



Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Developing Economies with Special Reference to the Rural Areas of Raipur District of Chhattisgarh State

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Received on : 04/01/2025
Revised on : 04/03/2025
Accepted on : 13/03/2025
Overall Similarity : 06% on 05/03/2025



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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurship has gained thrust in developing economies, yet significant challenges hamper their progress, especially in rural areas. This study explores the specific difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs in the rural areas of Raipur District, Chhattisgarh. The research aims to analyze financial, social, cultural, and infrastructural barriers, providing insights into possible interventions for policy and practice. A survey of 50 women entrepreneurs will be conducted to gather first-hand data on their experiences and challenges.

KEY WORDS

Women Entrepreneurs, Rural Areas, Raipur District, Developing Economies.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a vital component of economic development, yet women entrepreneurs in rural areas face unique obstacles. Despite Government initiatives and support programs, women entrepreneurs struggle with financial constraints, lack of market access, and socio-cultural barriers. This study investigates these challenges within the rural context of Raipur District, Chhattisgarh, and aims to suggest ways to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for women.

Brief Literature Review

Previous research highlights various barriers to women entrepreneurship, including lack of access to credit, gender discrimination, inadequate education, and restricted mobility. Studies on women entrepreneurs in India emphasize the importance of

microfinance, skill development, and supportive policies. However, limited research has been conducted on rural women entrepreneurs in Chhattisgarh, particularly in Raipur District.

Rationale of the Study

This study is vital in understanding the localized challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in rural Raipur. While existing literature provides a general perspective on entrepreneurship barriers, there is a lack of region-specific research. Addressing this gap can help policymakers and stakeholders implement targeted interventions to support women entrepreneurs effectively.

Research Gap Identified in the Literature

- Limited studies on women entrepreneurs in rural Chhattisgarh.
- Lack of empirical research on socio-cultural barriers affecting rural entrepreneurship.
- Insufficient analysis of financial and infrastructural constraints specific to Raipur District.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in rural areas of Raipur District.
2. To examine the socio-cultural and economic barriers affecting their business sustainability.
3. To assess the role of Government initiatives in supporting rural women entrepreneurs.
4. To suggest policy recommendations to enhance women's entrepreneurial participation.

Research Questions

1. What are the key challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in Raipur?
2. How do socio-cultural factors influence their business operations?
3. What role do financial institutions play in supporting women entrepreneurs?
4. What policy interventions can help address these challenges?

Limitations

- Limited sample size (N=50) may not represent all women entrepreneurs in Raipur District.
- Potential bias in self-reported data.
- Challenges in reaching participants due to geographical constraints.

Method

A mixed-method approach will be used, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

Participants

The study will focus on 50 women entrepreneurs engaged in various small-scale businesses in rural areas of Raipur District.

Data Collection

Primary data will be collected through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews. Secondary data will be obtained from Government reports, academic journals, and case studies.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical tools (SPSS), while qualitative data will be examined using thematic analysis.

Survey Questionnaire

1. What type of business do you own?
2. What are your primary sources of funding?
3. What challenges do you face in accessing financial support?
4. How do societal norms impact your entrepreneurial activities?
5. What kind of support do you need to expand your business?

Analysis of Survey Responses

Table 1: Key Challenges Faced by Respondents and their Prevalence

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Lack of financial support	65%
Societal restrictions	50%
Limited market access	58%
Inadequate education/training	42%
Poor infrastructure	47%

(Source: Primary Data)

Graph 1: Graph Showing the Key Challenges Faced by Respondents and Their Prevalence

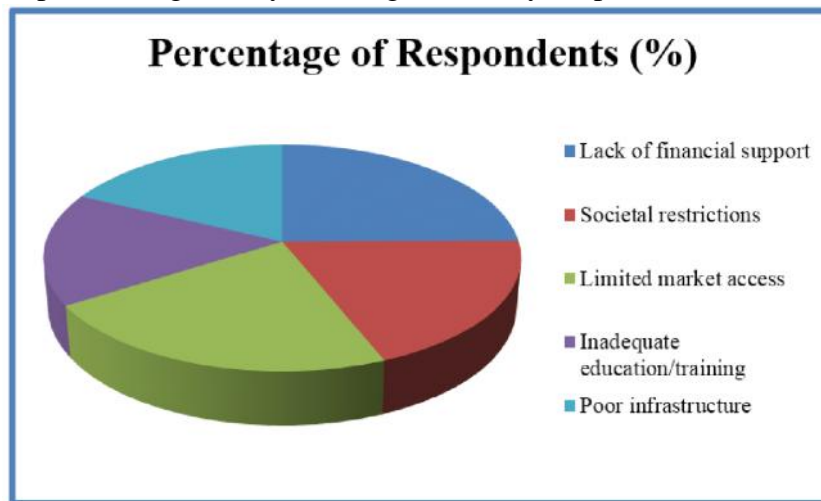


Table 2: Challenges, Funding Sources, and Support Needs of Women Entrepreneurs: A Survey Analysis

Survey Question	Key Findings from Women Entrepreneurs	Interpretation
1. What type of business do you own?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small-scale retail (45%) - Home-based businesses (25%) - Agriculture-based (20%) - Manufacturing (10%) 	A significant portion of women entrepreneurs are engaged in small-scale retail and home-based businesses, indicating flexibility and low startup costs.
2. What are your primary sources of funding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal savings (55%) - Microfinance institutions (20%) - Government grants (15%) - Bank loans (10%) 	The majority rely on personal savings, with limited access to formal financial institutions. Microfinance is more accessible than bank loans.
3. What challenges do you face in accessing financial support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High collateral requirements (50%) - Gender bias in loan approval (30%) - Lack of financial literacy (20%) 	Gender bias in financial access remains a significant barrier. Collateral requirements disproportionately affect women entrepreneurs.
4. How do societal norms impact your entrepreneurial activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrictive cultural norms (50%) - Family expectations and caregiving responsibilities (35%) - Limited mobility (15%) 	Women entrepreneurs face cultural and family constraints, which limit their ability to expand their businesses or access new markets.
5. What kind of support do you need to expand your business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial support (55%) - Market access (25%) - Skill development & training (20%) 	Financial aid remains the most crucial requirement, followed by improved market access and skill development.

Interpretation & Insights

1. Business Ownership

- Women entrepreneurs primarily operate small-scale retail and home-based businesses, reflecting the need for flexible work environments.
- The lower engagement in manufacturing suggests a lack of capital and industrial training.

2. Financial Challenges & Funding Sources

- Personal savings remain the dominant funding source, indicating limited access to external financial resources.
- Bank loans are the least used funding option, partly due to high collateral demands and gender-based biases in financial institutions.

3. Impact of Societal Norms

- Cultural expectations, family responsibilities, and mobility restrictions hinder entrepreneurial growth.
- Gender roles influence financial access and market participation.

4. Support Needed

- Financial aid is the primary requirement, followed by better market access and skill-building programs.
- Policy interventions should focus on reducing collateral barriers, increasing microfinance opportunities, and providing gender-inclusive business training.

The results indicate that financial barriers and societal norms are the most significant challenges for rural women entrepreneurs in Raipur. Government schemes are underutilized due to a lack of awareness.

Discussion

The findings highlight the need for targeted financial aid, skill development programs, and awareness campaigns to support women entrepreneurs in rural areas. Collaboration between Government agencies, NGOs, and financial institutions can enhance opportunities for women-led businesses.

Results

- Financial constraints remain the top barrier.
- Cultural norms limit women's entrepreneurial participation.
- Government schemes need better implementation and outreach.

CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs in rural Raipur face multiple challenges that hinder their growth. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive policy interventions, financial support, and community engagement.

Educational Implications

- Incorporating entrepreneurship education in rural schools.
- Training programs tailored to women's business needs.
- Financial literacy initiatives to enhance economic independence.

Recommendations for Women Entrepreneurial Growth

- **Improve Access to Finance:** Expand microfinance options and reduce gender-based loan restrictions.
- **Enhance Market Linkages:** Create dedicated platforms to connect women entrepreneurs with wider markets.
- **Provide Training & Mentorship:** Offer financial literacy and business development programs tailored for women.
- **Address Societal Barriers:** Encourage family and community support systems to promote women's entrepreneurship.

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