

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN HARYANA'S MSME SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the vital significance of education and skill enhancement in empowering female entrepreneurs in the MSME sector in Haryana. In light of India's substantial demographic dividend and the growing acknowledgement of entrepreneurship as a means to achieve economic progress, it is crucial to comprehend the influence of educational achievement and skill development on the success and empowerment of women entrepreneurs. An exploratory and quantitative research approach was employed in this study to evaluate the impact of education and skill development on entrepreneurial outcomes, such as firm growth, profitability, and overall empowerment. A representative sample of 369 female entrepreneurs from the MSME sector in Haryana was surveyed. The findings indicated a robust beneficial association between increased levels of education and the enhancement of skills, resulting in elevated corporate success and personal empowerment. The presented results emphasise the need of implementing focused educational and training initiatives to assist female entrepreneurs in surmounting obstacles and attaining higher levels of achievement.

KEYWORDS: Education, Skill Development, Women Entrepreneurs, MSMEs, Empowerment, Haryana.

Introduction

An extremely limited supply of highly skilled workers and staff has been a persistent problem for India's economy for quite some time. Increasing the employability of a country's workforce is essential if that workforce is to reach its full potential. By capitalising on its demographic dividend, robust domestic demand, aspirational middle class, rapid urbanisation, and massive growth in the retail, communication, finance, tourist, and real estate sectors, India has successfully protected itself from global shocks in recent times. In the future, these industries will continue to flourish and create more job possibilities (Singh & Paliwal, 2020). Nevertheless, the nation is not well positioned to reap the benefits of its demographic dividend if the workforce continues to lack skills. While the unorganised sectors of the country may offer transitory employment opportunities, establishing sustainable livelihoods is a formidable undertaking. The issue is further intensified of women who have been relegated to a subordinate position in the labour force. Women, particularly those living in rural areas, hold a precarious position in society and frequently lack access to quality education and essential resources such as capital. However, the majority of them are either self-employed and uncompensated in agriculture or compelled to undertake menial tasks to support their families. Amidst such circumstances, initiatives aimed at enhancing skills are a positive step towards empowering women (Shetty & Hans, 2019).

The discourse surrounding women empowerment is long and protracted. Women's empowerment refers to the liberation of women from "social, political, economic, and gender-based prejudicial treatment". While the presence of good laws and their execution is essential for women empowerment, a sustainable strategy necessitates the economic capabilities of women. It facilitates their

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enhancement of employability and propels them towards establishment of sustainable livelihoods (Rao, 2018). Thus, skill development has been considered a crucial endeavour in this context. Despite women making up 50% of the demographic dividend, their limited involvement in the labour field presents considerable obstacles to their economic empowerment. Ensuring such involvement is vital and directly connected to the economic development of the nation. The primary objective in this context is to enhance their involvement in the nation's workforce, which is closely correlated with the economic development of the country. Female labour force participation fell from 33.3% in rural areas to 26.5% in 2011 according to survey data, and from 17.8% to 15.5% in 6 urban areas during the same time period. So, preparing women for roles outside of their conventional spheres of influence (beyond care work) might facilitate the integration of gender roles and enhance women's output (Baral et al., 2023).

Notwithstanding the increasing involvement of women in the social & economic domains of the nation, there are still ongoing disparities in skills. Particularly for women positioned at the lower end of the social hierarchy, there are various desirable talents that can facilitate their professional advancement. Acquired skills can be either technical, such as accounting, computers, and numeracy, or management, such as leadership, communication, and personality development. Furthermore, there is another category of skills that may be entrepreneurial in character, allowing individuals to become self-employed and earn a profit by refining certain domain-related abilities (Nandan & Kushwaha, 2017). The Honourable Prime Minister initiated the National Skill Development Mission in July 2015. The primary objective of the mission is to establish alignment among different sectors and States in relation to competency development initiatives. In this context, the policy paper of the mission explicitly states that one of the primary functions is to operate specialised institutes for the training of women. The mission acknowledges "gender mainstreaming" and "entrepreneurship development" as crucial areas of emphasis in terms of empowering women through this initiative (Kumar & Shobana 2023).

This study investigates the crucial significance of education and skill enhancement in empowering female entrepreneurs in the MSME sector in Haryana. As entrepreneurship is increasingly acknowledged as a means to achieve economic growth and personal emancipation, it becomes essential to comprehend how educational achievement and skill development impact the success and empowerment of women entrepreneurs. The objective of this study is to examine the influence of educational qualifications and skill development on entrepreneurial outcomes, including business growth, profitability, and overall empowerment. This analysis will provide valuable insights into effective approaches for supporting and promoting women in the MSME sector.

Objectives

To assess the impact of education and skill development on the entrepreneurial success and empowerment of women entrepreneurs in Haryana's MSME sector.

Hypothesis

- H₀:** There is no significant correlation between the level of education and skill development and the success of women entrepreneurs in Haryana's MSME sector.
- H₁:** There is a significant positive correlation between the level of education and skill development and the success of women entrepreneurs in Haryana's MSME sector.

Review of Literature

In order to empower female entrepreneurs, the existing literature thoroughly examines the value of education and skill upgrading. The impact of internal and external factors on the growth of women-owned businesses is explored in this study by Agarwal and Lenka (2016). Support from social networks, government programs, NGOs, and financial institutions—in addition to the entrepreneur's own skills and experience—are shown to have a significant impact on the launch and development of new businesses, according to the study. These results emphasise the multifaceted and varied assistance that is necessary to encourage women to be successful entrepreneurs.

According to **Chaudhary (2017)**, skill development has a crucial role in maximising household output, increasing employability, and promoting income-earning opportunities for women. The paper examines several training initiatives, including the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, the National Abilities Development Corporation, and the National Skills Development Mission, that play a crucial role in improving women's abilities and fostering sustainable rural development and livelihoods. These programmes play a vital role in providing women with the essential skills to progress in different industries.

The Training and Skill Development approach is highlighted by **Deka (2018)** as a crucial technique for empowering women in non-traditional, high-skill, male-dominated economic sectors. This study examines the relationship between challenges encountered by female entrepreneurs and their perceived demand for empowerment. It indicates that it is crucial to tackle the particular obstacles encountered by women in various demographic situations in order to provide appropriate support and empowerment.

Furthermore, **Shetty and Hans (2019)** emphasise the significance of the Training and Skill Development strategy in surmounting obstacles encountered by female entrepreneurs in high-skill, male-dominated industries. This study emphasises the need of assessing goals, obstacles, and opportunities by considering the distinct demographic traits of female entrepreneurs. This underscores the need of implementing customised support and development programs.

Singh and Paliwal (2020) investigate the correlations between the enhancement of professional abilities and the empowerment of women. Their empirical research provides evidence of a substantial need for improving skills, which immediately leads to higher employability and entrepreneurial capacity. The authors contend that skill development initiatives should strive to promote self-reliance beyond the simple creation of jobs. In this sense, the Skill India Mission, which encompasses training for both traditional and unconventional positions, has attained remarkable success.

Collectively, the reviewed research emphasises the crucial importance of education and skill development in empowering women entrepreneurs. This underscores the need of implementing complete support systems that include family, societal networks, and formal training programs to effectively tackle the many difficulties encountered by women in business. Through the implementation of focused programs and the resolution of particular demographic obstacles, the capacity of women entrepreneurs to attain substantial business success and personal empowerment is profoundly augmented.

Methodology

- The research implemented an exploratory and quantitative research methodology to evaluate the influence of education and skill enhancement on the achievement and empowerment of female entrepreneurs in the "Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector of Haryana".
- The study focused on around 1,156 female entrepreneurs currently registered under MSMEs in Rohtak. A sample size of 369 was chosen using stratified random selection. This strategy guaranteed the inclusion of individuals from various company sizes, industries, and educational backgrounds.
- Data was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews and formal questionnaires in order to document both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. In addition, supplementary data was collected from literature studies, government papers, and other published sources to provide as contextual evidence.
- Analysis of the data was conducted using correlation analysis to investigate the association between education, skill development, and entrepreneurial success.

Results

Statistical analysis of the data showed a strong positive relationship between the educational attainment and skill enhancement and the entrepreneurial achievements of women entrepreneurs in Haryana's MSME sector. An analysis of the correlation matrix revealed a positive relationship between higher levels of education and more comprehensive skill development with greater business growth, profitability, and overall empowerment.

Specifically, the study revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.65 between the level of education and firm growth, suggesting a robust positive association. Similarly, the correlation coefficient between skill development and profitability was 0.70, indicating that women who made investments in improving their skills were more likely to achieve greater profitability. In summary, our results confirm the idea that education and the enhancement of skills have a beneficial effect on entrepreneurial achievement and empowerment.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Education	Skill Development	Business Growth	Profitability	Empowerment
Education	1.00				
Skill Development	0.55	1.00			
Business Growth	0.65	0.70	1.00		
Profitability	0.60	0.68	0.75	1.00	0.74
Empowerment	0.62	0.66	0.72	0.74	1.00

The correlation research established that there are significant positive associations between education, skill development, and business performance among women in Haryana's MSME sector. More precisely, there is a strong correlation between higher levels of education and improved skill development and higher levels of business growth, profitability, and overall empowerment. For example, the calculated correlation coefficients of 0.65 for education and business growth, and 0.70 for skill development and profitability, highlight the significant impact of these variables on enhancing business results. Furthermore, the presence of positive correlations ranging from 0.62 for education to 0.66 for skill development suggests that education and skills not only contribute to the achievement of business success but also cultivate increased self-confidence and leadership qualities among women entrepreneurs.

Discussion

In order to empower women entrepreneurs in Haryana's micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector and increase their chances of success, this study stresses the critical relevance of education and skill upgrading. The robust associations between these factors and entrepreneurial results indicate that allocating resources to education and skills can result in demonstrable enhancements in firm performance and individual empowerment. The findings emphasise the need of implementing focused educational and training initiatives specifically designed for female entrepreneurs. These programs should provide them with the requisite information and abilities to surmount obstacles, enhance business operations, and attain higher profitability. In order to optimise these advantages, governments and support organisations should prioritise the establishment of easily available and pertinent educational opportunities, the promotion of skill development programs, and the resolution of any obstacles that may impede women from accessing these resources. By investing in these specific domains, the entrepreneurial environment for women can be greatly improved, resulting in more resilient and comprehensive economic development in the region.

Conclusion

This study emphasises the vital importance of education and skill enhancement in empowering and contributing to the success of women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector in Haryana. The results demonstrate a robust positive association between educational achievement, improvement of skills, and entrepreneurial results such as expansion of commercial enterprises, profitability, and general empowerment. More precisely, the correlation coefficients show that there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between higher levels of education and more extensive skill development and greater firm growth and profitability. For example, the correlation coefficient of 0.65 between education and business growth, and 0.70 between skill development and profitability, establishes the significant influence of these factors on the achievement of entrepreneurial success.

The results additionally demonstrate that increased education and skills actively contribute to the enhancement of self-confidence and leadership attributes among women entrepreneurs. This is consistent with the wider recognition that training not only enhances corporate performance but also promotes personal and professional development. The observed positive connections across several variables, such as empowerment and company performance, indicate that educational and training programs play a crucial role in addressing the specific obstacles encountered by women in the MSME sector.

The aforementioned observations clearly demonstrate the need of focused educational and skill enhancement initiatives in order to empower women entrepreneurs. Such programs should target the particular requirements and obstacles encountered by women, therefore guaranteeing their access to pertinent training and resources. It is imperative for support organisations and policymakers to provide top priority to the development and execution of initiatives that empower women to achieve

entrepreneurial success. Thus, by doing this, businesses may augment the talents of women, enhance their commercial results, and make a valuable contribution to a more inclusive and sustainable economic development. To enhance the entrepreneurial climate for women and promote wider economic growth and resilience in the region, it is imperative to allocate resources towards education and skill development.

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