

# A Study on Mapping the Scope for Women Entrepreneurs in Salem District

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**Abstract-** This research study delves into the domain of rural women entrepreneurship in Salem District, aiming to shed well-lit on the pertinent disputes faced by women entrepreneurs operating in rural areas. Women's participation in entrepreneurship has gained momentum in rural India, signifying their potential to drive economic growth and empower local communities. However, this entrepreneurial landscape also presents unique obstacles that demand a comprehensive understanding. The study employs qualitative research methods to gather in-depth insights into the experiences of rural women entrepreneurs. Through a purposive sampling technique, a diverse group of women entrepreneurs from various regions and industries are selected to ensure a representative study sample. Moreover, the study reveals how these challenges often intertwine, further impacting the potential for growth and sustainability. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the role of support systems and policy interventions in promoting rural women entrepreneurship. The suggestions of this study are substantial for policymakers, development practitioners, and other stakeholders. It advocates for targeted intermediations that acknowledge the specific challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs and leverage their potential as catalysts for sustainable development.

**Keywords:-**Women entrepreneur, Rural development, Government Schemes, Challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is essential for improving the financial condition of rural areas as well as generating job opportunities for rural populations. It also provides self-employment for people who launch their own enterprises. Due to the need to overcome poverty, support for their families, and raise the standard of living, and women are now also interested in starting their own businesses in both urban and rural locations. Without any societal or other barriers, women are working in agriculture, business, and trade. However, rural women in India face numerous social and cultural barriers. As a result, women's entrepreneurial activity has a

smaller impact on the social and economic development of rural India. Since 2008, the UN has recognized October 15 as International Rural Women's Day in order to honour the women. Rural entrepreneurs are those who engage in entrepreneurial activity by developing industries and commercial units in rural areas using agricultural resources. In other words, rural entrepreneurship is defined as the formation of industrial and company units in rural areas.

## NEED FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Women entrepreneurship is essential for various reasons, and fostering an environment that encourages and supports women in starting and growing businesses has numerous benefits. Here are some key reasons highlighting the need for women entrepreneurship

**Economic growth and job creation:** Women-owned businesses contribute significantly to economic growth by creating jobs and driving innovation. Diverse perspectives and ideas from women entrepreneurs contribute to a more dynamic and resilient economy

**Gender equality:** It challenges traditional gender roles and helps break down barriers, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

**Innovation and creativity:** Women entrepreneurs often identify unique market needs and develop innovative solutions.

**Community development:** As business leaders, women can influence social change and contribute to community well-being.

**Empowerment and confidence:** Entrepreneurship empowers women by providing them with a sense of control over their professional lives. Success in entrepreneurship can boost women's confidence,

encouraging them to pursue leadership roles and tackle new challenges.

Access to capital and resources: Efforts to improve access to capital, mentorship, and networking opportunities can empower women entrepreneurs.

#### TYPES OF RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR ROLES

Female entrepreneurs in rural regions: Women entrepreneurs in rural areas are women who have taken the initiative to establish and manage businesses or start-ups in non-urban regions. They undertake various business activities, ranging from agriculture and agribusiness to crafts, small-scale manufacturing, retail, and service-oriented enterprises.

Women Agripreneurs in Rural Context: Women agripreneurs refer to women entrepreneurs who are actively involved in agricultural and agribusiness-related activities in rural regions. They contribute to agricultural value chains, innovation in farming practices, and rural economic growth.

Rural Women Social Entrepreneurs: Rural women social entrepreneurs are women who create and lead ventures with the primary aim of addressing social and environmental challenges in rural communities. These ventures seek to bring about positive social change while ensuring sustainable business practices.

Rural Women Innovators and Start-up Founders: Rural women innovators and start-up founders are women who demonstrate creativity and innovation by establishing and leading innovative start-ups in rural areas. Their ventures may focus on technology, services, or novel products that meet local needs and preferences

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify characteristics that motivates rural women to start their own companies.
- To assess the government's effectiveness in fostering women's entrepreneurship.
- To Analyse women entrepreneurs' strengths and weaknesses, as well as the possibilities and risks that encourage entrepreneurship.

To Propose ways to enhance the satisfaction of female entrepreneurs and provide a framework to promote their success.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Senthilkumar, Vasantha, and Varadharajan, 2012 [1]: In a society dominated by males, women encounter inequality both within and outside the confines of their homes. An examination of the development of women entrepreneurship reveals that Indian women face challenges stemming from unfavorable social status, low literacy rates, and limited participation in the workforce. Additionally, entrenched traditional norms and constraints confine women within their households, further contributing to their disadvantaged position. These factors collectively create an unsupportive environment for fostering women's entrepreneurship in the country. Particularly, initiatives for the development of rural women's entrepreneurship in India are notably limited.

Ritharan and Pharm (2013) [2]: The challenges faced by women business owners in rural areas were assessed, revealing that a significant majority of them were characterized by weak leadership skills. Their leadership proficiency was found to be insufficient for achieving success as entrepreneurs. Financial difficulties emerged as the second most prevalent issue, with numerous female entrepreneurs grappling with financial inadequacy. The third-ranked challenges included a lack of systematic development, unawareness of government initiatives, non-repayment of loans by participants, limited knowledge, and various other issues.

Raju and Bhuvaneshwari, (2014) [3]: The research titled "Exploring Rural Entrepreneurship in Sivaganga District" delves into the challenges, operations, demand, and strategies for fostering rural entrepreneurship. The study aims to delineate the requisites for rural entrepreneurship, address challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs, and identify supportive factors. The author highlights specific constraints that pose difficulties for rural entrepreneurs and proposes ways to provide assistance and encouragement. Recognizing the hurdles faced by less motivated rural entrepreneurs, the study advocates for government-sponsored business training for both urban and rural women. The promotion of rural women's entrepreneurship is seen as a catalyst for enhancing the quality of life in

rural areas, fostering sustainable development, and contributing to economic growth.

Sasikala T(2015)[4] conducted study on Socio-economic status of women entrepreneurs in Salem of Tamilnadu with sample size of 300 using stratified random sampling techniques. The major findings of this study are most of the women entrepreneurs are at the age group of 25 to 35 years, 80% of women entrepreneurs had experience below two years and their attitude was influenced by age and length of service of women entrepreneurs, finally the socio-economic status of women entrepreneurs has increased the type of enterprise which influenced is speaking to gathering and buying a car /two wheeler after becoming women entrepreneurs. One of the major suggestion offered was EDPs can be conducted for unmarried women and they can be provided training in communication and negotiation skills, stress management programmes can be conducted for women entrepreneurs.

Sirumalar Rajam, P.M., and Soundararaja, K.V. (2016)[5] states in their article that the women constitutes around half of the total world population. So is in India also. They are, therefore, regarded as the better half of the society. In traditional societies, they were confined to the four walls of houses performing household activities. In modern societies they have come out of the four walls to participate in all sorts of activities. The global evidence buttress that women have been performing exceedingly well in different spheres of activities like academics, politics, administration, social work and so on. Now, have started plunging into industry also and running their enterprises successfully. Therefore, while discussing on entrepreneurial development, it seems in the fitness on the context to study about the development of women entrepreneurs in the country.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the research is both exploratory and descriptive, as it seeks to investigate and categorize the issues and driving forces influencing rural women entrepreneurs.

Sources of Data: The data are collected from secondary sources. The literature review is created by internet accessible studies and journals using data gathered from books, published publications of the RBI, NABARD, DWCRA, Census Surveys, SSI publications, media, and other sources.

## Challenges Of Rural Women Entrepreneurship In India

Women entrepreneurs in rural India encounter a myriad of distinctive hurdles that impede their capacity to initiate, manage, and expand prosperous enterprises. Among these challenges are:

**Sociocultural Norms:** Conventional gender roles and societal norms frequently limit the mobility of women, curtail their decision-making authority, and hinder their involvement in economic endeavours. This can limit women's ability to engage in entrepreneurship and make independent business decisions.

**Limited Access to Education:** In numerous rural regions, females face restricted access to education, impeding their capacity to acquire the essential skills and knowledge needed for the effective management of a business.

**Lack of Awareness and Exposure:** Many rural women are not aware of the opportunities available in entrepreneurship or lack exposure to successful women entrepreneurs as role models.

**Access to Finance:** Access to capital is a significant challenge for women entrepreneurs everywhere, but it's often more pronounced in rural areas. Limited collateral, lack of financial literacy, and biases among lenders can make it difficult for women to secure loans or investment.

**Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Poor infrastructure, including inadequate transportation, unreliable electricity, and lack of internet connectivity, can impede the growth of rural businesses.

**Limited Market Access:** Rural entrepreneurs often struggle to access larger markets due to geographical barriers and lack of transportation. This restricts their ability to scale their businesses and find new customers.

**Social Stigma:** In some cases, women entrepreneurs in rural areas may face social stigma for venturing into business, as it challenges traditional norms.

**Work-Life Balance:** Women in rural areas often have multiple responsibilities, including household chores and childcare. Balancing these responsibilities with running a business can be incredibly challenging.

**Lack of Training and Skill Development:** Many women lack the necessary business skills and training to successfully start and manage a business. Access to business training and skill development programs is limited in rural areas.

Efforts are being made by various governmental and non-governmental organizations to address these challenges by providing training, financial support, mentorship, and creating platforms for networking and market access. However, there is still much work to be done to create a more conducive environment for women entrepreneurs in rural India.

**Government schemes to support women entrepreneurs**

Some of the key government support schemes for rural women entrepreneurs in India according to the Ministry of MSME's Annual Report for 2015-16, the following main programmes and programs are available to women entrepreneurs:

- **TREAD-Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development:** This initiative aims to empower women by fostering entrepreneurship among them. Its primary focus is on encouraging non-farm activities for women.
- **Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY):** The government offers financial assistance for the establishment of coir-based enterprises by rural women. The scheme focuses on training women in coir-related activities and providing them with subsidies and incentives to start coir-based businesses.
- **MUDRA Yojana:** The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana extends financial support to small and micro enterprises, inclusive of those owned by women. It disburses loans through diverse financial institutions to bolster income-generating endeavors.
- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** The scheme delivers financial assistance to women entrepreneurs through loans from Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) to start small businesses or expand existing ones. It offers three categories of loans - Shishu, Kishor, and Tarun - depending on the stage of the business.
- **Stand Up India Scheme:** Initiated by the Ministry of Finance, this program seeks to foster entrepreneurship among women,

Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Scheduled Tribes (STs). It facilitates bank loans ranging from Rs. 10 lakh to Rs. 1 crore, with the objective of benefiting at least one woman entrepreneur per bank branch.

- **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM):** Operated under the Ministry of Rural Development, NRLM aims to alleviate rural poverty and promote women's self-help groups (SHGs) and their federations. NRLM provides financial support, capacity-building, and market linkages to help women start and manage enterprises.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM):** Previously named as the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), this scheme seeks to empower rural women through self-help groups and skill development programs. It provides financial support and facilitates access to credit for women entrepreneurs.
- **Udyogini Scheme:** Implemented by the Rajasthan government, Udyogini supports women from below the poverty line to set up and run businesses by providing training, financial assistance, and market linkages.
- **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs):** RSETIs provide training to rural women and help them acquire skills necessary for entrepreneurship. They offer various skill development programs, entrepreneurship training, and guidance on starting small businesses.
- **Skill India Mission:** While not exclusively directed towards women, the Skill India Mission strives to empower women through skill development training, equipping them to initiate their own businesses or secure employment across diverse sectors.
- **Women Entrepreneurship Platform-WEP:** While not a traditional scheme, WEP is an initiative by NITI Aayog that provides a platform for networking, mentorship, and knowledge sharing among women entrepreneurs. It connects women-owned businesses with potential investors and mentors.
- **Unemployed youth employment Generation program (UYEGP)-** While not exclusive to women, UYEGP provides financial assistance to educated unemployed youth, including women, for starting their own businesses or enterprises.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study on rural women entrepreneurship in India sheds light on the significant strides made by women in rural areas towards economic empowerment and social upliftment. Despite facing numerous challenges and hurdles, these women have displayed resilience and determination in establishing and running successful businesses. Promoting gender equality in rural areas is not merely an economic imperative but a crucial aspect of sustainable development. Empowering rural women entrepreneurs translates into stronger families, healthier communities, and overall socio-economic progress. It is essential to create an ecosystem that fosters innovation, recognizes women's potential, and breaks traditional gender stereotypes. The study emphasizes that empowering rural women entrepreneurs is not just a goal, it is an imperative for achieving a sustainable and equitable society. It calls for concerted efforts, perseverance, and a shared vision to generate an permitting environment where rural women can thrive as successful entrepreneurs, contributing significantly to the nation's progress.

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