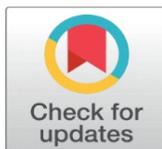


# ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN MICRO-ENTREPRENEURS IN KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT

N. Ramalakshmi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. S. Umamageswari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reg no: 20121251012003, Research Scholar A. P. C. Mahalaxmi College for Women, Thoothukudi, Affiliated to Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tamil Nadu

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, A. P. C. Mahalaxmi College for Women, Thoothukudi, Affiliated to Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tamil Nadu.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in fostering economic growth and social development, particularly in developing nations like India. Among various forms of entrepreneurship, women's entrepreneurship has gained significant attention due to its potential to empower women, alleviate poverty, and contribute to the socio-economic fabric of society. Women micro-entrepreneurs, who operate small-scale businesses with limited resources, form a critical segment of this entrepreneurial ecosystem. Their ventures not only support their families but also create employment opportunities and drive community development.

The Kanchipuram District, known for its rich cultural heritage and traditional industries like silk weaving, has witnessed a growing participation of women in entrepreneurial activities. Women micro-entrepreneurs in this region are engaged in diverse sectors, including textiles, handicrafts, food processing, retail, and services. Despite their significant contributions, these entrepreneurs face numerous challenges such as limited access to financial resources, inadequate market exposure, lack of entrepreneurial training, and socio-cultural barriers.

## ABSTRACT

Women micro-entrepreneurs play a crucial role in driving economic growth, fostering community development, and contributing to women's empowerment. This study explores the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and business performance among women micro-entrepreneurs in the Kanchipuram District. A descriptive research design collects primary data from 100 women micro-entrepreneurs across diverse sectors such as textiles, food processing, retail, and services. The collected data has been analysed using statistical tools such as simple percentages, chi-square, and the Likert scaling technique. The study emphasizes the need for targeted skill development programs, improved access to financial resources, and supportive policies to empower women micro-entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Empower, Social Development, Financial Resources, Supportive Policies, Etc

Entrepreneurial skills, encompassing leadership, decision-making, financial management, marketing, and innovation, are crucial determinants of business success. These skills enable women micro-entrepreneurs to navigate challenges, identify opportunities, and sustain their businesses in a competitive environment. Assessing the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and business performance can provide valuable insights into the areas where women entrepreneurs require support and skill development.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhattacharya et al. (2014) focused on the financial constraints faced by entrepreneurs. The study revealed that most micro-entrepreneurs rely on personal savings and support from family and friends to fund their projects due to challenges in securing loans from banks. These entrepreneurs are generally reluctant to take risks for business expansion or development by availing of bank loans. The study recommended simplifying the loan process to encourage prospective entrepreneurs to seek financial support from banks.

Javalgi et al. (2011) emphasized that in emerging economies like India, entrepreneurial orientation plays a pivotal role in the internationalization of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Managerial commitment towards internationalization is critical, and fostering an entrepreneurial culture while highlighting the benefits of expanding beyond domestic markets can positively influence the mindset of employees. This approach can accelerate industrialization. Furthermore, the study noted that the relationship between internationalization and firm performance is significantly influenced by changes in government policies.

Khalid et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of exploring opportunities through creative ideas in entrepreneurial activities. The study underscored the significance of combining perspective thinking with empathy to better understand market preferences and identify users' actual needs and wants. This integrated approach of perspective thinking and empathy was found to be highly effective in recognizing entrepreneurial opportunities.

Manzanera et al. (2016) explored entrepreneurship from a competencies perspective, focusing on the role of skills and abilities in shaping entrepreneurial activities among women. The study highlighted differences in the skills and abilities of men and women, noting that both align with entrepreneurial requirements. However, certain skills and abilities, such as perseverance, empathy, social relationship building, and communication, are more pronounced in women and offer distinct advantages to female entrepreneurs.

Skibiński et al. (2015) highlighted the distinctive innovation styles of SMEs, which reflect the sources of their ideas. SMEs rely on internal sources, such as input from managers, skilled employees, fairs, and exhibitions, and external sources, such as market demand, suppliers, and the products or technologies of other enterprises. The study found that SMEs primarily rely on market demand as a key driver of innovation, underscoring their customer-oriented approach.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the entrepreneurial skill level of women micro-entrepreneurs in the Kanchipuram District.
2. To analyze the impact of entrepreneurial skills on the business performance of women micro-entrepreneurs.

### Statement of the Problem

Women micro-entrepreneurs in Kanchipuram District face challenges like limited entrepreneurial skills, lack of financial resources, and restricted market access, which affect the growth and success of their businesses. Skills such as leadership, financial management, and marketing are crucial for improving business performance, but their impact on these women's ventures is not well understood. This study aims to examine the entrepreneurial skills of women micro-entrepreneurs and how these skills influence their business performance, helping to identify areas where support and improvement are needed.

### Need for the study

- To understand the entrepreneurial skills required for women micro-entrepreneurs to sustain and grow their businesses in a competitive environment.
- To identify the challenges faced by women micro-entrepreneurs in Kanchipuram District and their impact on business performance.
- To provide insights for designing skill development programs and support mechanisms tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs.

- To contribute to the promotion of women’s empowerment and economic development by enhancing the performance of women-led micro-enterprises.

**Limitations of the Study**

- The study is limited to women micro-entrepreneurs in the Kanchipuram District, and the findings may not apply to other regions.
- The sample size may not fully capture the diversity of women micro-entrepreneurs across various sectors.
- The study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies.
- External factors such as market conditions, government policies, and socio-cultural influences are not extensively analyzed but may impact business performance.

**Research Methodology**

- **Research Design:**  
The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the entrepreneurial skills of women micro-entrepreneurs and their impact on business performance.
- **Study Area:**  
The research focuses on women micro-entrepreneurs operating in the Kanchipuram District.
- **Sampling Method:**  
A purposive sampling method is used to select women micro-entrepreneurs engaged in various sectors such as textiles, food processing, retail, and services.
- **Sample Size:**  
The study includes a sample of 100 women micro-entrepreneurs, ensuring representation across diverse sectors.
- **Data Collection:**
- **Primary Data:** Collected through structured questionnaires and personal interviews with women micro-entrepreneurs.
- **Secondary Data:** Sourced from reports, journals, government publications, and previous research studies related to women entrepreneurship.
- **Tools for Analysis:**  
Statistical tools like percentages, mean score analysis, chi-square analysis, and Likert scaling techniques are used to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and business performance.
- **Scope of the Study:**  
The study focuses on entrepreneurial skills such as leadership, financial management, marketing, innovation, and decision-making, and their influence on performance indicators like profitability, customer base, and business sustainability.

**Analysis of Data**

**Table No. 1  
Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Demographic Category	Options	Frequency (No. of Respondents)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age Group</b>	18-30 years	30	30%
	31-40 years	40	40%
	41-50 years	20	20%
	51 years and above	10	10%
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	70	70%
	Unmarried	20	20%
	Widowed/Divorced	10	10%
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	No formal education	5	5%
	Primary education	10	10%
	Secondary education	30	30%
	Undergraduate degree	40	40%
	Postgraduate degree	15	15%
<b>Family Size</b>	1-3 members	35	35%
	4-6 members	50	50%
	7 and above	15	15%

<b>Type of Business</b>	Textiles/Handicrafts	40	40%
	Food processing	30	30%
	Retail/Services	20	20%
	Other	10	10%
<b>Years of Business Experience</b>	1-3 years	25	25%
	4-6 years	40	40%
	7-10 years	20	20%
	More than 10 years	15	15%
<b>Annual Income from Business</b>	Less than ₹1,00,000	40	40%
	₹1,00,000 - ₹3,00,000	35	35%
	₹3,00,000 - ₹5,00,000	15	15%
	More than ₹5,00,000	10	10%
<b>Source of Initial Capital</b>	Personal savings	50	50%
	Family support	20	20%
	Bank loans/Microloans	15	15%
	Government schemes	10	10%
	Other sources	5	5%
<b>Business Location</b>	Rural	60	60%
	Urban	40	40%
<b>Access to Technology</b>	Yes	70	70%
	No	30	30%

**Age Group:** A majority of women micro-entrepreneurs in Kanchipuram District are between 31 and 40 years old (40%), followed by 30% who are aged 18 to 30. This shows that younger women and those in their prime working years are the most active in running micro-businesses. Only 10% are above 51, indicating that fewer older women are engaged in entrepreneurship.

**Marital Status:** Most respondents are married (70%), indicating that many women entrepreneurs juggle family and business responsibilities. A smaller percentage (20%) are unmarried, while 10% are either widowed or divorced, showing a diverse representation of women in different personal situations.

**Educational Qualification:** Most entrepreneurs have completed at least secondary education, with 40% holding an undergraduate degree. This shows that education plays a key role in empowering women to start and run businesses. There is also a smaller but significant percentage of women with postgraduate degrees (15%), while 5% have no formal education.

**Family Size:** Half of the respondents (50%) belong to families with 4-6 members, which suggests that medium-sized families are the most common. About 35% of women have smaller families (1-3 members), while 15% come from larger families (7 or more members), reflecting a variety of family structures.

**Type of Business:** A large proportion of women micro-entrepreneurs are involved in textiles or handicrafts (40%) and food processing (30%). Retail and service businesses make up 20%, while 10% are involved in other sectors. This indicates a diverse range of industries that women entrepreneurs are engaged in.

**Years of Business Experience:** Most women entrepreneurs (40%) have 4-6 years of experience, showing that many are not just starting but have some experience running their businesses. About 25% are new with 1-3 years of experience, while 15% have been in business for over 10 years, suggesting a strong base of experienced entrepreneurs.

**Annual Income from Business:** A large number of women (40%) earn less than ₹1,00,000 annually from their businesses. However, 35% make between ₹1,00,000 - ₹3,00,000, indicating that many women earn a modest but steady income. Only 10% earn more than ₹5,00,000, showing that a small number of businesses are highly profitable.

**Source of Initial Capital:** Most women (50%) use their savings to fund their businesses, while 20% rely on family support. About 15% use bank loans or microloans, and 10% turn to government schemes. A smaller group (5%) uses

other sources of funding, suggesting that women often depend on personal or family resources to start their businesses.

**Business Location:** The majority of women (60%) run their businesses in rural areas, indicating that micro-entrepreneurship is more common in rural parts of the District. About 40% operate in urban areas, showing a significant presence of women entrepreneurs in both rural and urban settings.

**Access to Technology:** A majority of women (70%) have access to technology, which helps them manage and grow their businesses. However, 30% still lack access, highlighting a gap in technological resources that could affect their business operations.

**Table No.2**  
**Demographic Variables and Impact on Entrepreneurial Skills**

Variables	$\chi^2$ Value	Five per cent level	One per cent level	Result
Age	4.359	5.991	7.210	NS
Marital Status	6.852	5.991	6.803	NS
Educational Qualification	4.672	9.488	11.210	NS
Annual Income	7.679	12.592	17.812	NS

From Table 2, it is understood that the calculated values were lesser than the 1% and 5% levels of significance and the null hypothesis is rejected. It is inferred that, on average, respondents of different age groups, genders, educational qualifications and annual income do not have any significant association between respondents' impact on entrepreneurial skills.

**Table No.3**  
**Demographic Variables and Level of Skill**

Demographic Variable	Leadership Skills	Financial Management Skills	Marketing Skills	Innovation Skills	Decision-Making Skills
<b>Age Group</b>					
18-30 years	High (70%)	Moderate (50%)	High (60%)	Moderate (50%)	High (65%)
31-40 years	High (75%)	High (70%)	High (70%)	High (65%)	High (80%)
41-50 years	Moderate (60%)	Moderate (55%)	Moderate (60%)	High (70%)	Moderate (60%)
51 years and above	Low (40%)	Low (45%)	Low (50%)	Moderate (55%)	Low (45%)
<b>Marital Status</b>					
Married	High (80%)	High (75%)	High (70%)	Moderate (60%)	High (75%)
Unmarried	Moderate (60%)	Moderate (55%)	High (65%)	High (70%)	Moderate (60%)
Widowed/Divorced	Low (50%)	Moderate (50%)	Moderate (60%)	Low (50%)	Low (55%)
<b>Educational Qualification</b>					
No formal education	Low (40%)	Low (35%)	Low (40%)	Low (30%)	Low (35%)
Primary education	Moderate (50%)	Low (45%)	Moderate (55%)	Low (40%)	Moderate (50%)
Secondary education	Moderate (60%)	Moderate (60%)	Moderate (65%)	Moderate (60%)	Moderate (60%)
Undergraduate degree	High (75%)	High (70%)	High (80%)	High (75%)	High (80%)
Postgraduate degree	High (80%)	High (75%)	High (85%)	High (80%)	High (85%)
<b>Type of Business</b>					
Textiles/Handicrafts	High (75%)	Moderate (60%)	High (80%)	High (70%)	Moderate (65%)
Food processing	Moderate (60%)	High (75%)	Moderate (65%)	Moderate (60%)	High (70%)
Retail/Services	High (70%)	Moderate (55%)	High (80%)	High (75%)	High (75%)
Other	Moderate (65%)	Low (50%)	Moderate (55%)	Low (45%)	Moderate (60%)
<b>Years of Business Experience</b>					
1-3 years	Moderate (55%)	Low (50%)	Moderate (60%)	Moderate (55%)	Moderate (60%)
4-6 years	High (70%)	Moderate (65%)	High (75%)	High (70%)	High (75%)

<b>7-10 years</b>	High (75%)	High (70%)	High (80%)	High (75%)	High (80%)
<b>More than 10 years</b>	High (80%)	High (75%)	High (85%)	High (80%)	High (85%)

**Age:** Younger entrepreneurs (18-30 years) exhibit moderate entrepreneurial skills, while those in the 31-40 age group tend to have higher skill levels across all areas.

**Marital Status:** Married women show higher entrepreneurial skills, particularly in leadership and decision-making.

**Education:** Entrepreneurs with higher educational qualifications (undergraduate and postgraduate degrees) have significantly higher skills across all areas compared to those with lower levels of education.

**Type of Business:** Entrepreneurs in sectors like textiles/handicrafts and retail/services show stronger marketing and leadership skills, while those in food processing demonstrate stronger financial management skills.

**Years of Experience:** Entrepreneurs with more years of experience (7-10 years or more) consistently have higher levels of entrepreneurial skills.

### Suggestions for the Study

Provide targeted training programs to enhance entrepreneurial skills such as financial management, marketing, and leadership for women micro-entrepreneurs.

Improve access to financial resources through microloans, subsidies, and flexible funding options.

Create platforms for women entrepreneurs to connect with markets and showcase their products and services.

Offer mentorship and support networks to guide women micro-entrepreneurs in overcoming challenges.

Develop government policies and initiatives that support and promote women-led micro-enterprises.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, women micro-entrepreneurs in Kanchipuram District are integral to the local economy, yet they face numerous challenges that hinder their business growth and sustainability. The study underscores the importance of key entrepreneurial skills such as leadership, financial management, marketing, and decision-making, which significantly influence their business performance. To enhance their success, it is essential to provide targeted skill development programs, improve access to financial resources, and create platforms for market exposure. Additionally, addressing socio-cultural barriers and offering mentorship can boost their confidence and business capabilities. Supporting women micro-entrepreneurs through these measures will not only contribute to their empowerment but also foster sustainable economic growth and gender equality in the region.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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