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Woman Entrepreneurship Research in India: Classifications and Scope

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ABSTRACT

Analyzing the literature in the past two decades about the women entrepreneurs in developing economies like India present a complex yet interesting study context. The earlier studies largely focused on showcasing the limitations or constraints in doing research while the newer ones (those conducted in the recent years) present more scope than limitations. The purpose of this study is to classify some of the major studies conducted in the domain of women entrepreneurs in India. In the light of the limitations mentioned by various authors, we analyzed some possible scope that can fit in a research context in the present scenario. Based on this selected review, we also tried to set a theme for the scattered topics in a holistic framework by identifying five major research areas of women entrepreneurship in India and classified this study accordingly in the five sections. These are the sections related to study conducted using secondary data, informal economy, socio-cultural aspects, growth intention and measuring business performance specific to Indian women entrepreneurs. We suggest that most of the past studies conducted about the women entrepreneurship in India revolve around these five sections. While studies related to informal economy and socio – culture aspects have been studied largely as a constrain for women entrepreneurship while there is scarcity of studies for analyzing the intention to business performance and its measurement in relation to their competency. This study may prove useful to the readers and researchers looking for a systematic piece of literature on women entrepreneurship research in Indian context. Future researchers in this domain can channelize their focus in the direction suggested through classification of the studies, as the possible scope of future research has been discussed in each section.

Key Words: Women entrepreneurs, Indian women entrepreneurs, Female entrepreneurship research

INTRODUCTION

A simple definition of an entrepreneur is "one who starts a business venture, assume and manage the risk thereby earn profit" (Mitton, 1989). In the research context, entrepreneurship is a complex field of study as it involves multi-dimensional constructs (Ireland, Webb and Coombs, 2005). Different authors define the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in different ways (Zahra, Jennings and Kuratko, 1990). Terms such as strategy, corporate entrepreneurship and venture creation are often used interchangeably with entrepreneurship (Sharma and Chrisman, 1999). The traces of entrepreneurship can be found in various subjects and research domains such as

Sociology, Psychology, Economics and Management. Psychologists define an entrepreneur as one who possesses distinctive personality traits (McClelland, 1965, 1987); economists mentioned the unique role entrepreneur exhibits as an innovator in the new market creation (Schumpeter, 1934). In view of this, some dimensions of entrepreneurship as per different subjects of study are given in Table 1.

Table 1 - Entrepreneurship link with various knowledge fields

Subject	Link with Entrepreneurship
Sociology	Social entrepreneurship. Women empowerment and gender issues in entrepreneurship.
Psychology	Traits and characteristics of entrepreneur such as - need for achievement, persistence, risk - taking and locus of control
Economics	MSME and its contribution to economy, Organized and unorganized business activities, Informal economy
Management	Strategy and innovation in business by entrepreneurs Study about start-ups, venture funding.

Source: Author's compilation.

Despite the convergence of various subjects, entrepreneurship itself is a separate field of research and at the same time there lays a vast scope to research through various dimensions as mentioned in table1.

The subject becomes all the more interesting when it is studied from gender perspective. Considering role of gender as one of the influencing aspects in entrepreneurship, Welter *et al.* (2007) discussed women entrepreneurship in transition economy context. The authors found that though many similarities exist between male and female entrepreneurs as far as businesses are concerned but differences do exist when it comes down to choosing business sectors and performances of businesses.

Suganthi (2009) defines women entrepreneurs as, "When a woman or group of women initiate, organize and manage a business enterprise, they are called as women entrepreneurs". While the Government of India (2012) define them as women who owns minimum 51 percent of the capital invested in the business firm. This definition is applicable for a registered business unit and the informal business enterprises are defined differently by different authors. Unlike defining the terms, many authors mentioned the limitations for the clarity of defining the term entrepreneurship and the construct used in the research (Gartner, 1990; Shane and Venkatraman, 2000). While the limitations of women entrepreneurship research seem more challenging in developing nations. The available literate on Indian women entrepreneurshipis scattered and lack classification in terms of research areas.

The present study conducts the selected literature reviews of research studies conducted on the topic Indian women entrepreneurs. To identify and analyzing the relevant papers and specific women entrepreneurship literature, journals specific to entrepreneurship were primarily referred to. Databases such as EBSCO, ProQUEST, Web of science, Emerald

Publishing and SAGE publications were explored. All these database and journals were searched using search phrases women entrepreneur, women entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs in emerging economies, women entrepreneurship in India, Indian women entrepreneurs, rural entrepreneurship in India. Since, there is limited number of authentic studies in the Indian context, we follow manual selection process for review.

Related articles were identified after reviewing their abstracts followed by full text reviews pertinent to the subject of interest. The selected papers in the literature were analyzed and tabulated according to the research topics. The tables of the streams provide an overview that is related to present work. Our aim here was to relatively position these studies in the classified manner. A total of 112 papers were analyzed through abstract and initial reading, out of which 44 papers were finalized for the review.

The classified review in the present study is described in five sections. The first section discusses the research on women entrepreneurs based on the secondary data which is limited due to prevailing un-registered/informal micro business units in the country. Although, it provides an initial draft for understanding the basic demographical distribution of women entrepreneurs in the country.

Second section discusses the dominating literature in social-cultural aspects of research in the context of women entrepreneurs, third section includes the analysis of studies posited on the informal economy that largely influences the women entrepreneurship in India. The last two sections cover the studies focusing on the intention of women to become an entrepreneur and their business growth aspiration. Many of these studies were conducted using primary data survey. The last section summarized the issues related to conducting empirical studies in measuring the business performance of women entrepreneurs. The classification provides ample scope to defend the research limitations in this area. Finally, the discussion part summarizes the study.

The motivation to conduct this study through a revised literature review evolved from comparing the contemporary business scenario with the time when these studies were conducted, since advancement in technology for doing businesses in present time is much easier than past. Further, revised government 's policy in favor of women entrepreneurs, changing outlook of society about the women entrepreneurs and women's own perception about it provide considerable reasons to revise such studies and look at the future scope of these studies to get updated results and insights.

Section - 1: Research based on the secondary data

A genuine understanding of the demographic profile of Indian women entrepreneurs is essential to begin and find the scope of the research. Various authors (such as Jha, Makkad and Mittal, 2017) have reported the limitations of authentic secondary data to conduct the research on women entrepreneurs in India, further lack of authentic data about the women entrepreneurs is a challenge to set a theme or have a deeper look inside the domain, being an informal economy at large, this challenge is common in various developing nations (Vita, Mari, & Poggesi, 2014). While most of the micro enterprises are not registered and not easily accessible in India, many authors mention the limitation of obtaining and analyzing the data of

women entrepreneurs for research in India. This limitation has been well overruled by the classified studies of Daymard (2015), Agrawal and Lenka (2017) and Samantroy and Tomar (2018). These authors incorporated the main sources of secondary data of enterprises published by the government agencies of India which are -

The Economic Census

The National Sample Survey (NSSO) socio- economic surveys (NSS)

Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)

ASI provides survey data operating in the organized sector without the classification of gender owned enterprises. While NSSO provides comprehensive sets of the data of enterprises operating in the informal sectors with classifications of men and women owned enterprises.

The study of Samantroy and Tomar (2018) presented the demographic distribution of the women entrepreneurs in India based on the data published by the fifth and sixth economic census (2005 and 2013) and NSSO**.** Data based on the entrepreneurial activities of women in various states of India provide an excellent platform to understand the roots of the studies about the women engaged in work force. The highlights of the study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Establishments and workers engaged in total proprietary and women-owned establishments during the 5th and 6th ECs

Type of Establishments	Total Establishments (Million)		Est. with Workers Engaged (Million)	
	5th EC (2005)	6th EC (2013)	5th EC (2005)	6th EC (2013)
Total proprietary	37.34	52.29	77.92	103.06
Women-owned	3.54 (9.50%)	8.05 (15.40%)	6.05 (7.77%)	13.45 (13.05%)

Source: Samantroy and Tomar (2018), Calculated from unit level data published in Economic Census - 2005 & 2013.

It can be inferred from the table 2 that during sixth economic census (2013), there were total 52.29 million establishments under the proprietary firm, of which women owned only 8 million (approx. 15.4 percent) and these women owned proprietary consisted of 83 percent without any hired worker that is the business was run on own account with working herself or with family members. Further, status of top five Indian states in respect of women owned businesses is given in Table 3.

Table 3 - Top five states in India with highest percentage of women's own businesses

Top 5	Economic Census - 2013		Economic Census - 2005	
states	State	% of women enterprises	State	% of women Enterprises
1	Tamil Nadu	13. 50	Kerala	18.51
2	Kerala	11.37	Tamil Nadu	17.80
3	Andhra Pradesh	10.55	Gujarat	12.48
4	West Bengal	10.4	Andhra Pradesh	10.10
5	Maharashtra	8.25	Karnataka	9.58

Source: Samantroy and Tomar (2018), Calculated from unit level data published in Economic Census - 2005 & 2013.

Scope for future research - State wise distributions of women entrepreneurs offer various avenues for further research in this domain. For example, a genuine enquiry about why these five states (Table -3) contributes high in the density of women enterprises and what are the causes of the states showing the lowest (such as Punjab) in the ranking. Is it the psychological, social and cultural or business environment in these states that make it a challenge for women to become self-reliant?

Selecting a sample frame in such a heterogeneous population with extreme variations in demographic variables under the strong influence of informal economy is further a limitation of conducting research. But many authors attempted to overcome this limitation.

Agrawal and Lenka (2017) in their paper titled "Why research is needed in women entrepreneurship in India", set a justified theme based on the secondary data analysis and literature review with focus on two states of India namely Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The title of this study itself indicates the research demand in this domain. Various policies and practices implemented by the government of India have been presented with existing gaps. The study provides a historical growth of women's business activities from traditional food processing such as pickles(Achaar) and Papad to modern world service enterprises. As all the women engaged in the economic activities cannot be referred as entrepreneurs, since many of them work as a part of livelihood strategy, they are referred as necessity driven entrepreneurs (Unni and Naik, 2018) while there is a different set of women that fall in the category of growth oriented and opportunity - oriented entrepreneurs which are very low in India (Unni and Naik, 2018; Khokhar and Singh, 2016).

Based on the different characteristics of women entrepreneurs, Mitra's (2002) attempt to classify the women entrepreneurs in four categories i.e., family oriented, young achiever, financial need and block factor, is appreciable in this regard. The study by Daymard(2015) classified the women entrepreneurs' population in the self-employed (without hire workers) and women entrepreneur (with hired workers) and provide state wise distribution. His claim to this distinction is crucial to look into the deeper aspects of the dynamic of women entrepreneurship research in the Indian context.

Deshpande and Sharma (2013) analyzed the data of the third and fourth rounds of the Indian MSME census for the year 2001-02 and 2006-07 with a specific focus on caste and gender-based enterprises in India. They segregated the data of enterprises run and owned by schedule caste (SC and Dalits), schedule tribes (ST as marginalized groups of Adivasi), and women in India and reveal a different angle of research in entrepreneurship. Data of sectoral division of male and female owned enterprises of these populations can be the scope for further look in the research as mentioned by the authors.

In all, this study concludes that despite the huge efforts by governments through various policies and planning, women entrepreneurship still deserves more focused research attention in existing contexts (Agrawal and Lenka, 2017).

Tiwari (2017) summarized the various policies implemented by the Government of India for the development of

Table 4 - Summary of the studies on women entrepreneurship based on the secondary data

Author (year)	Data Source	Subject	Main Findings
Unni and Naik (2018)	Economic Census (EC) and NSSO*	Gender Differences and Informal Enterprises in India	Both Necessity driven and Growth oriented enterprises exist in Indian informal sector with no gender differentials in likelihood of growth.
Samantroy and Tomar (2018)	Fifth (2005) & Sixth (2013) EC, India	Distribution, Comparison and classification of women employed in various states of India as per their social (caste) environment.	Women entrepreneurship increased in sixth economic census (2013) compared to 2005 but majorly in own account enterprises (without hire workers), The percentage distribution of women enterprises in SC, ST and OBC is unevenly distributed and need to explore further.
Agrawal and Lenka (2018)	MSME (2016), Bureau, 2016; Sixth EC (2013)	Need for research in the women entrepreneurship in India	Despite the various government efforts, contribution of women enterprises is low and need deserved attention to research state-wise as well as on an aggregate mode.
Tiwari (2017)	Planning Commission of India, Sixth EC, and Literature survey	Literature Review	Various Plans, Policies and Schemes (by Government of India) for development of women is summarized and discussed with data of sixth EC
Daymard (2015)	NSSO - enterprise survey of data	Determinants of women enterprises	Basic characteristics of women entrepreneurship in India. Emphasis on distinction between women enterprises with and without workers.
Deshpande and Sharma (2013)	Registered units' data of third and fourth rounds of MSME census for 2001-02 & 2006-07	Caste and Gender Analysis in the small business units in India	North - eastern states have higher concentration of Schedule caste (SC), Schedule Tribe (ST) with high women owned entrepreneurs in this category while in other states these are under represented with dominance of traditional family business mainly for survival.

Source: Author's compilation; NSSO - National Sample Survey Organization., MSME - Micro Small and Medium Enterprises

entrepreneurship in general and that of women in specific under the various five-year planning programmes. The study exhibits the government's efforts in organized framework. But the effectiveness of these policies and programmes is yet to be explored.

These studies can be considered as the starting point for research about women entrepreneurship in India as the structure and distribution (state and sector wise) of women's economic activities provide a base for looking deeper in the field and to explore the specific part of it. Also, these studies can be taken as a reference point for understanding the big picture about the economic activities of women in India and a source to select the sample for primary research.

Section - 2 - Informal Economy - Synonym to women Entrepreneurship in Developing Nations

The major researches published in the international journals about the Indian woman entrepreneurs largely emphasize on the prevalence of the informal economy (Jha and Bag, 2018; Khokhar, 2019) Analysis of most of the literature on women entrepreneurship synonymous with informal economic activities embedded with socio-cultural context.

Informal economy is one of the dominant factors in the various developing nations. According to the National Commission for Enterprise in or unorganized sector (NCEUS, India) – "A private enterprise unincorporated (not registered with any government agency) engaged in the production of goods or in the service, sales as a proprietary firm or partnership based with employees not more than ten is termed as unorganized or informal enterprise. These enterprises do not pay taxes or other liabilities under law. Jha and Bag (2018) empirically analyzed the reasons for rigidness of transiting from informal to formal enterprise by the owner and reported various relevant causes justifying the constraints and advantage of remaining an informal enterprise.

Despite the various efforts by government, private and social organizations, women entrepreneurs are confined to micro enterprises operating informal businesses (Khokhar and Singh, 2016). Many researchers claim that the lack of growth of women entrepreneurs is associated with informal economy and the challenges associated with the informal economic activities include lack of education, access to bank or finance, socio -cultural norms and business/economic environment (Goel and Rishi, 2012). The heterogeneity of demographic factors often limits the research in this domain and provides in-consistent results (Khokhar, 2019).

Since, rural areas are more influx with the informal markets compared to urban areas, this is also seen as a positive tool for poverty alleviation (Goel and Rishi, 2012) and employment generation for under privileged people. Since the entry to such a market is easy for women with little investment, it offers employment to economically weaker sections of the society characterized by illiteracy, unemployment and poverty (Chaudhuri and Banerjee, 2007). Further, it provides less time constraints as compared to the private jobs along with easy family and work life balance (Goel and Rishi, 2012). Compared to men, women find more challenges in setting up an enterprise mainly in the rural areas. SHGs (Self – help groups) in various rural part of India seems

to be effective as a catalyst for financial and social upliftment of women (Chatterjee, Gupta and Upadhyay, 2017). The role of self- help groups as an effective approach to alleviate poverty and rural development and provides future research scope in the informal economic domain of women entrepreneurship. Similarly base of pyramid approach is promising research enquiry in the future. (Chatterjee *et al.,* 2017).

To differentiate the unorganized enterprises of women with the registered women enterprises, the study of Deshpande and Sharma (2013), show higher growth pattern of registered women entrepreneurs when compared to registered male entrepreneurs in certain areas and show more possibility for such outcomes. Such results provide opportunities to explore such studies on a large geographical spread of India. We recommend to conduct similar studies in future to compare the changes occurring due to growth of digital intervention and ease of doing business in the present business scenario.

Section - 3 - Socio - Cultural aspects of women entrepreneurship

Literature provides various psychological and social issues imposing the limitation of gender as a barrier to women entrepreneurship. Gender in general, divide the two biological sexes in the masculine (aggressive, strength, dominance) or feminine (passive, follower) as a strongly perceived aspect of the various societies (Hyde *et al.,* 2019). Various authors emphasize the influence of gender perception as a major hurdle for women to enter the main stream business and to compete in the businesses which are traditionally run by men entrepreneurs. This issue has been discussed by various authors in terms of justifying the role and image of women entrepreneurs in selecting specific business sector, choice of firm size, hiring employees etc. the perceived influence of gender consideration and social norms influence women's decision in business activities (Unni and Naik 2018).

Kantor (2002) debated the injustice in considering the gender as mere a variable instead of a socio-cultural construct; she explains that very few authors have taken it as a serious construct in women entrepreneurship research and its related aspects in comparing the role and performance of men vs women entrepreneurs.

The Development paper by Shah (2013), in collaboration with ESCAP- South and South-West Asia Office as a part of promoting women entrepreneurship and development program report that “women's entrepreneurship is an important untapped source of growth in India” as only about 13 per cent of enterprises registered in MSME sector is owned or managed by women. The study concludes that socio cultural factors are major constraints for women's entrepreneurship in India, work and family life balance as next big challenge (as reported by 65 percent women).

Section - 4 –Studies related to intention to become an entrepreneur and enterprise growth intentions

Theory of planned behavior (TPB) has been widely adopted as a reference for researching the entrepreneurial intentions among university students and aspiring entrepreneurs. Intention study in women entrepreneurship can be classified in two broad classes, one measuring the intention to become entrepreneur in the future (for female students or unemployed women)

while the other tries to analyze the growth intentions of existing women entrepreneur running micro /small business enterprise, such studies are interlinked with the performance variables.

Some authors established that women largely intend to take charge of business due to pull factors while there are studies which prove the dominance of push factors which drive out of necessity, lack of employment and to earn extra money (Moore and Buttner, 1997). We report the lack of such studies in the context of emerging scenarios of women entrepreneurship in India. The next generation or millennial might report a different outlook for opting entrepreneurial career.

At a global level, Morris et. al (2006) in their research specified the various issues and aspects about the women entrepreneurship that have been discussed since the inception of literature documented in this domain by Hisrich and Brush (1983). They concluded that limited focus is devoted to the causes that determine the growth intention and aspirations of women in business. In the Indian context such studies are limited but interlinked with the various aspects of research such as social -culture aspects and informal economy as discussed in the previous two sections.

Venugopal (2015) emphasized on the role of context in the growth intentions of Indian women entrepreneurs. The author used growth intentions as dependent variables against the attitude toward growth, subjective norms, work and family role identity and self-efficacy as independent variables. Women's self confidence in her own abilities (self - efficacy) was found to be the major hurdle in her business growth intention. The possible reasons may be the lack of education, training and exposure to business world compared to male entrepreneurs. Since the subjective norms was not found to be associated with the performance, we can interpret the changing scenario of family and society to accept the women as an entrepreneur in selected research sample frame of the study. The authors itself report the limitation of generalizing the results for vast geography of India especially for rural areas which require continuous research attentions with respect to changing society.

Literature about the women entrepreneurship of developing nations also reveals that many women willingly do not opt for the business growth and wish to confine to micro business units in order to avoid various business challenges associated with competition, legal and finance (Vita, Mari, &Poggesi, 2014) turning the research attention in yet another direction.

The study of Daymard (2015) discussed the various determinants of being a women entrepreneur in India with emphasis on education, access to finance, children, gender perceptions and social norms. These are the widely discussed determinants which determine the rate of women entrepreneurs in developing nations. The positive and negative associations of these variables with the prevailing growth rate of women entrepreneurs may provide scope to conduct similar research in the present business scenario.

Some Indian researchers tried to identify the factors that may determine the success of women entrepreneurs and so the performance of their enterprises.

Chatterjee, Das and Srivastav (2018) conducted an exploratory study covering the four states of India namely Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand using the sample frame from district industry centers (DICs) of the selected cities in the mentioned state. The outcome of the study presented four distinct factors associated with the success of businesses run by women entrepreneurs. These factors are related with psychological, socio-cultural, skills and resources. The study found that micro enterprises in these states adopt the existing business models or ideas with little or no modifications; they lack the innovative bent of mind in the business. Their businesses are traditional and do not demand for technical skills for success of business. Further, the support from government counts minimal in their success measures. Although, authors of this study suggested providing education and technical training to empower these women not to grow their business but to survive in the future.

Jha *et al* (2017) explored six factors suggesting growth and success of women entrepreneurs running and managing micro enterprise in the selected cities of India. Similarly,Dhaliwal (2019) explored the causes associated with the underperformance of the women entrepreneurs in India, based on the vast literature survey, data published in the GEM, NASSCOM and economic survey of India, along with an empirical study conducted in Delhi and NCR regions. The exploratory factor analysis identified three factors namely personal orientation; knowledge base and support system largely influence the success of businesses of women. These factors are related to socio-cultural and informal economy of India, along with aspects of intention and business performance implying the inter-connected approach of the studies.

In a recent study conducted by Mahajan and Chowdhary (2022) in major Indian cities, it was found that many women opt for entrepreneurial career for utilizing their social skills with their professional qualifications. Such businesses like human resource (HR) consultancy, yoga training largely require good communications and human relations skills. Women competent in such skills usually intend to set up independent business enterprise. The competency approach in women entrepreneurship is not much explored in India, while in developed nations emphasis on enhancing the entrepreneurial competencies of women entrepreneurs is widely studied topic, since these competencies are associated with business performance (Mahajan and Chowdhary, 2022).

Section - 5 - Studies concerning to Measure the business performance of women's enterprises

Most of the studies mention the financial performance (profit, sales, revenue etc.) as a measure of business performance. But, the question arises does the success of business lies in the financial performance especially for women entrepreneurs in the context of developing nations?

Kantor (2002) debated on ignoring the success factor of gender perception associated with women entrepreneurs especially in the South Asian context. She denied accepting the economic outcomes as the only measure of success of women entrepreneurs, as for women entrepreneurship is the source of gaining

equality, empowerment and achieving work - life balance which is not the case for men being as entrepreneur. Her debate was based on the lack of sensitivity of performance analysis studies by past researchers in such cases which resulted in weak or less detailed knowledge comparing the gender differentiation. She emphasized that satisfaction, social inclusion and empowerment should be the essential parameters of measuring success along with the financial measurement for the women entrepreneurs especially in developing nations. Women's empowerment was overlooked under the economic measures like profit and sales of business. Kantor's questions on performance measurement of women owned enterprises still raise questions and provide scope to take sensitive measures in this case.

Prasad *et. al* (2013) examined the business growth of the Indian women entrepreneurs under the influence of human and social capitals, the result of the study confirms the importance of both the factors in determining the growth of women owned enterprises. While the human factors comprised of education level, previous experience and parent's business, the social capital incorporated the size of the business network and perceived support from family and immediate society. Authors admitted the limitations of measuring business performance.

In view of above, it could be concluded that specific and revised research is required to measure the business performance of women entrepreneurs while comparing it with men entrepreneurs. There is a need to develop a scale to measure the success of first-generation women entrepreneurs emerge out of social and cultural barriers and contribute to the society by employment generation and inspire other women to become an entrepreneur.

DISCUSSION

The present study contradicts that most of the studies focused on the women entrepreneurship is confined to developed nations. The authors in the present study reviewed the literature and analyzed some of the relevant studies conducted in the context of women entrepreneurship in India. A total of 44 papers focused on the research about the Indian women entrepreneurs have been analyzed by filtering 112 papers, also some conceptual review papers concerning international studies were cited to justify the relevance of women entrepreneurship at global and Indian level. Since the subject area of entrepreneurship is complex and diverse, the present study has been divided in the five sections. Although all are interconnected but provide a distinct outlook for conducting future research in the mentioned sections.

The first section discusses the research studies based on the authentic secondary data analysis. Distribution and classification of women entrepreneurs in India offer the starting point for research in this domain. The results of the studies discussed in this section are based on the analysis of authentic secondary data published by the economic census, NSSO and Annual survey of industries (ASI). Studies discussed in this section present the demographic distribution of the women entrepreneurs in India, the state wise distribution provides insights in the

research domain and offer various avenues as a scope for future research. Agrawal and Lenka (2017) in their discussion about the need for research in the domain of women entrepreneurship indicate the importance of authentic data of women entrepreneurship. Tiwari (2017) check the efficiency of the policies and programmes undertaken by government agencies to promote women entrepreneurship with the secondary data analysis. Study of Samantroy (2018) look into the cast wise distribution of women entrepreneurs while study of Deshpande and Sharma (2013) direct our attention toward the women entrepreneurs of north – eastern states of India under the categories of schedule cast (SC) and schedule tribes (ST) which is under represented in the society. The traditional business set ups in the rural areas represented by various groups of self-reliant women such as self-help groups (SHGs) need deserve research attention to promote women entrepreneurship. Despite the lack of authentic secondary data, available data provides ample opportunities to conduct research in this domain. Although, most of the women are running business in the informal business set up, their businesses are not registered as a legal entity which restrict the researcher's ability to generalize the results, this can be improved by bringing more women entrepreneurs in the front line of economic activities by converting their informal small business units into a registered business units.

Second section highlights one of the most common aspects of discussion about women entrepreneurs in emerging economies which is concern of informal economy. Since, most of the businesses owned by women in developing economies are confined to the small business unit (Vita, Mari and Poggesi, 2014), these units are informal and characterized by limited business sectors and profit earning capacity.

The major causes documented in the literature for dominance of such informal businesses include poverty and gender perceptions (Gupta, Goktan and Gunay, 2014; Brush, 2017), lack of education in the areas of business and finance (Smith and Morse, 2005; Learner and Almor, 2002), while Jha *et al* (2018) report the reasons associated with social and economic conditions in the country. Although, results are not consistent but most of them indicate nature of informal business set up as one of the dominant characteristics of women's business enterprises in the country.

Third sections present the views of Indian authors on the prevailing socio-cultural context based on the past literature reviews of cross-national studies. This has been reported as an obstacle to women entrepreneurship; we emphasize to evaluate the caused associated with such obstacles in the present business scenario. As the outlook of society changes with the time and women entrepreneurship is changing with the change outlook of society.

The fourth section discusses the findings of the empirical studies conducted to analyze the business growth intentions of the existing women entrepreneurs from micro / small business units. As, mentioned in the previous sections, most of the authors highlights the socio-cultural and informal business aspects as reasons for low business performance of women entrepreneurs, but there is need to look at the other side of the context, instead of discussing on the obstacles women faces in

doing business due to socio-culture aspects or informal set up, we need to find the ways to enhance the growth intention of the women entrepreneurs in the present business environment which is driven by digital technology. There is a dire need to improve the business performance of the existing women entrepreneurs in the country.

Few studies have been conducted to analyses the reasons for low business performance of women entrepreneurs in the Indian context, while there are studies at global level which reports many competency-based analysis as a major cause for limited business exposure of women entrepreneurs. Few of the recent studies (such as Li et al, 2016) emphasizes on the digital competency of the entrepreneurs as one of the suitable tools to scale up the small businesses and to respond to the competition. In the developing nations like India, many new avenues for creating business ventures in various sectors are emerging via digital platforms (Tandon et. al, 2020).Approx, 44 % of the start - ups in India is technology driven and run primarily on the use of e-commerce or as a B2B market process through digital platforms. Further this number will keep growing and may achieve to more than 65% in the coming time (Grant Thornton, 2016). Digital technology has changed the locus of opportunities identifications and implementations for the entrepreneurs (Autio, 2017). We do recommend to provide the required training to women entrepreneurs to enhance their digital competency relevant to business growth. Further, various social media platforms serve as a business networking platform to promote the small business but such exposure is limited to metros and urban areas.

Last section raises the question of measuring success of business run by women entrepreneurs in the developing economies, as financial indicators such as profit and sales do not justify the contribution of women entrepreneurs. Women in the developing nations symbolize the women empowerment and contribute to the society by employment generation, inspiring other women and taking lead role in the economic growth. A deserving reward and recognition to existing women entrepreneurs may inspire to young generation of female students to opt for entrepreneurial career in near future.

We tried to divide the scope of the research in the five major topics to segregate the literature and channelize the focus of research in the context of Indian women entrepreneurship. Although all are interconnected due to extreme demographic heterogeneous variables, it is hard to explain one without intervention of the other, still we attempted to classify the literature in this domain.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SCOPE

The study provides an inception to the women entrepreneurship research in India for the readers and budding scholars looking to understand the basics of women entrepreneurship research with associated challenges and limitations. The primary objective was to classify the literature to cover the different aspects in five sections. On the other side it discusses the scope still require deserving research attention in the various sections associated with the women entrepreneurship in the developing context. The business context has changed

vastly in the recent years and so the perception of people toward running and managing it without the consideration of gender. The scholars looking to explore the field can find the scope beyond the limitations that co-exist in the developing nations toward entrepreneurial activities. Aspiring researchers in this domain can find scope of further studies identified and mentioned in each section. The present business scenario, government policy and outlook of society is quite favorable for women entrepreneurs in India, beside women's own perception and involvement in the business provides considerable reasons to revise the past studies to gain better insights.

There are many empirical studies conducted to analyze the causes of low performance or limited business exposure of women entrepreneurs while such studies are rare in India as discussed in section four, which call for a deserved research attention in this area. Whether women especially in non-metro and rural area intentionally do not opt for business growth or they lack in certain crucial competency or institutional support? This can be the base for conducting future research. Further, more studies involving qualitative analysis such as cases studies and focus group approach can be the future research scope in analyzing the intention to become entrepreneurs of aspiring women and university female students. In section five, this study also reports the challenges of measuring the success factors or business performance of women entrepreneurs that is a relevant and crucial research agenda for future researchers.

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