents of change; however, their role in driving social transformation has not been fully documented. Social barriers, cultural norms, limited institutional support, and gender bias continue to affect the ability of women entrepreneurs to bring about meaningful social change. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is to analyze the extent to which women entrepreneurs contribute to social change and the challenges that limit their impact.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on women entrepreneurs engaged in entrepreneurial activities across selected sectors. It examines their role in promoting social change at the household, community, and societal levels. The study covers social dimensions such as empowerment, leadership, decision-making, education awareness, health consciousness, and social status.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the socio-demographic profile of women entrepreneurs.
2. To analyze the role of women entrepreneurs in enhancing social empowerment.
3. To examine the impact of women entrepreneurship on decision-making power within households.
4. To evaluate changes in social status and leadership roles of women entrepreneurs.
5. To identify social and institutional factors influencing the social impact of women entrepreneurship.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will provide valuable insights for policymakers, academic researchers, and development agencies. The study will help in understanding the non-economic contributions of women entrepreneurs and assist in designing effective policies and programs to enhance their role in social transformation.

### **Women's Empowerment in India**

When we look at ancient Indian texts and scriptures, we see empowered women. Moreover, they were the axis around which the civilizations used to thrive. But a series of attacks and invasions posed a threat to the civilization. Women were exposed to all sorts of torture and abuse during this dark phase. Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that we are still fighting for empowering women around the world. With every passing day, the issue is coming right to the fore. In the wake of this, the government of India has started many women empowerment schemes in India. These schemes are going to propel women into the driver's seat fostering the way for women-led development.

### **Need for Women Empowerment**

1. Women are 50% of the population They can add immense value to the Indian economy in various fields.
2. An educated women has the Know-how and the means to uplift society.
3. Having more earning members is a boon for a poor family. Empowering the woman of the family can help eradicate poverty, especially multidimensional poverty.
4. The rights promised by our constitution emphasis social justice. Empowering a woman can bring an end to patriarchy which is deeply ingrained in our society.
5. Empowered women can add value to preventive healthcare leading to lower diseases and healthcare expenses.

### **List of Government's schemes for Women's empowerment in India.**

1. **Udyogini scheme:** The Udyogini Scheme focuses on empowering Women by offering financial assistance to start or expand their businesses. This scheme supports a wide range of industries, particular;y in rural areas, and provides loans at concessional rates. Women from economically weaker sections can benefit significantly from this initiative.
2. **Stand Up India Scheme:** The Stand Up India Scheme aims to support women and SC/ST entrepreneurs by offering loans between Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 Crore. This initiative helps women establish enterprises in manufacturing, trading , or service sectors. Its goal is to enhance financial independence and encourage entrepreneurship among underrepresented groups.
3. **AnnapurnaScheme:**The Annapurna Scheme is designed for women entrepreneurs who want to start food based businesses. Under this scheme,women can access loans of upto Rs.50000 to purchase equipment and raw materials. The scheme promotes women-led businesses in the food industry, contributing to both economic growth and self-reliance.
4. **Mudra Yojana Scheme:** The Mudra Yojana Scheme is one of the most popular schemes for women empowerment, offering collateral-free loans to small businesses. Women entrepreneurs can avail loans under three categories – Shishu, Kishor and Tarun- depending on the stage and scale of their business. The initiative provides financial stability and boosts the growth of MSMEs.
5. **MahilaUdyamNidhi Scheme:** The MahilaUdyamNidhi Scheme, offered by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) Supports Women Entrepreneurs in setting up new ventures or expanding existing businesses. The scheme provides financial assistance of up to Rs.10 lakh

with flexible repayment options. It encourages innovation and business growth among women in the MSME Sector.

6. PradhanMantriRozgarYojana (PMRY): The Pradhan MantriRozgarYojana offers financial assistance to unemployed women who wish to start their own businesses. It provides loans of up to Rs.2 lakh for businesses. In manufacturing, trade and Services. The initiative is a significant step toward reducing unemployment and fostering entrepreneurship among women.
7. Mahila Coir Yojana: The Mahila Coir Yojana focuses on empowering rural women through coir-based industries. Under this Scheme, Women can receive financial assistance for purchasing equipment and training to produce coir products. It encourages self-employment in rural areas, contributing to the overall economic development of women.
8. TREAD Scheme: (Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development). The Tread Scheme is designed to support women entrepreneurs from economically weaker sections. The scheme provides financial assistance, skill development, and counseling to help women establish successful businesses. By fostering entrepreneurial skills, it ensures the sustainable growth of women-led enterprises.

### **Alternative Funding Options for Women entrepreneurs:**

Women entrepreneurs in India have several alternative funding options beyond government schemes to support their businesses in the MSME sector. These include:

1. Bank Loans.
2. Microfinance Institutions (MFIs).
3. Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).
4. Angel Investors and Venture Capitalists (VCs).
5. Crowdfunding platforms.
6. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Funds.
7. Self – Help Groups (SHGs) and Cooperatives.
8. Grants from NGOs and International Agencies.

During the financial Year 2024 – 25, under the Khadi programme of KVIC, Women entrepreneurs are considered a “Special Category” under PMEGP and receive higher subsidies (25-35% on project costs) and are only required to contribute 5% of the project cost, compared to 10% for the general category. In addition to MSMEs, the Government of India has taken a range of steps towards women empowerment and safety.

### **Challenges faced by Women Entrepreneurs:**

The Global Gender Gap Report from the World Economic Forum indicates that while India has made slight progress in bridging gender parity, it continues to rank low globally. Economic inequality remains a significant factor, widening the gap for women across various aspects of life, There are some Key challenges that women in India face:

**Limited Access to Finance:** According to a 2022 report by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), nearly 90% of women entrepreneurs in India have never accessed credit from formal financial institutions. This gap became even more evident during the 2020 lockdown, where 72% of women-led businesses reported have no financial reserves, compared to 53% of their male counterparts.

Moreover, women in India receive credit equivalent to only 27% of their total deposits, while men secure loans amounting to 52% of their deposits. This disparity reflects systematic biases, where financial institutions often fail to provide equal lending opportunities to women.

**Limited Access to Professional networks:** For many women entrepreneurs in India, the lack of professional networks remains a significant challenge. A Survey by Google and Bain revealed that 49% of Women reported limited professional support due to restricted access to formal and informal networking opportunities. These networks are often crucial for mentorship, collaboration and business growth leaving many women at a disadvantage.

1. **Balancing Family Responsibilities:** In India, societal expectations often place women in the dual role of caretakers at home and professionals at work. Regardless of their entrepreneurial or workplace commitments, women are expected to manage household responsibilities efficiently. This constant struggling can compromise their performance growth, making it essential for women to redefine these expectations and prioritize their goals without succumbing to the “Superwoman” stereotype.
2. **Lack of Proper Training:** A lack of structured knowledge and training continues to hold back many women entrepreneurs. Bridging this gap with targeted training programs can empower women with the tools and confidence needed to thrive in their ventures. By addressing these challenges, India can take significant strides toward gender equality in entrepreneurship and ensure women are empowered to contribute meaningfully to the economy.

## Review of Literature

### Impact of Women Entrepreneurship on Social Change – Recent Studies

BazánValque et al. (2025) examined how socioeconomic conditions affect women’s entrepreneurial engagement using a structural model (PLS-SEM). The study found that female entrepreneurship not only supports income generation and economic growth but also transforms cultural norms and perceptions about women’s roles in society. Women’s improved access to productive resources and increased leadership capacities contribute to social change, especially in historically excluded communities. This work highlights entrepreneurship as a dynamic mechanism for personal and societal transformation rather than just economic activity.

Gochhait, Lenka, and Salamzadeh (2025) reviewed literature on how technology empowers women in social entrepreneurship. They report that digital adoption enables women entrepreneurs to access resources, networks, and markets, leading to broader social effects such as inclusive community participation and skill development. Technology thus acts as a catalyst for women’s economic and social empowerment, helping overcome long-standing gender barriers.

A significant study by Gacisan et al. (2024) examined the impact of microfinance and entrepreneurial engagement among rural Self-Help Group (SHG) women in India. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers found that participation in entrepreneurial activities positively influenced women’s economic, social, and psychological empowerment. Specifically, women engaged in SHG enterprises reported improved social status, more active community participation, and greater decision-making within households — clear indicators of social change driven by entrepreneurship.

Dale and Saha (2023) conducted a systematic literature review on digital women entrepreneurship, highlighting how women adopt strategic management approaches to compete in digital markets. The study underscores that digital inclusion and strategic decision-making help women realize economic and social gains through entrepreneurship. Women leverage networks and peer relationships to overcome cultural and socioeconomic limitations, thus influencing business performance and broader social participation.

Pujari and Kamble (2022) provided a comprehensive literature review of women’s entrepreneurship development through MSMEs. Their analysis reveals that entrepreneurial engagement contributes significantly to women’s empowerment across economic, social, and domestic spheres. The study noted that women’s increased participation in MSMEs enhances their decision-making power, autonomy, and social status within family and community contexts, while also highlighting persistent structural barriers like financial constraints and patriarchal norms.

**Research Methodology:** The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Both primary and secondary data will be used. Primary data will be collected from women entrepreneurs through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data will be sourced from journals, reports, books, and government publications. Appropriate statistical tools will be applied for data analysis.

**Table No 1.1: Classifications of Respondents From Selected Taluk In Madurai District**

Taluks in Madurai	No. of Respondents	Percentage from each Taluk
Madurai North	75	25%
Madurai South	75	25%
Usilampatti	75	25%
Thirumangalam	75	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Results And Analysis

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical methods are utilized to describe the demographic attributes of the respondents using percentage analysis, encompassing variables such as experience and educational qualifications.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant association between socio-demographic characteristics and the level of social empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

### Test Applied: Chi-Square Test

**Table 1.1: Association between Educational Qualification and Social Empowerment**

Educational Qualification	Low	Moderate	High	Total
School	22	38	20	80
Graduate	14	56	70	140
Post-Graduate	4	28	48	80
Total	40	122	138	300

**Table 1.2**

Chi-square Test Results(Statistic)	Value
Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )	<b>32.684</b>
Degrees of freedom	<b>4</b>
Asymp.Sig(p-value)	<b>0.000</b>

**Interpretation:** The Chi-Square value of **32.684** is significant at the **5% level (p < 0.05)**. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Inference:** There is a significant association between educational qualification and social empowerment of women entrepreneurs. Higher education leads to greater social empowerment and contributes significantly to social change.

**Hypothesis 2**

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in household decision-making power before and after women entrepreneurship.

**Test Applied: Paired Sample t-Test**

**Table 1.3: Paired Samples Statistics**

Decision-making	Mean	N	Std.Dev
Before Entrepreneurship	2.84	300	0.62
After Entrepreneurship	3.91	300	0.58

**Table 1.4(Paired samples Test)**

t	df	Sig.(2 tailed)
21.437	299	0.000

**Interpretation:** The calculated *t* value (21.437) is significant at the 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Inference:** There is a significant improvement in household decision-making power after entrepreneurship. **Hence,** women entrepreneurship positively influences family-level social change.

**Hypothesis 3**

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in social empowerment levels based on educational qualification.

**Test Applied: One-Way ANOVA**

**Table 1.5: Descriptive Statistics**

Edn.Qualification	Mean	Std.Deviation
School level	3.12	0.54
Graduate	3.74	0.48
Post - Graduate	4.02	0.41

**Table 1.6: ANOVA Results**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	26.438	2	13.219	48.673	0.000
Within Groups	80.692	297	0.272		
Total	107.130	299			

**Interpretation:** The F-value (48.673) is significant at the 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Inference:**Educational qualification significantly influences social empowerment, with higher-educated women experiencing greater empowerment and leadership roles.

**Hypothesis 4**

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference in social status and leadership roles based on years of entrepreneurial experience.

**Test Applied: One-Way ANOVA**

**Table 1.7: Descriptive Statistics**

Years of Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation
Below 5 years	3.28	0.51
5 – 10 years	3.81	0.47
Above 10 years	4.09	0.44

**Table 1.8: ANOVA Results**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.962	2	9.481	39.217	0.000
Within Groups	71.824	297	0.242		
Total	90.786	299			

**Interpretation:** The ANOVA result is statistically significant at the **5% level**.

**Inference:** Women with greater entrepreneurial experience enjoy higher social status and leadership positions, indicating sustained social transformation over time.

**Hypothesis 5**

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant association between institutional support and social impact of women entrepreneurship.

**Test Applied: Chi-Square Test**

**Table 1.9: Institutional Support vs Social Impact**

Institutional Support	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Low	34	22	9	65
Moderate	18	74	53	145
High	6	28	56	90
Total	58	124	118	300

**Table 1.10: Chi-Square Test**

Chi-square	<b>41.296</b>
df	4
Sig.	0.000

**Interpretation:** The Chi-Square value is significant at the **5% level**.

**Inference:** Institutional support has a strong influence on the social impact of women entrepreneurship, emphasizing the role of government schemes, finance, and training.

The hypothesis-wise SPSS analysis clearly establishes that **women entrepreneurship significantly contributes to social change** by:

1. Enhancing social empowerment.
2. Increasing household decision-making power.
3. Improving leadership roles and social status.
4. Strengthening institutional and community engagement.

## Findings

The results of the study clearly show that women entrepreneurship plays a powerful role in bringing positive social change in the lives of women. Firstly, education makes a significant difference in the level of social empowerment. Women with higher educational qualifications, especially graduates and post-graduates, were found to be more socially empowered than those with only school-level education. Education appears to build confidence, awareness, communication skills, and leadership ability. It enables women to participate more actively in social and community activities.

Secondly, there is a noticeable improvement in women's role within the household after they become entrepreneurs. The study shows that women gain greater decision-making power in family matters once they start earning and managing their own businesses. This financial independence strengthens their voice and increases their respect within the family.

Thirdly, empowerment levels vary significantly depending on educational background. Women with higher education reported stronger social status and leadership qualities. This suggests that education not only improves economic capacity but also enhances self-belief and social recognition.

The study also highlights the importance of experience. Women who have been in business for a longer period enjoy greater social status and leadership positions. Over time, entrepreneurship helps women build networks, confidence, and credibility in society. This indicates that social transformation is not immediate but develops gradually with sustained effort.

Finally, institutional support plays a crucial role in increasing the social impact of women entrepreneurship. Women who receive financial assistance, training, and government support schemes experience greater empowerment and community influence. Support systems clearly act as a foundation that enables women to grow and succeed.

Overall, the findings confirm that women entrepreneurship is not only about income generation. It is a pathway to social empowerment, stronger family participation, leadership development, and broader community change.

**Suggestions:** Based on the findings, several practical suggestions can be made to further strengthen women entrepreneurship and social empowerment:

1. **Encourage Higher Education for Women:** Since education significantly enhances empowerment, efforts should be made to promote higher education among girls and women. Scholarships and awareness programs can support this goal.
2. **Provide Continuous Skill Development:** Regular training programs in entrepreneurship, financial management, digital skills, and leadership should be organized to build confidence and competence among women entrepreneurs.
3. **Strengthen Institutional and Financial Support:** Government agencies and financial institutions should simplify loan procedures and increase awareness about available schemes. Easy access to credit and training can help women sustain and expand their businesses.
4. **Promote Mentorship and Networking Opportunities:** Experienced entrepreneurs can guide new women entrepreneurs through mentorship programs. Networking platforms can also create opportunities for collaboration and growth.
5. **Encourage Family and Community Support:** Awareness programs should be conducted to change traditional mindsets and encourage families to support women in their entrepreneurial journey.



6. **Focus on Rural and Less-Educated Women:** Special initiatives should be introduced for women from rural and underprivileged backgrounds to ensure inclusive development.

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