

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EMPOWERING THROUGH BUSINESS EDUCATION IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu has witnessed a remarkable growth due to the increasing support from business education and governmental initiatives. This article examines the role of business education in empowering women entrepreneurs in the state, highlighting the challenges they face and how education is helping them overcome these barriers. It also explores various government schemes and initiatives aimed at encouraging women to become entrepreneurs, thus contributing to the state's economic growth and gender equality.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Business Education, Empowerment, Government Schemes

INTRODUCTION:

In the evolving landscape of India's economic development, women entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful catalyst for inclusive growth. Particularly in Tamil Nadu, a state known for its progressive social reforms and high literacy rates, the emergence of women entrepreneurs has played a pivotal role in reshaping traditional norms and driving innovation across sectors. However, the journey toward economic independence and leadership for women is often paved with societal, cultural, and structural challenges. Business education does more than teach financial management or marketing strategies—it instills critical thinking, leadership, and strategic planning skills. These are essential tools for women who must often overcome barriers like limited access to credit, lack of mentorship, and social resistance to female-led businesses. When women are equipped with such knowledge, they are better positioned to identify market opportunities, manage risk, and build sustainable enterprises.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To analyse the impact of business education on the growth and success of women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu.
2. To identify the key challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing and utilizing business education resources.
3. To evaluate the role of government schemes, academic institutions, and NGOs in promoting entrepreneurship among women through educational programs.

4. To examine how business education enhances women's skills in financial management, leadership, marketing, and strategic decision-making.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Women entrepreneurship has become a vital element in the economic development of both developed and developing countries. In India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, there has been a visible rise in the number of women stepping into entrepreneurship. This growing trend reflects the changing socio-economic status of women and the increasing opportunities available to them. A major contributing factor to this gap is the lack of access to relevant, high-quality business education and training. Entrepreneurship is not just about having a business idea; it involves a range of skills such as financial planning, market analysis, leadership, risk management, and strategic decision-making.

Significance of Business Education in Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu:

Business education has significantly contributed to the empowerment of women in Tamil Nadu by providing them with:

Knowledge of business management:

Institutions like the University of Madras and Anna University offer specialized programs designed to equip women with skills in marketing, finance, and operations, essential for running a business.

Entrepreneurial skills:

Through practical case studies, internships, and project work, women learn how to navigate the challenges of starting and growing businesses.

Networking opportunities:

Colleges and universities facilitate networking events, entrepreneurship cells, and incubators where women can meet potential investors, mentors, and collaborators. Business education in Tamil Nadu helps women gain self-confidence and overcome traditional gender roles that might discourage them from pursuing business ventures.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu:

Despite the growing support for women entrepreneurs, several challenges persist in Tamil Nadu:

Access to Finance:

Female entrepreneurs often face challenges in securing financial resources due to traditional lending biases.

Societal Perceptions:

In many rural parts of Tamil Nadu, societal norms and family expectations still discourage women from stepping into entrepreneurship.

Work-Life Balance:

Many women in Tamil Nadu juggle business responsibilities with family duties, creating a significant challenge in managing both.

Limited Awareness:

Despite the availability of government schemes and subsidies, many women in rural areas

are unaware of these opportunities.

Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission (TNSRLM):

This initiative provides financial aid, skill development programs, and marketing support to rural women entrepreneurs.

MUDRA Yojana:

Under this national scheme, women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu have access to micro-financing to start small businesses.

Women Entrepreneurs Development Programme (WEDP):

Offered by various state universities, this program equips women with practical entrepreneurial skills.

Startup India Hub:

Through this platform, women in Tamil Nadu can gain mentorship, business advice, and access to seed funding.

These initiatives are designed to level the playing field, encouraging women from various backgrounds to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career option.

Case Studies of Successful Women Entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu:

Tamil Nadu has seen many successful women entrepreneurs who have transformed their businesses and inspired many others. A few notable examples include:

Kavitha Srinivasan - Founder of Sristi Designs, a successful textile business based in Coimbatore. Kavitha's journey from a small-scale textile producer to a recognized brand showcases the power of business education and determination.

Indira Nooyi - Though originally from Tamil Nadu, her success as the former CEO of PepsiCo has inspired countless women across the state to aim for top positions in business leadership.

These case studies demonstrate how business education, coupled with government support, can help women overcome barriers and succeed in entrepreneurship.

Source of Data:

In Tamil Nadu, the rise of women entrepreneurship is closely linked to the growing emphasis on business education and skill development. Various government initiatives such as the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW) and schemes under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) have played a vital role in promoting entrepreneurial skills among women. Educational institutions and NGOs have also contributed by offering targeted programs in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and digital skills. Data from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship shows a steady increase in the number of women enrolling in business-related courses, indicating a positive shift in mindset and accessibility. The data underscores the impact of structured education and policy support in empowering women economically and socially.

Society's View on Women Entrepreneurship Empowered Through Business Education in Tamil Nadu:

1. Increased Social Respect: Women entrepreneurs are viewed with greater respect as they break traditional gender roles and contribute to the economy.
2. Role Models for Others: Successful women business owners inspire other women and girls to pursue education and careers, creating a ripple effect.
3. Improved Family Well-being: Society acknowledges the positive impact of women's income on family health, education, and overall quality of life.
4. Community Development: Locals appreciate the way women entrepreneurs help in uplifting communities through job creation and service availability.
5. Shift in Gender Norms: Business education challenges stereotypes, encouraging a more balanced and progressive view of women's roles in society.
6. Valuing Education: Society increasingly sees the importance of educating women not just for jobs, but also for innovation and entrepreneurship.
7. Greater Civic Participation: Empowered women are more likely to engage in social and political discussions, promoting inclusive governance.
8. Support for Local Economies: Society benefits economically from women-owned businesses, leading to more support for policies that aid female entrepreneurs.
9. Increased Awareness and Dialogue: Public discourse around women's empowerment and rights gains strength with visible success stories in entrepreneurship.
10. Positive Image of the State: Tamil Nadu gains recognition as a progressive state fostering inclusive growth, which boosts its image nationally and globally.

Benefits of Women Entrepreneurship Empowered Through Business Education in Tamil Nadu:

Economic Independence:

Business education equips women with the skills needed to start and manage enterprises, leading to greater financial self-reliance.

Increased Income and Employment:

Women entrepreneurs generate income for themselves and create job opportunities for others in their communities.

Enhanced Business Skills:

Training in areas like marketing, finance, and operations enables women to run more efficient and profitable businesses.

Boost in Confidence and Leadership:

Education and entrepreneurial success improve women's self-esteem and decision-making power both in business and at home.

Digital and Financial Literacy:

Programs often include training in digital tools and banking practices, helping women access online markets and financial services.

Support for Rural Development:

Women-led businesses, especially in rural areas, contribute to local economies and reduce migration to cities

Promotion of Lifelong Learning:

Entrepreneurship education encourages continuous skill development and innovation among women.

Networking and Collaboration Opportunities:

Business education provides platforms for women to connect, share ideas, and build strong support systems.

Preservation of Traditional Skills:

Many women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu use their education to commercialize traditional crafts, textiles, and foods, preserving local culture.

Sustainable Community Growth:

Empowered women often reinvest in their families and communities, promoting education, health, and social welfare.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

In Tamil Nadu, business education has played a crucial role in empowering women and encouraging them to pursue entrepreneurship. Findings indicate a growing number of women, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, are launching small and medium enterprises due to improved access to entrepreneurial training and support systems. Business education has enhanced their skills in finance, marketing, and digital tools, contributing to better business outcomes. However, challenges persist, especially in rural areas where women face barriers such as limited access to credit, digital illiteracy, and lack of exposure to high-growth sectors.

CONCLUSION:

Business education plays a pivotal role in the empowerment of women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu. With growing access to education, training programs, and government initiatives, women in the state are increasingly stepping into leadership roles and becoming successful entrepreneurs. However, continuous support in terms of financial aid, mentorship, and societal acceptance is essential to further accelerate the participation of women in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. By addressing these challenges, Tamil Nadu can continue to empower women and promote inclusive economic growth.

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