



# Women Entrepreneurship: An Instinctive Approach or Stroke of Luck

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## **Author's contribution**

*The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Entrepreneurship, known for its dynamic nature, has traditionally been associated with men, while women were primarily seen as homemakers. However, the landscape is changing with urbanization, although rural areas still face significant challenges. Rural women are gradually breaking free from the constraints that confined them to their homes, and an increasing number of them are venturing into entrepreneurship. This study aimed to explore the motivations that drive rural women to become entrepreneurs, whether it arises from an intrinsic desire or external circumstances. The researchers focused on semi-urban revenue circles in the Rajkot district of Gujarat, where 150 women entrepreneurs were surveyed. The study found that women were primarily influenced by pushing factors rather than external circumstances. Additionally, it highlighted the crucial role played by family members in supporting women entrepreneurs in their business endeavors. As rural women continue to pursue entrepreneurship, they should not overlook the invaluable assistance provided by their families.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship; rural women entrepreneurs; motivation; role of family.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is many things: a technique, an art form, a set of talents, a way of life, and a practice. Schumpeter regarded the entrepreneurial process as an engine for economic progress since entrepreneurs generate new goods, processes, markets, resources, and even organizations.

However, ever since the evolution of the word the entrepreneurship there has never been an accord over the definition and hence no shortage of definitions. Earlier the term entrepreneur had never been used by anyone. It was only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the term 'entrepreneur' had been coined by an Irishman and French Economist Richard Cantillon. At 5% significance level for 1 degree of freedom, 17.294 is greater than 3.341. This shows that family type affects the choice to become an entrepreneur.<sup>1</sup>

With the passage of time, entrepreneurship concept has been revolutionized and it is now considered to be one of the key factors which promotes and foster economic development. It may not be a sufficient requirement, but it is unquestionably a required prerequisite for economic progress. The significant role that entrepreneurship plays in the economic development of a country or region can be systematized as the promotion of capital formation, large scale employment opportunities, securing balanced regional development, equitable redistribution of wealth and income, increase in Gross Domestic Product, improvement in standard of living, promoting country's export trade, creating social change, and as a result a whole lot of overall development. As a result, entrepreneurship could be considered a driver for economic progress [1-3].

But the process of monetary expansion will remain futile if there is gender disparity. Entrepreneurship should not be seen as something that is only for men. This is a myopic perspective that is based on social inertia. Women are just as capable of being entrepreneurs as men, and they should be given the same opportunities to pursue their dreams.

Structural disadvantages of women have characterized entrepreneurship as male typed activity. But now nations all over the world have

realized that women entrepreneurship is indispensable for them to flourish economically. So, it is utmost necessary that economic activities be taken up by women more often. Already the third decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century has stepped in and now women dominance can be seen in almost all the segments of business. Earlier when women took up entrepreneurship it was basically an extension of their household work. Tailoring, knitting, pickle making were most of their entrepreneurial activities. Gradually they entered in the service sector and now in mainstream business too, women have been able to create a position for them. The policy makers now cannot neglect the importance of women right and cannot deny the power that the women possess as an economic force. Traditionally the rationale behind women entrepreneurship was to enhance women equity and social inclusion but now, development of women is making good economic sense.

Swami Vivekananda rightly supposed, "The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of women."<sup>2</sup> It is in this backdrop that this paper has been articulated in order to find out how and why women take up entrepreneurship, whether it is an instinctive approach or it is a stroke of luck. In these circumstances the role of their family will also be discussed.

Family background has always been an inspiring and motivating agency for every individual. Family background, family culture always induced the children to carry forward the family legacy where they have successfully created business empire. In this process, new business enterprises, new thoughts of ideas also emerge and thus the influence of family in entrepreneurship is an important factor to be explored.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Entrepreneurship has always been an area of interest for research. Various researchers all over have considerably enriched the stock of motivational aspects of women entrepreneurs with their constant research and valuable findings. Some research contributions are summarized here under-

- Orhan and Scott [6] studied on detailed as to why a woman become entrepreneur. A

<sup>1</sup>Khanka, S.S [4], "Entrepreneurship Development", S Chand Publications, Delhi

<sup>2</sup>[5]

comparison between developed and developing countries were made where it has been found that the need for achievement plays a vital force for women in choosing entrepreneurship in developed countries while in developing countries women were motivated by a combination of both pull and push factors.

- Kyro [7] forwarded a statement that women are unique individuals having their own traits, characteristics all different from gender perspective. With these unique features they can start their own business, be their own boss and can make their dreams turn into reality.
- Raman et al. [8] studied on 225 women entrepreneurs of Malaysia and their motivational aspects. Entrepreneurs engaged in manufacturing, trading and service sector in Small and Medium Industries of Malaysia had been selected which revealed that discovering and exploring their inner talent and skill and doing something remarkable and creative are the most motivating factors behind their entry into entrepreneurship.
- Singh [9] investigated what motivated and encouraged women to create their own enterprises. Persistent impediments that are specific to the Indian context were also identified. The lack of cultural acceptance of women as company owners, the priority put on family obligations, gender discrimination, and the minimal issue given to women by banks when it comes to loaning money are some of the basic and key impediments to women's entrepreneurship.
- Katoch et al. [10] studied on the encouraging and discouraging factors of women entrepreneurs in Ludhiana city. The study revealed that income supplement had been the top most priority, the encouraging factor while labour problem had been the most discouraging factor.
- Frank's [11] study focused on micro-entrepreneurship and its attraction to a sample of 39 little traders in Penang, Malaysia. Starting a microbusiness may be motivated by both need and personal inclination. The emergence of new sources of income is one apparent outcome of micro-entrepreneurship, but the phenomena also has ramifications for mobility, freedom, and the

reconfiguration of personal and professional boundaries.

- Matharu et al. [12] researched women company owners in Indore and found that the most important motivational elements for women business owners are ambition, a supportive environment, professional competence, and confidence. The least inspirational aspect has been the work environment.
- Dr. Ahmed [13] specially studied on the thrust and draw motivational issues of self-employed women entrepreneurs of Nagaon District, Assam. 100 such self-employed women entrepreneurs had been selected. The study revealed that the women turned up to self-employment as it was the last resort to earn income followed by supplementing their husband's income. The factor which motivated least was the desire to achieve something unlike their urban counterparts. While choosing self-employment the women entrepreneurs had some psychological and economic constraints too. Low self-perception and self-image and limited mobility and high cost of production had been their psychological and economic constraints respectively.

## 2.1 Statement of the Problem

No can deny the fact that for overall development of a nation economic participation of woman is a must. Economic empowerment of woman contributes to the overall growth of national economies. Empowerment of women through entrepreneurship has a direct relationship and it is therefore necessary to understand the relationship of entrepreneurship with the women. Though numerous studies have been undertaken in respect of women entrepreneurship and its various aspects like the problems that women entrepreneurs specifically face, their underlying factors of motivation, the role of the family and its effect on entrepreneurial decision making have not been touched as such. Also, rural women entrepreneurs have not been an exclusive sample of study in this aspect. This paper thus seeks to evaluate what drives a rural woman to become entrepreneur, whether it is by chance or by efficacy or situational impulsion which force them to become entrepreneurs or choose entrepreneurship as last hope. In these study rural women entrepreneurs from Guwahati city have been studied to find the rationale behind choosing entrepreneurship as an economic

activity. Considering this, the role of their family will also be introspected to draw an inference and make a comprehensive analysis.

## 2.2 Objectives of the Study

- To understand what motivate women entrepreneurs to start their entrepreneurial activity.
- To analyze the role of their family in their decision to take up entrepreneurship.

## 2.3 Research Questions

The researchers have undergone the study to answer certain research questions which have been raised while conducting the study. The research questions are:

- What motivates women entrepreneurs to start their entrepreneurial activity?
- Is there any role of their family in their decision to take up entrepreneurship?

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The study has been in the three revenue circles of Rajkot district of Gujarat. The Rajkot consist of 5 Revenue Circles out of which two Revenue Circles, Rajkot and Gondal. The other three Revenue Circles are mainly rural or semi urban and the researcher specially wants to study how the women entrepreneurs of these Revenue Circles are treated- by themselves as well as by their families. Now, when globally the economic worth of women has been realized, when almost all the nations have realized that social and economic development of women is necessary for a nation's overall development, what is the position of a women who is being an economic and financial supporter of the family in rural areas where real India lives, is of dire importance.

50 women entrepreneurs from each of the three revenue circles are taken on a judgemental basis. No distinction has been made regarding registration of the women entrepreneurs and hence the appropriate sampling frame cannot be determined. Thus, non-probability sampling technique has been applied. For the collection of data, the samples have been provided with structured questionnaire. The respondents have been asked to answer the questions on the

measure of 3-point Likert Scale against their agreement or disagreement on certain parameters with scores 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

To analyze the collected data, SPSS has been used and descriptive statistics done. Chi square test have also been applied to analyze the role of family. The parameters used for motivation has been classified as-

- Push Factors,
- Pull Factors and
- Chance factors.

These factors have been chosen after a thorough literature review on the aspect of motivation of women entrepreneurs and the different theories of entrepreneurial motivation.

The parameters used to analyze the role of family are classified as-

- Profession of Parents/ Spouse,
- Type of family and
- Role model within the family members.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the survey conducted the researcher concluded the findings into two broad groups based on the objectives sought-

- Understanding the role of family in influencing the decision to take up entrepreneurial activity.

### 4.1 Profession of Parents/ Spouse

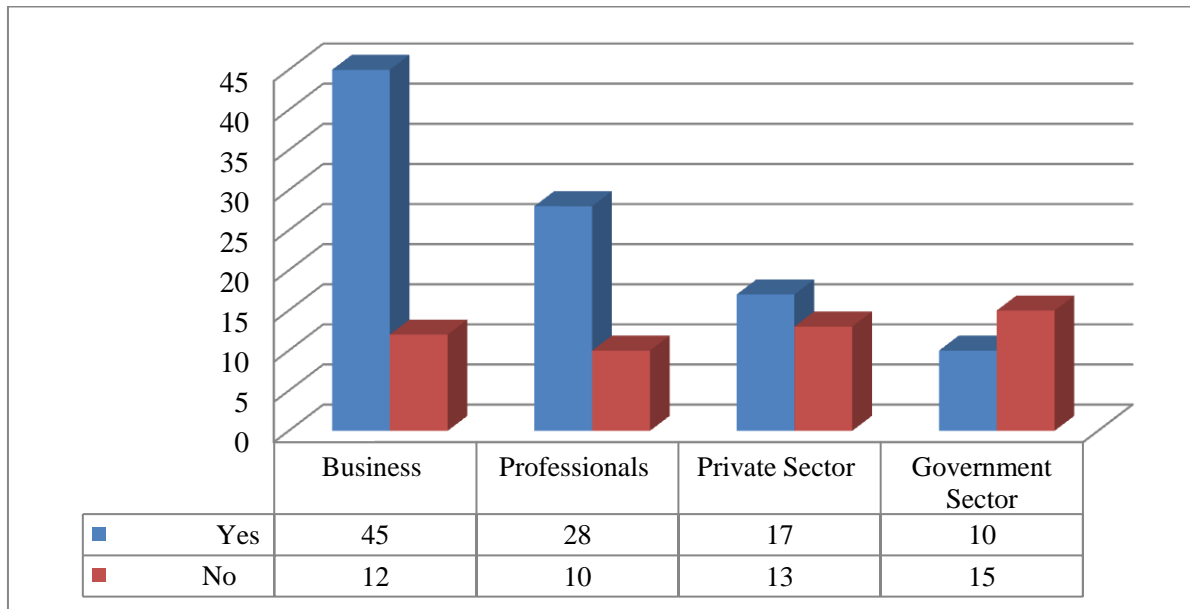
The study has found out that the professions of their parents had a bearing on their decision to take up entrepreneurship. 38% of the respondents' parents/spouse is businessman, 25% of them are professionals, 20% are private sector employees and 17% are government sector employees.

The survey reveals that profession of their parents/spouse made it easy for them in taking up entrepreneurship.

Chi Square test has been done at 5% level of significance to determine if parental/spouse profession has a significant bearing on the respondents to take up entrepreneurship.

**Table 1. Table showing the respondents’ parents/spouse profession and whether it was easy to take up entrepreneurship or not**

Profession	Yes	No	Total
Business	45	12	57
Professionals	28	10	38
Private Sector	17	13	30
Government Sector	10	15	25
	100	50	150



**Fig. 1. Graphical distribution showing the respondents’ parents/spouse profession and whether it was easy to take up entrepreneurship or not**

Source: Field Study

**List 1. Calculation of chi square for the above tabulated data**

experimental Frequency (O)	predictable Frequency(E)	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
45	38	7	49	1.28
28	25	3	9	0.36
17	20	-3	9	0.45
10	17	-7	49	2.88
12	19	-7	49	2.58
10	13	-3	9	0.69
13	10	-7	49	4.9
15	8	7	49	6.13

$$\text{Value of Chi square}(\chi) = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$$

$$= 19.27$$

The estimated value, 19.27, is more than the critical value at 5% Level of Significance for three degrees of freedom, which is 7.815, indicating that there is a substantial association between the two. So, it can be summed up that profession of the parents/spouse can influence in becoming

an entrepreneur. This can be because the business culture that already existed in the family supported the entrepreneurs in terms of network of people and benefitted them through the experience and ideas. Carrying out entrepreneurial activity had been much easier for them.

**Type of Family:** The type of family also affects an individual in the decision of choosing a

profession. Many a times, individuals from nuclear family finds it easy in taking any decision of their choice. In joint family culture decisions are often taken after discussion with the elders. So, it becomes quite imperative to find out the type of family the respondents hail from and its effect on their decision to become entrepreneurs.

78% of the respondents are from nuclear family while 22% of the respondents are from joint family. Chi square test has been used to establish the relationship between the type of family and their decision of taking up entrepreneurial activity.

$$\text{Value of Chi square}(\chi) = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$$

$$= 17.294$$

The computed value at 5% level of significance for 1 degree of freedom is 17.294 which is more than the critical value of 3.341. This also implies that there is a substantial association between the sort of family and the choice to become an entrepreneur. Thus, it can be concluded that type of family has an impact on the decision of taking up entrepreneurial activity. The respondents find it much easier to start their venture of any economic activity in nuclear family as they do not have to follow or bind by orders or decision of someone else. It becomes their discretion solely.

**Role Model among Family:** Every individual right from their childhood finds a role model in his/her family who inspires him/ her to become someone or do something he/ she aspires. This inspiration from family members often encourages an individual to take up any work and so is in case of entrepreneurship too. The

respondents had been interviewed regarding the inspiration from family members on their decision to take up entrepreneurship as a career option.

52% of the respondents had admitted of having an influential family member who inspired them in taking up entrepreneurship while 48% did not had such role models in their family. When asked about if the absence of such role models would have affected their decision of taking up entrepreneurial activity, mixed responses had been found.

- Understanding the motivating factors

To understand the effect of motivating factor, mean and standard deviation have been applied. The data has been tabulated as under.

The values assigned to the three -point likert scale has been 1 for Agree, 2 for Neutral and 3 for Disagree. The mean from 1-1.67 represents Agree while the mean from 1.68-2.33 represents Neutral and from 2.34 -3 represents Disagree. The table shows the different sub factors under the motivational factors -push, pull and chance and their respective mean and standard deviation. The rural women of the three revenue circles have most agreed to responsibility due to death of a family member as the highest motivating factor with a mean of 1.33 followed by financial difficulty with a mean of 1.36 and then unemployment with a mean of 1.3. These mean values indicate the 'scale of agreement.' Also, these factors have low standard deviation which implies that the data tends to be closer to mean and do not deviate. Higher standard deviation means that the data is spread out from the mean resulting to a high deviation.

**Table 2. Table showing type of family and the decision of taking up entrepreneurship activity**

Type of Family	Yes	No	Total
Nuclear	100	17	117
Joint	17	16	33
Total	117	33	150

Source: Field Study

**List 2. Calculation of chi square for the above tabulated data**

Experimental Frequency(O)	Predictable Frequency (E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
100	91.26	76.3876	0.837
17	25.74	76.3876	2.968
17	25.74	76.3876	2.968
16	7.26	76.3876	10.521

**Table 3. Table showing the motivational factors and the frequencies against the level of agreement**

Factors	Sub Factors	Frequency of Agree	Frequency of Neutral	Frequency of Disagree
Push Factors	Unemployment	112	18	20
	Financial difficulty	115	15	20
	Dissatisfaction with the present job	48	35	67
	Responsibility due to death of a family a member	110	30	10
Pull Factors	To be independent	95	40	15
	Willingness to do something new	26	12	112
	Social Recognition	92	44	14
	To do something for the society	86	50	14
Chance Factors	Use of idle funds	15	18	117
	To spend spare time	22	10	118
	To utilize own skill and talent	90	22	38
	Business culture exist in family	82	18	50

Source: Field Study

**Table 4. Table showing the mean and standard deviation of the motivational factors based on their scale of agreement**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unemployment	150	1.3866	0.73096
Financial problem	150	1.3667	0.70869
Dissatisfaction with current job	150	2.1267	0.86929
Responsibility due to death of a family member	150	1.3333	0.59828
To be independent	150	1.4667	0.67224
Willingness To do something new	150	2.5800	0.76211
Social recognition	150	1.4800	0.66272
Do something for society	150	1.5200	0.66272
Use of idle fund	150	2.6800	0.64838
Spend Spare time	150	2.6400	0.72612
Utilise own skill and talent	150	1.6533	0.85911
Business culture exist in family	150	1.7867	0.91656

If these factors are deeply analyzed it can be inferred that the factors are push factors. The respondents are not drawn towards entrepreneurship but are forced towards it because of the adverse scenario in their family. Economic hardship, sudden death of a family member and unemployment are such factors which are not self-created but something which makes a person compel to do or behave in a certain way. This is a gloomy situation. However, some entrepreneurs agreed to entrepreneurship can be a way to become independent, to become socially known. This is a positive sign, a ray of hope which tells that slowly rural women are believing in themselves and moving towards empowerment. The least motivating factors have been availability of funds and spending spare time. These factors occur out of chance. Everyone is not born with a silver spoon. There might not be favorable conditions to support any

event. This again shows that rural women chose entrepreneurship not because of favorable luck.

In a nutshell, the findings of the study can be deduced as –

1. Rural women chose entrepreneurship not as an instinctive approach but because they are forced to. Push factors have a greater role or affect in shaping a woman to become entrepreneur. They are not self-motivated driven but are forced.
2. Family plays a vital role in choosing entrepreneurship. Generally, the profession of their parents has a direct impact on choosing entrepreneurial activity and it is specially seen in case of rural entrepreneurs of Rajkot.
3. The family background, joint or nuclear, guides an individual in choosing

entrepreneurship. Women have come out from their homes breaking the shackles of joint or nuclear family. But this can be seen more in case of nuclear families implying that decision making becomes easier for them.

4. Role model among the family member did not have a very firm bearing upon their decision of choosing entrepreneurship. Thus, self-inspiration had been found to be a major factor in the respondents becoming entrepreneurs.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Women represents half of the population of any region. Therefore, women should be made progressive and make try to make them economically and financially self-reliant. Dependences on others would never make them an economic asset for the nation. Women are always blessed with some traditional expertise and through this they can turn themselves into an economic resource for the family and the for the nation as well. The researcher would like to forward certain recommendations in this regard:

- Government policies should be framed in such a way that they are more practical oriented and provide a prospective entrepreneur with hands on practice and exposure.
- Financial assistance programmes should be made more aware. In this context media, NGOs should play an active role.
- Helpline numbers can be installed so that there can be available and quick remedy for any query by a layman.
- Trainings on financial administration and business administration should also be conducted to cater to the diverse needs of an entrepreneur.
- At last, attitude of the people should be changed so that women find it easier to open up for entrepreneurship. Such issues should be sensitized to promote women entrepreneurship.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Women are entrepreneurs and they have the capacity to be nation builders too. It has been seen that rural women have become entrepreneurs because they have seen the opportunity to create a better life for themselves and their families. Women of rural India have always been hard working and have hidden

talents. These talents and skills are often showcased when they are given the opportunity, not out of compulsion. They have high potential and should be supported in order to speed up and fuel the economy towards progress and better growth. Government should take initiative through various programs and policies to encourage entrepreneurship so that women turn to entrepreneurship not out of compulsion but as a choice. Anything forced to do may not always result in success. A conducive environment with full support from all the realms will make a country march towards self-employment and self-sufficiency.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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