

Challenges and Opportunities Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in MSMEs: An Analytical Study with Reference to Coimbatore City

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurship plays an important role in economic growth and social development. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector provides many opportunities for women to start and manage their own businesses. This helps women achieve financial independence and create employment opportunities. This study focuses on the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in MSMEs in Coimbatore City. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature. Primary data were collected from 120 women entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire, and secondary data were collected from books, journals, and government reports. The Chi-square test was used to analyse the relationship between demographic factors such as age, qualification, and type of enterprise and the level of satisfaction. The results show that there is no significant relationship between demographic factors and the level of satisfaction of women entrepreneurs. The study also found that women entrepreneurs face challenges such as financial problems, lack of technical knowledge, and difficulty in balancing family and business responsibilities. At the same time, they have opportunities through government schemes, training programs, and digital platforms. The study concludes that proper financial support, training programs, and government assistance can help women entrepreneurs improve their business performance and contribute to economic development.

Key Words: Women Entrepreneurship, MSMEs, Challenges, Opportunities, Business Growth, Coimbatore City.

1.Introduction:

Women entrepreneurship is a key factor in the economic growth and development of a nation. Nowadays, many women are entering the business field and establishing enterprises under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. MSMEs play a vital role in creating employment opportunities, increasing industrial production, and generating income. Women entrepreneurs not only achieve financial independence through their businesses but also contribute to the overall well-being of their families and society.

In India, various government schemes and support initiatives have been introduced to promote and encourage women entrepreneurs. Despite this support, women continue to face several challenges such as limited financial resources, lack of technical knowledge, social and cultural barriers, insufficient training, and the pressure of managing both family and business responsibilities. At the same time, there are many emerging opportunities, including access to government assistance, digital marketing platforms, entrepreneurship development programs, and expanding market demand.

Coimbatore City, a leading industrial center in Tamil Nadu, has a strong base of MSMEs operating in sectors like textiles, manufacturing, food processing, and services. A significant number of women in Coimbatore are engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Hence, it becomes essential to examine the specific challenges they encounter and the opportunities available to them.

This study focuses on analysing the barriers and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in MSMEs in Coimbatore City and evaluates how these factors affect their business growth and overall performance.

Therefore, it is necessary to undertake a comprehensive study to examine the specific challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in MSMEs in Coimbatore City and to explore the opportunities available to enhance their growth and

long-term sustainability. This study seeks to evaluate these barriers and opportunities and to assess their influence on the performance, expansion, and overall development of women-owned enterprises.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. **Dr. R. Meenakshi (2021)**, in her study, examined the increasing involvement of women in the MSME sector and emphasized the significance of financial literacy and digital skill development in ensuring business sustainability. The research indicated that women entrepreneurs who obtained adequate training and institutional assistance demonstrated improved performance in areas such as profitability, market reach, and customer retention.
2. **Dr. K. Anitha and Dr. P. Kalaiselvi (2022)**, in their research on women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, highlighted the importance of enhanced credit access and effective marketing support mechanisms. The study found that utilization of government schemes and participation in self-help groups strengthened the confidence and decision-making abilities of women entrepreneurs, resulting in improved business performance and growth.
3. **Dr. S. Revathi (2023)**, in her study on women-owned MSMEs, examined the impact of digital platforms and e-commerce on business development. The research revealed that women entrepreneurs who embraced digital marketing strategies were able to widen their market reach and improve sales performance. However, the study also pointed out persistent challenges, including inadequate technical skills and limited infrastructural support, which restricted their full potential for growth.
4. **Dr. Latha Subramanian (2024)**, in her recent study, analyzed the various challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector, highlighting problems such as insufficient collateral security, gender discrimination, and the difficulty of managing both business and family responsibilities. The research concluded that effective policy measures, skill development initiatives, and better access to financial resources are crucial for strengthening women entrepreneurs and increasing their role in economic growth and development.

3. METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK:

3.1 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

- To analyze the opportunities and support systems available for women entrepreneurs, including government schemes, financial assistance, and training programs.
- To study the role of digital platforms and marketing strategies in the growth and development of women-owned MSMEs
- To explore the opportunities available for women entrepreneurs in both the manufacturing and service sectors.

3.2 SCOPE OF STUDY:

1. The study focuses on women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector of Coimbatore City, covering both manufacturing and service industries such as textiles, food processing, and services.
2. It examines the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, including financial, technical, and social barriers, and explores opportunities through government schemes, training programs, incubation centers, and digital platforms.
3. The study analyses how these challenges and opportunities affect business growth, sustainability, and performance, providing insights for policymakers and organizations to support women entrepreneurship.

3.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Women entrepreneurs play an important role in the growth of the economy, especially in the MSME sector. Many women have started their own businesses and contribute to employment and income generation. The government has also introduced several schemes and programs to support women entrepreneurs. However, women entrepreneurs still face many problems in running their businesses. These problems include lack of finance, limited technical

knowledge, lack of training, marketing difficulties, and the challenge of managing both family and business responsibilities. These issues may affect the growth and success of their enterprises. At the same time, women entrepreneurs also have opportunities such as government support, training programs, and digital marketing platforms. Therefore, it is important to study the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs. This study focuses on women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector in Coimbatore City and examines how these challenges and opportunities affect their business activities and satisfaction level.

3.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- ✓ The study is limited only to women entrepreneurs in MSMEs in Coimbatore City, so the findings may not be applicable to other regions or states.
- ✓ The study is based on a sample size of 120 respondents, which may not fully represent all women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector.
- ✓ The research mainly depends on primary data collected through questionnaires, and the responses are based on the personal opinions of the respondents.
- ✓ The study focuses only on selected demographic factors such as age, qualification, and type of enterprise, while other factors influencing business performance were not examined in detail.
- ✓ Due to time and resource constraints, the study could not cover a larger geographical area or a larger number of respondents.

3.5. RESEARCH STUDY:

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature, focusing on women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector of Coimbatore City, covering both manufacturing and service industries. The main objective is to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs and assess their impact on business performance.

A total of 120 women entrepreneurs have been selected as respondents using purposive sampling. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaires, while secondary data is obtained from government reports, research papers, and MSME records.

The collected data is analyzed using the Chi-Square test, which helps to examine the association between categorical variables, such as demographic factors (age, education, marital status) and challenges or opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs. This method provides insights into patterns and relationships that affect the growth and performance of women-owned MSMEs.

4. ANALYSIS & INTERPREATION:

ASSOCIATION ATTRIBUTES BETWEEN SATISFACTION AND AGE

Table 4.1

AGE	MODE OF SATISFACTION			TOTAL	CHI SQUARE VALUE	SIG
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW			
BELOW 25	13 (52)	6 (24)	6 (24)	25 (100)		
25-30	15 (34.88)	17 (39.53)	11 (25.58)	43 (100)		

30-45	8 (32)	5 (20)	12 (48)	25 (100)	9.500	.147
8ABOVE 45	6 (22.22)	10 (37.03)	11 (40.74)	27 (100)		
TOTAL	42 (35)	38 (31.66)	40 (33.33)	120 (100)		

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

Interpretation:

The table shows the relationship between the age of respondents and their level of satisfaction. Among respondents below 25 years, most have high satisfaction (52%), while 24% have medium and 24% have low satisfaction. In the 25–30 years age group, the majority have medium satisfaction (39.53%), followed by 34.88% with high satisfaction and 25.58% with low satisfaction. Among respondents aged 30–45 years, most have low satisfaction (48%), while 32% have high satisfaction and 20% have medium satisfaction. In the above 45 years group, 40.74% have low satisfaction, 37.03% have medium satisfaction, and 22.22% have high satisfaction. The Chi-square value is 9.500 and the significance value is 0.147, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between age and level of satisfaction.

ASSOCIATION ATTRIBUTES BETWEEN SATISFACTION AND QUALIFICATION

Table 4.2

QUALIFICATION	MODE OF SATISFACTION			TOTAL	CHI SQUARE VALUE	SIG
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW			
SCHOOL LEVEL	12 (37.5)	8 (25)	12 (37.5)	32 (100)	1.733	.943
DIPLOMA	11 (39.28)	8 (28.57)	9 (32.14)	28 (100)		
UG	10 (30.30)	12 (36.36)	11 (33.33)	33 (100)		
PG	9 (33.33)	10 (37.03)	8 (29.62)	27 (100)		
TOTAL	42 (35)	38 (31.66)	40 (33.33)	120 (100)		

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

Interpretation:

The table shows the relationship between qualification of respondents and their level of satisfaction (high, medium, and low). Among respondents with school level education, 37.5% have high satisfaction, 25% have medium satisfaction, and 37.5% have low satisfaction. For diploma holders, 39.28% have high satisfaction, 28.57% have medium satisfaction, and 32.14% have low satisfaction. Among UG respondents, 36.36% have medium satisfaction, 33.33% have low satisfaction, and 30.30% have high satisfaction. For PG respondents, 37.03% have medium satisfaction, 33.33% have high satisfaction, and 29.62% have low satisfaction. Overall, 35% of respondents have high satisfaction, 31.66% have medium satisfaction, and 33.33% have low satisfaction. The chi-square value is 1.733 and the significance value is 0.943, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between qualification and level of satisfaction among the respondents.

ASSOCIATION ATTRIBUTES BETWEEN SATISFACTION AND TYPES OF ENTERPRISES

Table 4.3

TYPES	MODE OF SATISFICATION			TOTAL	CHI SQUARE VALUE	SIG
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW			
MICRO	15 (32.60)	15 (32.60)	16 (34.78)	46 (100)	1.944	.746
SMALL	13 (35.13)	14 (37.83)	10 (27.02)	37 (100)		
MEDIUM	14 (37.83)	9 (24.32)	14 (37.83)	37 (100)		
TOTAL	42 (35)	38 (31.66)	40 (33.33)	120 (100)		

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

Interpretation:

The table shows the relationship between types of enterprises and the level of satisfaction. Among micro enterprises, most respondents have low satisfaction (34.78%), while 32.60% have high satisfaction and 32.60% have medium satisfaction. In small enterprises, most respondents have medium satisfaction (37.83%), followed by 35.13% with high satisfaction and 27.02% with low satisfaction. Among medium enterprises, 37.83% have high satisfaction and 37.83% have low satisfaction, while 24.32% have medium satisfaction. The Chi-square value is 1.944 and the significance value is 0.746, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the types of enterprises and the level of satisfaction.

5. FINDINGS:

1. The study found that most of the respondents belong to different age groups, and the level of satisfaction varies slightly across these groups. However, the Chi-square test shows that there is no significant relationship between age and level of satisfaction, as the significance value (0.147) is greater than 0.05.
2. The analysis of qualification indicates that respondents with school level, diploma, UG, and PG education show different levels of satisfaction, but the variation is not significant. The Chi-square result (1.733) with a significance value of 0.943 confirms that qualification does not significantly influence the level of satisfaction among women entrepreneurs.
3. The study also examined the relationship between types of enterprises (micro, small, and medium) and satisfaction levels. Although micro enterprises show slightly higher low satisfaction and small enterprises show more medium satisfaction, the Chi-square value (1.944) and significance value (0.746) indicate that there is no significant association between the type of enterprise and satisfaction level.
4. Overall, the study reveals that high, medium, and low satisfaction levels are almost evenly distributed among the respondents, with 35% reporting high satisfaction, 31.66% medium satisfaction, and 33.33% low satisfaction.
5. The findings suggest that demographic factors such as age, qualification, and type of enterprise do not significantly affect the satisfaction level of women entrepreneurs in MSMEs in Coimbatore City.
6. Despite facing several challenges, women entrepreneurs continue to participate actively in the MSME sector, showing balanced levels of satisfaction across different categories.

SUGGESTIONS:

- **Provide skill development and training:** Regular training programs on entrepreneurship, financial management, digital marketing, and technical skills should be organized to improve the knowledge and capabilities of women entrepreneurs.
- **Increase awareness of government schemes:** Many women entrepreneurs are not fully aware of the available government schemes. Awareness programs, workshops, and seminars should be conducted to inform them about subsidies, financial assistance, and support initiatives.
- **Encourage the use of digital platforms:** Women entrepreneurs should be motivated to use digital marketing, social media, and e-commerce platforms to promote their products and reach wider markets.
- **Strengthen support networks:** Self-help groups, women entrepreneur associations, and mentoring programs should be strengthened to provide guidance, knowledge sharing, and support for business growth.
- **Provide better infrastructure and market support:** Government and local authorities should offer better infrastructure facilities, incubation centers, and market linkages to help women entrepreneurs improve their business performance and sustainability.

CONCLUSION:

Women entrepreneurship plays a significant role in the economic and social development of a country. The MSME sector offers wide opportunities for women to start and manage their own enterprises, which helps them achieve financial independence and improve their standard of living. This study focused on identifying the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in MSMEs in Coimbatore City. The results of the study show that women entrepreneurs have different levels of satisfaction in their business activities. However, the statistical analysis reveals that there is no significant relationship between demographic factors such as age, qualification, and type of enterprise

and the level of satisfaction. This indicates that women entrepreneurs, regardless of their background or type of enterprise, experience almost similar levels of satisfaction in running their businesses. Although women entrepreneurs face several challenges such as financial limitations, lack of technical skills, and difficulties in balancing family and business responsibilities, they continue to play an active role in the development of the MSME sector. With adequate financial support, effective training programs, government initiatives, and improved market opportunities, women entrepreneurs can enhance the growth and sustainability of their enterprises. Hence, promoting and supporting women entrepreneurship is essential for strengthening economic development and empowering women in society.

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