



SUCCESS THROUGH SKILLS: A STUDY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN CHENGALPATTU DISTRICT

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Abstract:

The primary goal of this study was to examine the factors that contributed to the growth of small and medium-sized women-owned enterprises in the Chengalpattu District. Other important goals of the investigation included learning more about the difficulties these female entrepreneurs faced, the differences between educated and uneducated women entrepreneurs' perceptions of success factors, and the forces that drive and inspire these women to launch their own businesses. Over 130 female entrepreneurs self-administered a questionnaire to gather the study's sole source of primary data. The data were analyzed using various statistical method. The findings show the importance of targeted interventions to address both educational disparities and societal challenges, thereby creating a more supportive environment for women entrepreneurs in the region.

Key Words: Entrepreneurs, Supportive, Challenges, Women, Factor, Perception, Region, Etc.,

Introduction:

The rise of women entrepreneurs has become a significant trend in both developed and developing economies, reflecting the increasing role of women in shaping the business landscape. Women-led businesses contribute not only to economic development but also to social progress by promoting gender equality and empowering communities. Despite their growing presence, women entrepreneurs often face a distinct set of challenges, including limited access to capital, societal biases, and a lack of networking opportunities. These challenges necessitate a focus on the skills that enable women to overcome obstacles and achieve business success. Although there have always been entrepreneurs in India, this century has seen an unheard-of increase in the number of them. In addition to technology development, there has been a mentality shift. Women have risen to prominence in every economic sector during the past forty years, including entrepreneurship. Women are now more conscious of their rights and don't worry as much about social criticism. Women in the 21st century no longer accept the treatment they previously experienced and wear their identity like a badge. Women have risen forward to carve out a position for themselves in the cutthroat world of business.

The idea that business and entrepreneurship are reserved for metropolitan, educated women should be rejected. In order to improve the ratio of men to women in business and to expand the economy, the rural sector has a significant role to play. In India's small-scale industries, thousands of women from both urban and rural areas are employed. Over 2 million women are thought to work in small businesses as managers or owners in total (Development Commissioner, MSME). 87% of these businesses are unregistered, compared to 13% that are. The overall number of women working in the SSI sector is thought to be around 33, 17,496. (Data as per MSME). The Government of India has launched a number of important programmes with the goal of encouraging female entrepreneurship. India, meanwhile, is ranked 142 out of 149 nations in terms of economic opportunity and participation in the World Economic Forum's 2018 Gender Gap Index. The percentage of women in the labour force is one-third that of men. This study explores the crucial role that specific skills play in the success of women entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on those operating in Chengalpattu District. The district, with its diverse economic activities and growing entrepreneurial ecosystem, provides a unique context for examining how women entrepreneurs leverage their skills to navigate the competitive business environment. Key skills such as strategic planning, financial literacy, marketing acumen, and resilience are often cited as vital for the sustainability and growth of enterprises. Understanding the impact of these skills on business outcomes is essential for developing targeted interventions that can support women entrepreneurs in reaching their full potential. By analyzing the experiences of successful women entrepreneurs in Chengalpattu District, this study aims to identify the most critical skills that contribute to their success and provide recommendations for enhancing skill development initiatives. The insights gained from this research will be valuable for stakeholders such as policymakers, educational institutions, and business support organizations, enabling them to tailor their programs to better support women entrepreneurs. Moreover, the study contributes to the broader discourse on women's entrepreneurship by highlighting the importance of skill acquisition and development in achieving long-term business success.

Review of Literature:

Bharti Kollan and Indira J. Parikh (2005) examined the historical progression of women's roles in entrepreneurship from the 1950s to the present. Using historical analysis and a review of existing literature, the study analyzed how societal and psychological barriers have evolved over time. The analysis revealed that, despite significant progress, women continue to face persistent challenges. The study employed content analysis tools to identify ongoing issues and emphasized the need for continuous support and reforms to address these enduring barriers.

Dr. V. Basil Hans (2018) aimed to evaluate differences in business ownership between rural and urban women entrepreneurs in India. Utilizing comparative analysis of data from rural and urban areas, the study employed statistical tools to analyze business ownership trends. The research found no significant difference in ownership between rural and urban women,

suggesting that geographical location does not substantially impact women’s ability to own and operate businesses. The findings highlight the importance of focusing on other factors influencing entrepreneurial success beyond geographical location.

Holly Buttner (1993) focused on gender differences in motivations for starting businesses. The study used surveys and interviews to gather data from male and female entrepreneurs, and comparative analysis techniques were applied to assess differences in motivations. The findings indicated that men generally start businesses for financial reasons, while women often cite familial obligations. This distinction in motivations was analyzed using statistical tools to understand its impact on entrepreneurial success, highlighting how gender-specific motivations influence business outcomes.

Ranbir Singh and O.P. Monga (2014) investigated the awareness and utilization of government initiatives and financial resources among women entrepreneurs. The study used surveys to measure awareness and resource usage, and data analysis tools like Excel were employed to interpret the findings. The research revealed that only 29.3% of women entrepreneurs were aware of the available support systems, indicating a gap in resource utilization. The study emphasized the need for improved information dissemination and targeted support to enhance resource use among women entrepreneurs.

Seema Johar (2015) explored the influence of family support and personal confidence on the success of women entrepreneurs in Ghaziabad. The study utilized surveys and personal interviews to gather data on sources of motivation and the impact of self-confidence. Data analysis tools such as NVivo were used to code and identify key themes. The study found that 43% of women were motivated to start their businesses by their husbands and that 94% reported increased self-confidence following the establishment of their businesses. These results highlight the crucial role of familial encouragement and personal empowerment in entrepreneurial success.

Statement of the Problem:

Women entrepreneurs in the Chengalpattu district face unique challenges and opportunities in their pursuit of business success. Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship in driving economic growth and social development, there remains a gap in understanding how specific skills contribute to the success of women entrepreneurs in this region. The problem lies in identifying the key skills that enable these women to overcome barriers such as limited access to capital, gender biases, and market competition. Additionally, there is a need to assess the effectiveness of existing support systems, training programs, and policies in enhancing these skills. This study aims to investigate the role of various skills in determining the success of women entrepreneurs in Chengalpattu district, providing insights that can inform targeted interventions to support and empower these women in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Objectives of the Study:

The women business owners who live and work permanently in Chengalpattu District are the target demographic. In order to narrow the gender gap, future academics may use the success factors of female entrepreneurs as a starting point for their work.

- To identify and explore the key success factors for women entrepreneurs in Chengalpattu.
- To determine if there are differences in how educated and non-educated entrepreneurs perceive success factors.
- To investigate the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.
- To examine the motivations and driving factors for women starting a business.

Hypothesis of the Study:

- Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference in the perception of success factors between educated and uneducated women entrepreneurs.
- Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference in the perception of success factors between educated and uneducated women entrepreneurs.

Research Methodology:

- **Research Method:** The study uses quantitative research, collecting and analyzing numerical data to explore factors affecting women entrepreneurs.
- **Research Approach:** Data is gathered using structured procedures and analyzed numerically. The research is exploratory, aiming to uncover key insights.
- **Sample Size and Population:** The research focuses on small and medium-sized businesses headquartered in Chengalpattu District, where more than 51% of the businesses are owned by women. A sample of 130 women entrepreneurs were selected using convenience sampling.
- Tools for Analysis
 - Mean
 - Standard Deviation
 - Z test
 - Ranking Test
 - Likert Test

Table 1: Comparison of Perceptions of Success Factors between Educated and Uneducated Entrepreneurs

Factor	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	Z	Sig
Family Support	Educated	67	34.18	6.53	1.886	0.170
	Uneducated	63	33.90	7.17		
Personal Motivation	Educated	67	30.27	8.28	0.150	0.699
	Uneducated	63	29.64	8.47		
Skills and Expertise	Educated	67	28.78	7.62	1.870	0.172
	Uneducated	63	28.70	8.24		
Access to Financial Resources	Educated	67	18.99	4.95	5.087	0.025*
	Uneducated	63	19.16	4.59		

Business Planning and Strategy	Educated	67	51.79	9.85	3.632	0.057
	Uneducated	63	53.17	8.44		
Networking and Social Connections	Educated	67	19.43	4.17	0.317	0.573
	Uneducated	63	19.21	4.31		
Market Understanding and Customer Focus	Educated	67	26.84	4.39	6.860	0.009*
	Uneducated	63	26.38	3.84		
Resilience and Adaptability	Educated	67	31.88	6.71	0.635	0.426
	Uneducated	63	32.03	6.49		
Access to Support Services	Educated	67	21.21	4.44	0.430	0.512
	Uneducated	63	21.46	4.25		
Regulatory and Legal Knowledge	Educated	67	20.66	3.80	0.087	0.768
	Uneducated	63	21.18	3.83		

The analysis presented in Table 4.1 compares the perceptions of success factors between educated and non-educated women entrepreneurs. The findings reveal that for most factors, there are no significant differences in perceptions between the two groups. For instance, the importance of Family Support is rated similarly by both educated (Mean = 34.18, S.D. = 6.53) and uneducated (Mean = 33.90, S.D. = 7.17) entrepreneurs, with a $|Z|$ value of 1.886 and a significance (Sig) value of 0.170, indicating no statistically significant difference.

Similarly, Personal Motivation is perceived nearly equally by educated (Mean = 30.27, S.D. = 8.28) and non-educated (Mean = 29.64, S.D. = 8.47) entrepreneurs, with a $|Z|$ value of 0.150 and a Sig value of 0.699, again showing no significant difference. The factor Skills and Expertise also shows negligible difference, with educated entrepreneurs having a mean score of 28.78 (S.D. = 7.62) and uneducated entrepreneurs scoring 28.70 (S.D. = 8.24), resulting in a $|Z|$ value of 1.870 and a Sig value of 0.172.

However, two success factors reveal statistically significant differences. Access to Financial Resources is perceived more importantly by uneducated entrepreneurs (Mean = 19.16, S.D. = 4.59) compared to their educated counterparts (Mean = 18.99, S.D. = 4.95), with a $|Z|$ value of 5.087 and a Sig value of 0.025, indicating a significant difference. Additionally, Market Understanding and Customer Focus is rated higher by educated entrepreneurs (Mean = 26.84, S.D. = 4.39) than by uneducated ones (Mean = 26.38, S.D. = 3.84), with a $|Z|$ value of 6.860 and a Sig value of 0.009, also showing statistical significance.

For other factors like Business Planning and Strategy, Networking and Social Connections, Resilience and Adaptability, Access to Support Services, and Regulatory and Legal Knowledge, the differences in perceptions are minimal and not statistically significant, as indicated by their respective $|Z|$ and Sig values. For example, the perception of Business Planning and Strategy shows mean scores of 51.79 (S.D. = 9.85) for educated and 53.17 (S.D. = 8.44) for uneducated entrepreneurs, with a $|Z|$ value of 3.632 and a Sig value of 0.057, which is close to significance but still not conclusive.

Table 2: Ranking Test- Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

S.No	Challenges	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1	Market Competition	33129	45.51	VIII
2	Work-Life Balance	31688	44.53	IX
3	Networking Opportunities	31461	43.22	X
4	Regulatory Hurdles	34908	47.95	VII
5	Gender Bias	44528	61.66	I
6	Skills and Training	40764	55.99	II
7	Legal Barriers	40200	55.22	III
8	Lack of Mentorship	39968	54.90	IV
9	Societal Expectations	36999	50.82	V
10	Access to Capital	35193	48.34	VI

The analysis of challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, as presented in Table 5.7, reveals that gender bias is the most significant obstacle, ranking first with the highest total score of 44,528 and a mean score of 61.66. This underscores the pervasive impact of gender-related discrimination on the entrepreneurial experiences of women. Following closely is the challenge of skills and training, which ranks second with a total score of 40,764 and a mean score of 55.99, highlighting the critical need for access to professional development opportunities. Legal barriers also pose a significant challenge, ranked third with a total score of 40,200 and a mean score of 55.22, indicating the difficulties women entrepreneurs face in navigating complex legal requirements.

The lack of mentorship is another major challenge, ranked fourth with a total score of 39,968 and a mean score of 54.90, reflecting the importance of guidance and networking support. Societal expectations come next, ranked fifth, with a total score of 36,999 and a mean score of 50.82, indicating the ongoing societal pressures that can hinder women's entrepreneurial activities. Although access to capital is crucial, it ranks sixth with a total score of 35,193 and a mean score of 48.34, suggesting that financial challenges, while significant, are perceived as less critical than gender bias or the need for skills.

Regulatory hurdles rank seventh, with a total score of 34,908 and a mean score of 47.95, showing that complex regulatory requirements are recognized as obstacles, though not as pressing as other challenges. Market competition, work-life balance, and networking opportunities are ranked eighth, ninth, and tenth, respectively, with the latter being perceived as the least significant challenge, reflected in its lowest total score of 31,461 and a mean score of 43.22. These findings indicate that while market competition and work-life balance are concerns, they are less impactful than the more personal and societal challenges women entrepreneurs face.

Table 3: Motivations and Driving Factors for Women Starting A Business

Factors	Level of Satisfaction					
	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total Score
Financial Independence	49	47	61	23	25	205
	6.9%	6.6%	8.6%	3.2%	3.5%	29.0%
Passion and Interest	27	52	35	20	31	165
	3.8%	7.3%	4.9%	2.8%	4.4%	23.3%
Flexibility and Work-Life Balance	20	35	35	13	31	134
	2.8%	4.9%	4.9%	1.8%	4.4%	18.9%
Support from Family and Friends	13	40	23	8	17	101
	1.8%	5.6%	3.2%	1.1%	2.4%	14.3%
Necessity	10	40	24	10	19	103
	1.4%	5.6%	3.4%	1.4%	2.7%	14.5%
Total Score	119	214	178	74	123	708
	16.8%	30.2%	25.1%	10.5%	17.4%	100.0%

The analysis of the motivations and driving factors for women starting a business reveals varying levels of satisfaction. Financial independence emerges as the most significant motivator, with 49 women (6.9%) reporting high satisfaction and 47 (6.6%) satisfied, making it the most common factor at 29.0% overall. Passion and interest also play a crucial role, with 27 women (3.8%) highly satisfied and 52 (7.3%) satisfied, accounting for 23.3% of the total respondents. Flexibility and work-life balance is another important factor, contributing to 18.9% of the responses, though it also has a notable portion of dissatisfaction. Support from family and friends and necessity are less influential, with satisfaction levels at 14.3% and 14.5% respectively. While these factors drive many women to entrepreneurship, the overall satisfaction levels vary, with some respondents feeling neutral or dissatisfied, indicating that the motivations to start a business do not always translate to high levels of satisfaction in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

Scope for Further Study:

The findings of this study suggest several areas for further research that could deepen our understanding of women entrepreneurs in the Chengalpattu district. Future studies could focus on conducting longitudinal research to track how perceptions of success factors and challenges evolve over time, offering insights into the long-term impacts on business outcomes. Additionally, examining the effectiveness of specific educational programs and skill development initiatives could identify key strategies that help women entrepreneurs overcome barriers such as access to financial resources and market understanding. Comparative studies across different regions could also reveal regional variations, contributing to a broader understanding of the challenges and success factors at a national level. Exploring the role of technology and innovation in supporting women entrepreneurs, along with the influence of cultural and societal norms, could provide valuable insights into external factors shaping their entrepreneurial experiences.

Recommendations:

- Improve training programs focused on essential business skills and financial management.
- Increase access to various funding options, including grants and loans.
- Provide financial literacy workshops to help women manage and secure capital.
- Implement measures to reduce gender bias in funding and support services.
- Expand mentorship programs to connect women entrepreneurs with experienced advisors.
- Create more networking opportunities to build connections with industry peers.
- Offer practical resources for navigating legal and regulatory requirements.

Conclusion:

The study of women entrepreneurs in the Chengalpattu district reveals crucial insights into the factors influencing their success and the challenges they face. The comparison between educated and uneducated entrepreneurs showed that while most success factors were perceived similarly, significant differences emerged in the areas of Access to Financial Resources and Market Understanding and Customer Focus, indicating the role of education in shaping these perceptions. Additionally, the ranking of challenges highlighted Gender Bias as the most significant obstacle, followed closely by the need for Skills and Training. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions to address both educational disparities and societal challenges, thereby creating a more supportive environment for women entrepreneurs in the region. By enhancing access to resources, improving market knowledge, and combating gender bias, it is possible to foster greater success and empowerment among women entrepreneurs in Chengalpattu.

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