

Women Entrepreneurship: An Energized Mission for India's Development

Dr. Pragya Dheer¹, Dr. Shreya Bhootra² & Dr. Jyoti Chaudhery^{3*}

¹Associate Professor, Department of Management, University of Kota, Kota, Rajasthan, India.

^{2,3}Guest Faculty, Department of Management, University of Kota, Kota, Rajasthan, India.

*Corresponding Author: chaudharyj908@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurship is a powerful aspect for the India's development, acting as a significant driver of economic growth, social change, and empowerment. Women empowerment increased through skills, talents and innovative potential for substantial progress across various sectors. This paper delves into the critical function of entrepreneurship in supporting women to breach age-old hurdles and engage meaningfully in economic growth. The study exemplifies & observed the impact of education, capital availability and enabling networks on the power of women entrepreneurs. It also emphasises on how stereotypes norms are broken and exhibition of innovation within society. It presents both opportunities and challenges available for women to succeed in the entrepreneurial landscape. The challenges like less capital funding, social & cultural factors, and targeted policy actions. To support women's empowerment and entrepreneurship, it is necessary to implement planning with supportive ecosystem, promote access to finance addressing societal norms, facilitating networking and collaboration and implementing supportive government policies. Overall, women entrepreneurs have the potential to energized India's mission to achieve Vikshit Bharat 2047. As per the government udyam registration portal and udyamassit platform (UAP), 3,11 crore women lead the businesses and registered till now. The increasing number of successful women leading startups and the growing recognition of their contributions are promising signs of the transformative power of women entrepreneurship in India.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Women Empowerment, Social & Economic Development, Top Women-Led Enterprises & Gender Equality.

Introduction

The Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Economic Development Economic growth is the fuel, but women-led entrepreneurship is the engine that converts that growth into true economic development. While growth is a numerical increase in GDP, development is the broader, qualitative, and long-term evolution of a society.

- **Beyond the Role in GDP**

While women-owned businesses contribute significantly to a nation's Gross Domestic Product, their impact goes beyond the balance sheet. They diversify the marketplace and introduce innovation in sectors that are often overlooked, such as social enterprises and sustainable consumer goods.

- **Improved Living Standards and Health**

Statistics consistently show that women entrepreneurs reinvest a higher percentage of their earnings back into their families and communities. This creates a direct link between business success and improved nutrition, healthcare, and education for the next generation.

- **Financial Literacy and Empowerment**

For many women, starting a business is the primary gateway to financial literacy. Managing a venture requires mastering credit, investment, and savings—skills that provide women with the agency to make independent life choices and secure their financial futures.

- **Reducing Income Inequality**

Women entrepreneurs are a powerful force in reducing income inequality. By entering the workforce as owners rather than just employees, they bridge the gender pay gap and often provide more equitable working environments for other women, fostering a more balanced distribution of wealth.

- **Employment and Job Creation**

Female-led SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) are massive engines for employment creation. They often provide flexible work environments and entry-level opportunities that help integrate marginalized groups into the formal economy.

- **A Tremendous Shift in Structural Change**

The rise of the female entrepreneur ensures a structural change in the economy. It moves a society away from traditional, male-dominated industrial models toward a more inclusive, service-and-tech-oriented economy. This shift challenges cultural norms and redefines the "face" of leadership in the global market.

Women Entrepreneurs as Development Catalysts

Driving the GDP "Boost": Growth is a numbers game, and women are winning it. Recent 2024 data indicates that by closing the gender gap in entrepreneurship, countries like India could boost their GDP by nearly \$700 billion by 2025.

Improved Living Standards & the "Family Reinvestment" Rule one of the most profound "qualitative" shifts in development is how money is spent.

- The Rule of Reinvestment: International studies (World Bank, 2025) show that women entrepreneurs reinvest up to 90% of their income back into their families and communities (compared to 30–40% for men). This directly improves health and nutrition outcomes, ensuring the "long-term process" of development is passed to the next generation.

Reducing Inequality through Job Creation

- Closing the Gap: Female-led firms are more likely to hire female employees, helping to close the 11% gender employment gap seen globally in recent years.
- Case Study: Initiatives like the "eTrade for Women" (UNCTAD, 2025) have supported over 450 digital entrepreneurs across 65 countries, creating a "domino effect" of employment in rural and digital sectors.

Financial Literacy & Structural Change: A major shift comes in structure, when women move from basic or necessary to formal and professional work/businesses. Till now (April, 2026), over 40% of small business registration in current markets by women. Structure Change: Women have changed the structure of society by joining Technical and Manufacturing industries. In today's global economy, women entrepreneurs are no longer a mere phenomenon but have become a crucial element of entrepreneurship in India. Women have now become not only passive players but also active participants who start, run, and expand their business ventures using sound judgment and innovation.

This article examines how women entrepreneurs not only drive economic development but also bring about social change. Indian women presently contribute approx 18% to GDP and also have potential to contribute an additional \$700-770 billion by 2025-2026 if the gender gap is eradicated. Women are changed and moved from traditional sectors to growing sectors like e-commerce, IT, bio-tech etc. Female leading ventures are creating a chain of effect on health and education. As per the research by Clinton Global Initiative (UN) shows women invest up to 90% of their income for their family. Women's

main concern are health, education and nutrition as per the research. Women entrepreneurs are hiring other women and directly addressing income disparity and providing routes to escape from out-dated employment barriers set by society and communities. Mudra Yojana and other Women Entrepreneurship Platforms provide the financial literacy to women to move from borrower to builder.

Ultimately, the growth of the woman entrepreneurs is just not an economic trend, it is a social revolution. It ensures sustainable growth and improving standard of living for all. In India, women entrepreneurs are recognized not only as participants in the market, but as "Real life heroes" who grow businesses. They have become one of the main source for the nation's growth.

Challenges to Women Entrepreneurs

- Limited access to credit
- Work-life balance and unequal responsibilities/burdens
- Stereotypes and gender bias
- Mobility and safety issues restricting market access
- Limited mentorship
- Difficulty in raising funds
- Need for appreciation and motivation
- After marriage shifts/ transformation

Naming all the legends in the field of Women Entrepreneurship will be arduous but enlighten few of them:

- **Falguni Nayar – The dynamic CEO of Nykaa industry has a great contribution in the field of Beauty, personal care and retail technology.**

Falguni Nayar pioneered in the online beauty venture. She fasters credibility through authentic products, cultivated rapport with customers through curated assortments and reliable delivery. Nykaa later expanded the business with offline stores and brand stewardship with amalgamation of the digital convenience with retail presence. Nayar's story is quintessence balancing technology by supply chain discipline, balancing technology and brand credibility.

- **Vani Kola – MD, Kalaari Capital**

Industry: Venture capital and early-stage investing

Vani ensures payback by investing early in start-up of venture capital and by fostering and building durable companies.

With contributing experience in the US technology sector, she procured funding, emphasizing strategy, integration, sustainability and long-term growth. Her work lend a hand to many founders and investors collaborate across India's start-up ecosystem and create job opportunities through smart capital and mentorship.

- **Aditi Gupta – Co-founder, Menstrupedia**

Industry: Women health education

Aditi Gupta co-created Menstrupedia to make menstrual education easier to understand and more culturally relatable. She has been trail blazer using a comic format, the initiative reached enormous schools, various NGOs, aided girls and families through discuss menstruation with equanimity. Her work shows how education itself can be designed like a product while creating social impact.

- **Ghazal Alagh – Co-founder, Honasa Consumer (Parent company of MamaEarth)**

Industry: FMCG and personal care

Ghazal Alagh co-founded Honasa (Mamaearth) by tapping into mounting demand for safer personal care products has been designed by diligence for mothers and babies. It ensures solutions for parents and children, the company expanded into broader personal care categories, supported by strong storytelling, digital distribution, and retail growth.

Her journey reflects how women entrepreneurs in India have aligning consumer insight and brand messaging to build modern FMCG companies.

- **Richa Kar, Founder, Zivame**

Industry: E-commerce and intimate wear retail

Richa Kar introduced Zivame to solve a actual and often overlooked problem of buying intimate wear in private, carefully, and confidently. Zivame is an online-first brand invested heavily in customer education, sizing support, and return-friendly policies, falling hesitancy for first-time online intimate wear customers. Over time, Zivame helped normalise healthier conversations around intimate wear shopping. Therefore, her story is a strong example of women entrepreneurship in India where you create a market by combining product access with awareness and comfort-led consumer experience.

- **Suchi Mukherjee, CEO, Limeroad**

Industry: Fashion e-commerce and social discovery

Suchi Mukherjee started Limeroad with a community-led approach to shopping, encouraging users to make style boards and involve with curated looks. The platform meant to blend commerce with content, while building operational strength in sourcing and supply chains. Her journey shows that how female entrepreneurs are experimental with new retail formats that feel more personal. It's a reminder that mounting-commerce isn't only about advertisement rather than it's about creating a best shopping experience.

Women for Start-ups (Government Initiative)

Start-up India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), conducted the **“Women for Startups: State Workshops”** for aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs between **November 2022 and November 2023**.

The initiative was launched with the objective of increasing and enabling women-led start-ups across the country through capacity building and providing them with pitching and fundraising opportunities.

The workshops, conducted in collaboration with start-up nodals of the state governments, included sessions on:

- Legalities
- Marketing and branding
- Sales and customer acquisition
- Pitching and fundraising
- Product development

Impact:

- 22 States
- 1400+ aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs
- 200 mock pitches
- 90+ experts and mentors

Recommendations

- Strong government policies, initiatives and schemes with enabling networks.
- Addressing challenges related to AI and emerging technologies.
- Greater skill enhancement programs.
- Encouraging startups and innovation.
- Sector diversity with more innovation in areas like retail and biotechnology.
- Example: Aditi Gupta (Menstrupedia) promoting menstrual education.
- Safer workplaces with safety measures and self-defence awareness.
- Better access to resources for scaling businesses and hiring.
- More training programs and workshops for holistic development, including financial literacy.

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