



## An Empirical Investigation of Gender Discrimination And Women Entrepreneurs In Lucknow City

### KEYWORDS

Gender Discrimination, Women Entrepreneur, Informal Sector,  
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**ABSTRACT** *In the present paper an attempt has been made to analyse the gender discrimination with women entrepreneurs in informal sector in the Lucknow city. The study has been conducted in Lucknow which is capital of Uttar Pradesh as it is one of the oldest cities of Uttar Pradesh and blessed with good basic infrastructural facilities and resources. Data has been collected from women entrepreneurs in the informal sector on the basis of well developed questionnaire. Women entrepreneurs faced discrimination in their education life also. The women entrepreneurs, who were graduate and above, did not face any kind of domestic violence during the last twelve months. Analysis reveals the fact that education has significant role in reducing domestic violence against women.*

*The basic problem faced by women entrepreneurs was lack of funds. Most of the women entrepreneurs are of the opinion that because of lack of training, they are not able to survive in the market. Improper location and inadequate infrastructure facilities are the hurdles in the way of development of women entrepreneurship which is also responsible for the exploitation of the women entrepreneurs in informal sector.*

### Introduction

Social exclusion on the other may be regarded as manifestations of economic and social discrimination as well as cultural differences and social distinctions in the society. Studying the Discriminations faced by the women entrepreneurs under unorganized sector thus seem to be promising in various respects. At a most general level it may provide insights into promoting economic development, reducing poverty, increasing employment opportunity, self dependence. Investigating problem faced by female entrepreneur is considered to be key for the monitoring and explanation for the improvement in the unorganized sector and changes in material living standards and general welfare.

There is a bias in society that women were more and more adept at operations like the slow development of small enterprises. As a long-term occupational segregation, women's ability and talent are not brought into full play, and most people believe only in the kind of small services and retail sectors have the possibility of success and only a small percentage of women in such areas as engineering, construction, transportation, communications and other special departments. This is more like the people feel that women are more adept at running a small business. But now, women have proved their existence in all types of industries and run their own companies, as well as a majority of women would like to further expand their businesses. As male entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs also have their own characteristics, cannot be put into a category. Female-led businesses, its purpose, Strategy and growth goals are different and the scale and development of enterprises subject to their individual abilities and entrepreneurial passion, it will be all women business mix is obviously a bit biased.

In the process of industrial development unorganised sector also played a very important role for the generation of employment and removal of poverty. According to the 2001 Census, there were 496.4 million women in India, out of India's total population of 1028 million. It was also es-

timated that the unorganized / informal sector workers as comprising about 86% of work force in the Indian economy in 2004-2005 and informal employment both in the organized and unorganized sector was recorded as 92%. About 38% of the total workers were females. Further, 39% of all working owners were female. The estimated number of unorganised manufacturing enterprises in India during 2005-06 was 17.07 million. A total of about 36.44 million workers were estimated to be working in unorganised manufacturing enterprises. In other words, each enterprise roughly engaged about 2.13 workers on an average.

Female entrepreneurs have formed a social class, and in the economic, social, political and other fields are playing an increasingly important role. In reality, the gap between male and female entrepreneurial performance-great performance of female entrepreneurs is always lower than men's. Female Entrepreneurs are always accompanied by a higher failure probability, smaller size, lower development rate (Brush, et al., 2006). The development of micro enterprises in general and particular for women would be the appropriate approach to fight against poverty at the grass-root and generate income at the house-hold level. Women are trying their level best to attain quality of opportunity in various ways which differs over the time and among societies. Women entrepreneurship enables to pool the small capital resources and skills available with women. It paves the way for fuller utilization of capital and also mobilizes the female human potential. Entrepreneurship is suitable to women and it is possible to do work when they have free time. Women who are self employed gaining better status in the society as well as in their own family.

### Review of Literature:

Brush et al (2006), observed in their study that the gap between male and female entrepreneurial performance-great performance of female entrepreneurs is always lower than men's. Female Entrepreneurs are always accompanied by a higher failure probability, smaller size and lower development rate. Patrick (1998) attempted to study the sales-women working in the registered shops and establishments

by analyzing the aspects of discrimination, time allocation and migration. Using field data from Ernakulam district of Kerala, the author has shown that there is large-scale discrimination against saleswomen compared to salesmen in the labour market in terms of wages. The perception that women are temporary participants in the sales force was often cited as a rationale for paying low wage, though it was not the fact. Many employers tend to pay low wage to the women on the plea that they have low level of skill. The absence of trade union among sales women was pointed out to be the major reason for such wage discrimination. Effective implementation of Minimum Wage Act in shops and establishments, along with motivating women for gradual and sustained involvement in trade union activities, emerge as vital policy prescriptions. Soundarapandian (2008) focused on the development of women entrepreneurship, constraints for the women and strategies for the women entrepreneurship development in India. Haridoss and Fredrick (2009) in their study they found that different women had different attitudes towards entrepreneurship particularly in the small scale industries in the study area. Highly educated women considered business as a challenge and they considered entrepreneurship as their first priority and hence they were prepared to take risks. They were also more rational in their involvement. Gaur, Bandana, (2011) in her paper focused on the condition of women in economic activities and the need of the hour is to create an environment which ensures dignity to the women of today who have taken up jobs on every front defence, police, pilot and industrialist whatever field we can think of, women has managed to prove herself. They are being recognised by the world as equivalent to men in almost all occupational fields. As the women have been empowered with right to property and divorce as well as freedom of marriage she has ample opportunities to improve her overall status intelligently. The women have full rights in terms of education of her children family management and religious etc. It clarifies that the vigorous changes have cracked down the age old suppression and repression of Indian women. Sahu, R. (2011), focused on the condition of women and women empowerment in India as the majority of Indian women reside in rural areas and urban slums and most of them are engaged in subsistence agriculture and the informal sector with little or no regulation, legislative protection and trade union support. Nayak & Panigrahy (2011) highlighted the role of the District Industries Centre (DIC) for the women empowerment under the PMRY scheme in Ganjam district of Orissa as it is playing an important role in the establishment of small scale industries (SSI) in the state. Narasain, M. (2004) in his study focused on the condition of women in India even women struggle for social justice, women fought for their rights throughout the twentieth century. In the past several decades their struggle has truly become global but all is far won. Aruna Goel (2004), focused on the constitutional status and capacity building for women leadership as women leader should promote harmony and peace for women population like expectation of life, female infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, female literacy Representation at decision making.

Kurba, (2005), shows that gender is a key determinant of vulnerability, so that in period of economic transaction, women are likely to be especially vulnerable to increased poverty and insecurity. Present study also seems to be an important and promising strategy to extend and supplement mainstream approaches of studying social exclusion and women entrepreneurs as a key topic of sociological and economic research.

### Problems of Women Entrepreneurs:

The social discrimination against women reflects not only in the political, cultural, educational and other aspects, but also in their participation in Economic activities. Gender discrimination stems from the concept of traditional gender roles that women cannot be as good as male or female is subordinate to men (Chuang 2005), this stereotype thinking has led to women's low social recognition, low-evaluation, resulting a variety of gender-based discrimination.

Women are considered not able to put together a team of high-potential entrepreneurs. People who hold such prejudice believe that women are unwilling to share ownership with others. Early days, almost all entrepreneurs are eager to put their own businesses complete control in their hands, but it is thought that, in and to share control and equity issues, women were more difficult to resolve.

When proper exposure and knowledge are imparted to them, Indian women, proved themselves to be highly potential productive force. When proper education and environment are given, the social taboo can be broken up and women force can be used as a good human resource potential for the development of the Nation. Women entrepreneurs face gender-based barriers to starting and growing their businesses including discriminatory property, matrimonial and inheritance laws and/or cultural practices, limited mobility, voice and representation, and an unequal share of family and household responsibilities. In society females lag behind males but they are equally contributing in the process of economic development. The Present study takes in to account Lucknow as it is one of the oldest cities of Uttar Pradesh and blessed with good basic infrastructural facilities and resources. 208 women entrepreneurs in the informal sector have been interviewed on the basis of well developed questionnaire. Simple statistical methods like percentage and frequency distribution and average has been used for the interpretation of the results.

### Findings of the study

The results are based on the personal interview of the 207 women entrepreneurs in informal sector in Lucknow city. Table 1 presents the socio-economic background of women entrepreneurs in Lucknow city. 20.29 percent belong to 30-39 years of age group, 7.73 percent to less than 30 years. Majority of the women entrepreneurs (89.86%) belong to Hindu religion and only 9.66 percent to Muslim religion. 0.48 percent women entrepreneurs belong to other religion. As far as social groups are concerned majority of the women entrepreneurs (45.89%) belong to other backward class. 27.05 and 3.86 percent fall in the schedule cast and schedule tribe respectively. 54.59 percent women entrepreneurs belong to nuclear family.

**Table 1: Percentage distribution of women entrepreneurs based on some socio-economic characteristics**

Characteristics	No.	Percentage
Age of the respondent		
less than 30	16	7.73
30_39	42	20.29
40_49	56	27.05
50_59	52	25.12
60 and 60 above	41	19.81
Religion		
Hindu	186	89.86
Muslim	20	9.66
Others	1	0.48

Social Group		
SC	56	27.05
ST	8	3.86
OBC	95	45.89
Others	48	23.19
Type of family		
Nuclear	113	54.59
Joint	94	45.41
Total	207	100

Note: Calculated on the basis of survey data.

Table 2 reports the economic activities and some other characteristics of women entrepreneurs in Lucknow city. Economic Activities performed by women entrepreneurs in informal sector includes Vegetable, Fruit, Flower & Fish (jointly) 28.5 percent, Kirana store 0.48 percent. 3.38 percent women entrepreneurs were engaged in running Cosmetics & Bangle shop. Also 22.22 percent women entrepreneurs reported general store in the study area. 25.6 percent women entrepreneurs were engaged in tea, cold drink, egg and pan business. 11.11 percent women entrepreneurs are involved in other business. Hundred percent units are proprietary. A large number of women entrepreneurs (69.08%) in Lucknow city reported that joint family is a hindrance in running business. When women entrepreneurs were asked to what factors they considered the reason of success around 64.25 percent gave credit to their struggle and hard work. The average initial investment of the women entrepreneurs has been Rs.5220.5 and average current investment has been Rs. 10501/-. Hundred percent female entrepreneurs informed that they directly distribute their products to the customers. Half of the total respondents (70.05%) said that they do promotion of their products. When we asked these women entrepreneurs working in informal sector about what made them start their business, majority of them (78.29%) informed that they started their business because they wanted to Profit / making money.

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of women entrepreneurs based on characteristics of enterprises**

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Economic Activities		
Vegetable/Fruit/Flower/Fish	59	28.5
Boutique	1	0.48
Stationary/Gift/Toy	1	0.48
General Store	46	22.22
Cosmetic/Bangle	7	3.38
Kirana Store	1	0.48
Tea/Cold Drink/Egg/Pan	53	25.6
Cloths/Garment	16	7.73
Others	23	11.11
Legal form of the unit		
Proprietary	207	100
Partnership	-	-
Cooperative	-	-
Private Limited	-	-
Other	-	-
Role of joint family in business		
Helps	143	69.08
Hinders	20	9.66
Ineffective	44	21.26
Success is due to		
Worship	74	35.75
Struggle and hard work	133	64.25
Others	1	2.5
Initial investment (Average)		5220.5
Current investment (Average)		10501.4
Distribution of Products		

Direct to customers	207	100
Through retailers	-	-
Through wholesalers	-	-
Sole selling agents	-	-
Promotion of product		
Yes	145	70.05
No	62	29.95
What made start business		
Profit / making money	162	78.26
Did not want to work for others	11	5.31
Want some freedom	13	6.28
Social status	13	6.28
self – achievement	8	3.86
To make my own decision	-	-
Total	207	100

Note: Calculated on the basis of survey data.

### Conclusion of the study:

The present study makes an attempt to explore problem of discrimination and domestic violence against women who are involved in the entrepreneurial activities in the informal sector in Lucknow city. Total 207 women entrepreneurs have been interviewed with the help of well developed questionnaire in the different areas of Lucknow city.

The findings reveal that majority of the women entrepreneurs belong to Hindu religion. As far as social groups are concerned majority of the women entrepreneurs belong to other backward class. Analysis reveals the fact that education has significant role in reducing domestic violence against women. The basic problem faced by women entrepreneurs was lack of funds. The need of the time is to make such schemes by the government which could actually benefit these women entrepreneurs working in the informal sector. The major problem for women entrepreneurs has been finance. Hence, the government can provide interest free loans to encourage women entrepreneurs. To attract more women entrepreneurs, the subsidy for loans should be increased. Most of the women entrepreneurs are of the opinion that because of lack of training, they are not able to survive in the market. The government should conduct frequent training programmes with regard to new production techniques, sales techniques, etc. Improper location and inadequate infrastructure facilities are the hurdles in the way of development of women entrepreneurship which is also responsible for the exploitation of the women entrepreneurs in informal sector. Therefore central as well as state government should take such steps which could improve the status of women entrepreneurs working in informal sector as the contribution of informal sector in the economy cannot be ignored. Education can play pivotal role in improving the status of women entrepreneurs working in Informal Sector of the Economy and also in curbing discrimination and domestic violence against them.

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