



CONSTRAINTS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

¹Ritu Kumari, ²Deepak Kumar

¹Lecturer, ²Lecturer

¹Department of Commerce

¹Apex Institute of Management and Technology, Haridwar, India

Abstract: Research on women's entrepreneurship has shown a growing trend in the past few decades. This study area is in an adolescent phase with comparatively few numbers of research articles, books, and literature reviews being published on female entrepreneurship. Our study is concisely focused on the various kinds of problems, constraints, and barriers encountered by women who want to enter the corporate world as an entrepreneur. Furthermore, the study aims to identify, rank, and highlight the various kinds of difficulties encountered by women entering the business world as entrepreneurs. Here we have considered some of the articles on women entrepreneurship from the Emerald database and refined our search based on keywords, access and year of publication to review the difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs more effectively. Our study begins with the concept of entrepreneurship, specifically women entrepreneurs followed by a comprehensive literature review in tabular form showing various problems faced by female entrepreneurs. This study is relevant for policymakers to frame policy imperatives and programs considering the constraints discussed.

Index Terms - women entrepreneurship, constraints, barriers, female entrepreneurs, challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

The term 'entrepreneur' has tracked back its origin from the French word *entreprendre*, that means 'to undertake' or to bear the risk. Entrepreneurship can be defined as the process of creating opportunities, through innovative business means leading to the continuous development of society and contributing to market economies by combining production and exchange activities (Ghosh et al, 2017). In the last few decades, entrepreneurship has become a concept that is increasingly widespread around the globe because it is closely related to economic growth and the well-being of society (Maden, 2015). As entrepreneurship has emerged as a developmental inspiration to the corporate world and adds value to the economies but the growth is lopsided without the involvement of the female class which covers approximately half of the population of the world (Lenka, 2017).

The Government of India (GOI, 2006) has defined a women entrepreneur as a business enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial stake of 51% of capital or giving at least 51% of employment generated in the enterprise for women (Dubey et al 2017). Women entrepreneurship is the new way for women in the business market with their innovative corporate ideas and techniques. Women can be categorized as an entrepreneur if they are principals in any family business or partners in a partnership firm. Women entrepreneurship is opening new entrances into the business world and creating employment opportunities which are leading to financial growth and increment of per capita income. (Rajvanshi, 2017) Entrepreneurship and more specifically female entrepreneurship plays an important role in the building of an economy. It has three major processes including initiation, promotion, and distribution of wealth and service.

An entrepreneur is a significant factor in economic transformation and an inseparable part of socio-economic growth. The primary motive for women to enter entrepreneurship is to engage in some economically gainful activity, making money or more money to support the family. (Mittal et al, 2017) Women, who think of business organization, must initiate it, organize and allocate the resources, operate the enterprise, and undertake the uncertainty for an innovative project. Around a half-century ago, the thought of female entrepreneurs running and managing their enterprises would have seemed as ambitious as the height of the sky (Kuadl, 2023). Entrepreneurship provides them with a platform for self-expression and offers financial security to women (Panda, 2018). Because women who want to begin their entrepreneurial journey need to be ready to face many problems and challenges (Balakumar et al.,2018) like gender discrimination and inequality, financial constraints, work-family conflict, Lack of entrepreneurship training and education, Personality based constraints, etc. (Panda, 2018) Despite of the fact that women have to face many challenges and a large number of factors working against women, women started their rise to fame.

In the last two decades, the number of female-driven enterprises shows an increasing trend as statistics show that the business owned and managed by females has increased by 114% (Kuadl,2023). Women have been significantly getting involved in entrepreneurial activities because of urbanization, industrialization, modernization, education and skill development programs, and state subsidies (Agarwal, 2017). Increase in the count of women entrepreneurs is of utmost importance because it will result in many kinds of economic gains to economies like employment generation, poverty eradication, and increased national income.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A systematic search of the online database which is Emerald Sight was conducted using the keywords 'problems and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs' or 'barriers faced by female entrepreneurs' or 'constraints faced by female entrepreneurs'. Only research articles of open access published from 2013 to 2023 were selected to confine our analysis to the last 11 years. The articles other than those published in a journal that is reports, review papers, dissertations, book chapters, and books, etc. were excluded from the present review stud. Altogether 293 documents were found in the emerald sight database. A review and analysis of the title, abstract, and summary filtered out 20 papers that were considered for this study tending to their significance to the topic and information required which is being focused on problems, barriers, and constraints faced by female entrepreneurs. All problems-related themes were extracted and recorded in an excel sheet to classify the barriers of similar nature under one category because each article taken into consideration was indicating some kind of similar problem to the other. The study is exploratory in nature. The objectives of our study are:

- To review the existing literature on barriers encountered by female entrepreneurs.
- To outline the work published by researchers on women entrepreneurship across the world.
- To study the literature available on problems faced by women entrepreneurship from 2013 to 2023.

III. FINDINGS/DISCUSSIONS

The results of secondary data collected for this study are discussed in the Table-1.

Table 1 Author's own research

Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs	Description	References
Glass Ceiling	Unequal treatment in employment opportunities	Ali (2013), Lekovlena (2013), Chawla and Sharma (2016)
Financial Constraints	Lack of financial support from banks and government, access to capital, shortage of funds for innovation	Lekovlena (2013), Barel et al (2023), Rudhumbu et al (2020), Ama et al (2014), Hodegs et al (2015), Masllorens et al (2021), Ghouse et al (2017), Mohan and Baruah (2019), Shami et al (2019)
Work- family conflict	To balance family and work demands leads to dissatisfaction and anxiety issues.	Barel et al (2023), Adikaram and Razik (2022), Ali (2013), Sajjad et al (2020), Panda (2018), Chawla and Sharma (2016), Lenka and Agarwal (2017)
Gender discrimination	Can lead to poor education, health and sexual abuse, and violence	Ama et al (2014), Teoh and Chong (2014), Barel et al (2023), Panda (2018), Chawla and Sharma (2016), Ameen and Willis (2016),
Laws/ regulation of government	Inadequate laws , legitimacy issues	Lekovlena (2013), Ali (2013), Adikaram and razik (2022), Chawla and Sharma (2016), Ameen and Willis (2016)
Income gaps	Difference between women and men in terms of money for doing the same work	Ali (2013), Chawla and Sharma (2016), Azmat(2013)
Harassment at workplace	Unwelcomed sexual behavior whether physically, or verbally	Ali (2013), Tripathi and Singh (2018)
Information and Technology	To give them knowledge about computer and technology	Ameen and Willis (2016), Tripathi and Singh (2018), Orser et al (2019)

Network issues	Lack of access to professional network	Lenka and Agarwal (2017), Ghouse et al (2017), Chawla and Sharma (2016), Hodegs et al (2015)
Corruption	Forced to pay bribe for basic services	Masllorens et al(2021), Ali (2023)

In Table 1 all the constraints of similar nature encountered by women entering the corporate world are categorized. Financial constraints, work-family conflicts, and gender discrimination are the common kind of barriers discussed by most of the authors. While many authors have discussed network issues, government recommendations, and lack of access to information technology as problems faced by women. Only a few researchers mentioned the problem of corruption, harassment in the workplace and pay gaps as constraints faced by female entrepreneurs.

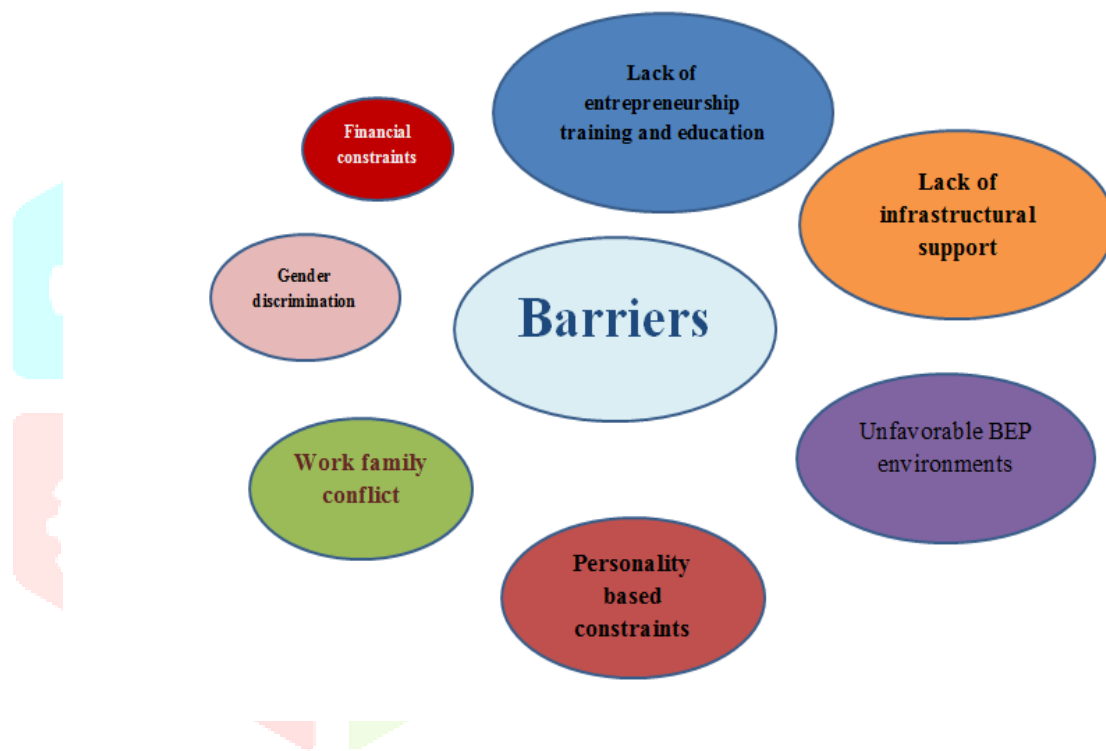


Figure: 1 Adopted from (Panda 2018)

According to Panda (2018), various barriers faced by female entrepreneurs can be summarized and classified under different categories as per their characteristics as financial constraints, gender discrimination, work-family conflicts, personality-based constraints, unfavorable BEP environment, lack of infrastructural support and lack of entrepreneurship training and education as shown in figure 1.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed the secondary data available on women entrepreneurs. It explores certain barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. Various problems have been identified from the above literature like gender inequality, income gaps, social and cultural factors, lack of finance and access to capital etc. To mitigate the above-mentioned challenges various schemes have been launched by State/Central Government and Banks like The Mudra loan, Dena Shakti scheme, Stree Shakti Scheme, Cent Kalyani scheme etc. Women entrepreneurs can get financial benefits from these schemes. Men and women should work together to achieve economic growth and prosperity. Women entrepreneurs should be taught to cope with new technologies and innovation as well.

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