

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Starting a business is never easy, but for women entrepreneurs, the journey can be even more complex due to a range of unique challenges. While progress has been made toward gender equality, women still face persistent barriers that their male counterparts are less likely to encounter. Recognizing these challenges is essential in building the support systems needed to help women-led ventures thrive. Access to capital remains one of the most significant hurdles. Women entrepreneurs are often met with higher rejection rates when seeking loans or venture capital. This funding gap can stem from unconscious investor bias, smaller professional networks, or a lack of representation in financial institutions—limiting opportunities to grow and scale their businesses.

Societal expectations and gender stereotypes further complicate the entrepreneurial journey. These biases can impact how women-led businesses are perceived, sometimes undermining their authority or credibility in the marketplace. Many women also face pressure to balance traditional caregiving roles with business responsibilities, adding emotional and logistical strain to their professional lives. Networking and mentorship—critical components of business success—are often less accessible to women. Without strong industry connections or mentorship opportunities, it can be difficult to access strategic advice, form partnerships, or gain key market insights that drive growth.

The work-life balance is another significant challenge. The intense demands of launching and running a business, combined with societal expectations around home and family responsibilities, can lead to stress and burnout—making it harder for women to sustain their entrepreneurial momentum. Lastly, systemic issues such as workplace discrimination, biased policies, and a lack of institutional support continue to hinder women entrepreneurs. These barriers manifest in many ways, from limited representation in leadership roles to inadequate support structures for women-led startups.

Addressing these challenges requires intentional efforts—from policy changes to inclusive investment practices—to build a more equitable entrepreneurial landscape where women can lead, grow, and succeed.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Examining the challenges that women face in launching new enterprises is vital, as it highlights the specific barriers that continue to shape their entrepreneurial experiences. While the economic contributions of women are increasingly acknowledged, many still encounter systemic hurdles—such as restricted access to capital, societal biases, and limited support networks. Gaining a deeper understanding of these obstacles is essential for informing the development of targeted policies and support systems that empower women in business, foster gender equity, and drive inclusive economic growth. Beyond its academic value, such a study serves as a catalyst for meaningful social change, helping to create a business environment in which women entrepreneurs can thrive and succeed.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study addresses the complex and multifaceted challenges that women entrepreneurs face when establishing new enterprises. Although the number of women entering the entrepreneurial arena continues to grow, many still encounter persistent obstacles that impede their progress. These include gender-based discrimination, limited access to funding, and a shortage of mentorship and networking opportunities. Additionally, societal expectations and cultural norms often act as deterrents, discouraging women from fully engaging in entrepreneurial pursuits. By examining these specific barriers, this study seeks to generate meaningful insights that can guide the development of effective support mechanisms and strategies to empower women entrepreneurs and enhance their chances of success.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the key challenges and obstacles that women entrepreneurs face in the process of launching new businesses.
- To examine the difficulties women encounter in accessing financial support, and to assess how these funding barriers influence the growth and sustainability of their ventures.
- To investigate the limitations women experience in building professional networks and connections, and to evaluate how these challenges impact their entrepreneurial development.

- To develop actionable recommendations and strategies aimed at enhancing support systems, policies, and resources that promote a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem for women.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study explores the distinct challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in launching new ventures, focusing on financial constraints, limited access to essential resources, inadequate mentorship opportunities, and the pressures of societal and cultural expectations. It takes into account the lived experiences of women striving to succeed in competitive markets while balancing personal, familial, and professional responsibilities. Through this analysis, the study seeks to offer meaningful insights into the types of support systems needed to empower women-led enterprises and foster a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial landscape.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Some entrepreneurs were occupied with their professional commitments and therefore were unwilling or unable to participate in completing the questionnaires.
- A few respondents were reluctant to share certain information, which may have impacted the accuracy and completeness of the data collected.
- Due to the geographical dispersion of the entrepreneurs, it was challenging to reach a broader sample size, limiting the scope of the study.

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