

FROM VISION TO VENTURE: EXPLORING MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS AMONG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN JORHAT DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

According to Joseph Schumpeter, entrepreneurs are the agents of “creative destruction”, disrupting existing industries and creating new economic opportunities (Schumpeter, 1942). Entrepreneurial development is pivotal for a country that wishes to march towards economic development. But currently entrepreneurial world is dominated by male and women need to explore new avenues to outnumber them. Keeping this in mind, the current study tries to explore the motivational factors influencing women entrepreneurship in Jorhat District of Assam. A minute understanding of the motivational factors is crucial to divert women to entrepreneurship. The study area, Jorhat, is one of the oldest and influential districts of Assam with a literacy rate of 83.42% (Census of India, 2011). It is famous for tea, small-scale and cottage industries in the fields of silk, cane work, bamboo work, silver jewellery, brass smithing, cotton textile, etc. The objectives to the paper are to examine the motivational determinants influencing women entrepreneurs in the establishment of their own enterprises. Secondly, to study the association between enterprise-specific characteristics and the entrepreneurial success of women. Both primary and secondary data is used in the study. Stratified random sampling technique is used to collect data from the registered women entrepreneurs of Jorhat district. The study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Primary data is collected through a thoroughly tested structured questionnaire. The study finds the desire for self-dependence as the foremost significant motivational factor among the women entrepreneurs in the study area.

Keywords: Motivation, Entrepreneurship, Small-Scale and cottage industries, Entrepreneur, self-dependence

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship refers to the process of identifying, creating, and pursuing opportunities to start new ventures or businesses. Joseph Schumpeter defined entrepreneurship as the process of introducing new combinations of production factors, such as new technologies, methods of

production, or new products and services into the market. According to Schumpeter, entrepreneurs are the agents of “creative destruction”, disrupting existing industries and creating new economic opportunities (Schumpeter, 1942).

The Economic Survey, 2024-2025 defines women entrepreneurship as “an enterprise owned and controlled by women having minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women.” According to the Census of India, 2011, women constitute around 50% of India’s population, perform two- third of the work and produce nearly 50% of food items but earn astonishingly just one-third of the earnings with just 10% ownership of property or wealth of the country. The Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) in India is 25.5% and in Assam it is just 10.5% (Census of India, 2011).

Women entrepreneurship has the potential to make a strong contribution to the economic upliftment of the family and the society (Bora, 2019). Research on women-owned business is more extensive in the developed countries of the world than in developing countries like India (Nayak, Tan & Wanke, 2024). Therefore, such a study is considered a necessity to understand in depth the motivations of women towards business ventures. Entrepreneurs must be motivated and empowered through effective follow-up programs and Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs). The EDPs are very crucial for entrepreneurship (Shetty, Baliga & Gil, 2023).

Women-owned enterprises contribute significantly towards job creation, diversification of income, poverty alleviation in developing countries like India. Women’s driving force to entrepreneurship is multidimensional with dimensions like personal aspirations, socio-cultural sector, economic needs and institutional support systems. Studying the different dimensions will help and boost the future generation as well.

Entrepreneurship is inevitable when it comes to industrialization and economic development of a country. Viksit Bharat @2047 encompasses multiple pillars like economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, inclusive development, technology, good governance, etc., and to achieve this entrepreneurship is one obvious way. A strong culture of innovation and self-reliance must be cultivated by building an inclusive ecosystem. The inclusive ecosystem will support startups and provide skills and resources so that women entrepreneurship grows in high speed. This will further be a great motivating factor for Indian women towards entrepreneurship as a career.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review of previous literature will help understand the different findings on motivation of women entrepreneurs.

Shetty, Baliga & Gil (2024) made an exploratory, qualitative design based on thematic analysis of 13 Indian social Entrepreneurs. The study finds two factors that motivate social entrepreneurship, they are personal factors like life experience, social awareness, social inclination, spiritualism and contextual factors like institutional void, community development,

volunteer experiences and presence of role models in life. Entrepreneurs must be motivated and empowered through effective follow-up programs and Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs). The EDPs are very crucial for entrepreneurship

Manolova, Brush and Edelman (2008) in their paper attempts to know the motivation that guides women in starting their own firms. Their research finds that in the United States; women are found to be the majority owners in 30% of all privately held firms. These firms have a revenue of \$ 2.5 trillion. The study uses expectancy theory framework to understand the differences in motivation between men and women in starting a firm. They found that men are motivated by financial gains, self-realization and autonomy. On the other hand, for women **status** is an additional significant motivating factor. The results confirmed the explanatory power of expectancy theory in examining entrepreneurial start-up motivation.

Kashyap and Bordoloi (2020) in their paper attempts to identify the motivational factors that boost women entrepreneurs to start their own enterprises in Guwahati city of Assam. The study highlights the impact of the various socio-economic factors on empowerment of women entrepreneurs of the city. They found the monthly income of the women entrepreneurs as the crucial factor for empowerment.

Goswami, Hazarika and Handique (2019) in their research work on handloom industry of Assam examines the push-pull theory of entrepreneurial motivation and uses the exploratory factor analysis with an orthogonal varimax rotation technique to examine entrepreneurial motivation. Five motives were identified namely- self-dependence, preserving handloom culture, providing monetary support, formal job environment and work flexibility. The paper displays a slightly contradictory result that women with a higher desire to provide monetary support to their family were found to be less likely to become micro- entrepreneurs in Assam, this is due to their poor economic condition, risk-averse mindset and financial constraints

Sarmah, Saikia and Tripathi (2022) considers the Sustainability Development Goals- 5 (SDG-5), to examine the association between entrepreneur's gender and their entrepreneurial motivation and to discover whether entrepreneur's gender influences their motivation. Qualitative approach is used to interview 320 MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) entrepreneurs of Assam. The Chi-square test and Mann Whitney test were exclusively used in the study. The paper finds strong, positive and significant association between entrepreneur's gender and their motivation. Men are more attracted to entrepreneurship than women. A 2-fold policy is suggested, firstly, to economically strengthen them and secondly, to spread awareness about their legal rights.

Sinha (2023) stated that a well-established entrepreneurship activity will play a pivotal role in economic empowerment and sustainable development. The researcher conducts a minute study and finds that the Bishnu Priya Manipuri women belonged to a linguistic minority and are economically backward, yet they are rich in art and culture and have expertise in craft and handloom activities. Approximately 60% of them are economically dependent and lacks confidence and willingness to take risk of starting a new enterprise. The main reasons being

financial dependency, low success rate, lack of time due to patriarchal nature of the community, lack of family support, no business skill and knowledge. The study found very low entrepreneurial activity and zeal among the Bishnu Priya Manipuri women.

Koneru (2017) studied women entrepreneurship in India using SWOT analysis and gives benefiting suggestions. It focuses on creating awareness and giving continuous attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate the women entrepreneurs. The study finds that the development activities sponsored by the government have benefited only the urban middle class women of India. The paper comes up with many reasons for women to become entrepreneurs, they are, self-identity and social status, education and qualification, support to family members, role model to others, success stories of friends, bright future for their wards, need for additional income, innovative thinking, employment generation and family occupation.

Rao (2016) made a robust discussion on the reasons for women becoming entrepreneurs and the challenges faced by them. A unique reason being the advent of traumatic events, like, divorce, discrimination due to pregnancy etc. The challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs according to the research are conflict between work and domestic commitments, gender gaps in education, lack of finance, and legal constraints in family law.

Okafor and Roy (2010) studied 570 respondents from the registered women entrepreneurs from three different states of South West Nigeria to study the relationship between motivations and the entrepreneurial challenges. To make the responses objective and precise five-point Likert-scale was used extensively. Correlation coefficient was used to study the relationship between motivation and the challenges women entrepreneurs face. The results from the hypothesis testing show the factors that motivate women entrepreneurs are family influence (0.55), psychological (0.49), financial (0.42), and environment (0.52). Thus, display a moderate and positive correlation with the challenges. The highest value is family influence which means respondents are marries and may find difficulty managing family issues and business.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the paper are:

1. To examine the motivational determinants influencing women entrepreneurs in the establishment of their own enterprises.
2. To study the association between enterprise-specific characteristics and the entrepreneurial success of women.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses primary data collected from 50 women entrepreneurs of Jorhat district of Assam. Data is collected by survey method through a thoroughly structured questionnaire.

The study area, Jorhat, is one of the oldest and influential districts of Assam with a literacy rate of 83.42% (Census of India, 2011). It is famous for tea, small-scale and cottage industries in the fields of silk, cane work, bamboo work, silver jewellery, brass smithing, cotton textile, etc.

FINDINGS/ DISCUSSION

Motivation towards entrepreneurship is guided by push-pull (necessity vs. opportunity) motives. Push motives include job loss, lack of well-paid work, or economic difficulty. Pull motives includes independence/self-dependence, realisation of one's skills and opportunity (Lingappa, 2023). Motivation varies across nations and regions of the world. In high-income settings the pull factors are common, while in low-income contexts necessity motives are dominant (Solevik, Iakovleva, Trifilova, 2019). Besides these there are also psychological motives such as self-efficacy, desire for self-achievement and social motives like status in family/society, gender constraints for women, household responsibility, etc. (Nayak, Tan, Wanke, 2024).

The study to achieve the desired result makes use of 11 statements based on the motivational factors. A scale is constructed with 11 statements on the grounds of personal, economic and social factors of motivation. Likert five-point technique is used to collect the responses and the scores are given according to the degree of responses of the respondents. The Likert five-point responses are- 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree. The interpretation of the responses is 1- strongly disagree means very low extent of motivation, 2- disagree means low extent of motivation, 3- neutral means moderate extent of motivation, 4- agree means high extent of motivation, 5- strongly agree means very high extent of motivation. The total score of each women entrepreneur is obtained by adding the scores of all the individual items in that particular scale. After that the mean value of each statement of motivation is calculated. The responses of the 30 respondents on the statements of motivational drivers are shown in the table number 1.

Table no. 1

Motivational factors/drivers

STATEMENTS	MEAN SCORES	RANKS
1. No Government Job	4.22	2
1. Independence/ self-dependence	4.46	1
1. Family Support	3.79	5
1. Self Interest	4.22	2
1. Desire for Creative work	3.90	4

1. Ease of Obtaining raw materials	4.22	2
1. Make use of one's skills	3.73	6
1. Demand in the market	4.22	2
1. Set oneself as Role Model	3.10	8
1. Create Employment Avenues for Others	4.10	3
1. For Fame in Society	3.46	7

Source: Primary data

The facts and figures of table no.1 explain the motivational factors or drivers influencing women entrepreneurship in Jorhat district of Assam. The mean score is highest for self-dependence or the desire for being independent (4.46), securing rank 1. This is also consistent with the findings by Nayak, Tan, Wanke, 2024. The second rank is obtained by three motivational factors of entrepreneurship, they are no government job, self-interest, ease of obtaining raw materials and demand in the market with mean score of 4.22. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth ranks are successively given to the factors- create employment avenues for others, desire for creativity, family support, and make use of one's skills. The ranking of the factors differs among women of different caste, creed, region and age.

TYPES OF ENTERPRISES AND ENTERPRISE SPECIFIC FACTORS

The women entrepreneurs of the sample collected were seen to be engaged in all the three sectors, namely, agricultural sector, manufacturing sector and the service sector. Women entrepreneurs are increasingly participating in Agri-based enterprises like- organic farming, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, sericulture, medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation, and food preservation (pickles, jam etc). In the manufacturing sector they are engaged in handloom and textile units, handicrafts and traditional crafts, traditional jewellery production, beauty and herbal products producing units, garment and embroidery units and food processing and bakery units. The service sector is greatly popular among women as they are low capital intensive. They include beauty salons and spas, boutiques, educational institutions, day-care facilities, event management, tourism agencies, photography services and health and fitness services.

The success of women entrepreneurs depends on certain factors which are specific to an enterprise. Some of these factors are taken for analysis in the paper, they are- type of sector, formal registration status, ownership type, access to formal credit, technology adoption level, monthly/annual turnover, age of enterprise and number of employees.

Table no.2

Enterprise Related Factors

Factors	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Sectors	Agriculture	15	30%
	Manufacturing	16	32%
	Services	19	38%
Formal Registration Status	Registered/ Unregistered	30	60%
		20	40%
Number of employees	Less than 10	35	70%
	More than 10	15	30%
Access to formal credit	Yes/No	36	72%
		14	28%
Technology adoption level	Low	25	50%
	Medium	20	40%
	High	5	10%
Monthly turnover	Less than 25000	30	60%
	More than 25000	20	40%
Age of enterprise	Less than 10 years	37	74%
	More than 10 years	13	26%

Source: Primary Data

From the table above, 30% of the respondents are engaged in agricultural related businesses. 32% of the respondents are engaged in manufacturing related enterprises. 38% are engaged in services. 60% of the enterprises are registered and 40% are unregistered. 70% of the entrepreneurs have less than 10 employees while the remaining 30% have more than 10 employees engaged. 72% entrepreneurs have received formal credit from government schemes and programmes and the remaining 28% did not receive assistance yet. Majority of the entrepreneurs use traditional methods where 50% fall under low technology, 40% uses medium technology and only 10% use high technology. The monthly turnover is less than 25000 for 60% of the respondents and 40%

earn more than 25000. 74% of the enterprises are established less than 10 years and 26% have been established more than 10 years ago.

To understand the relationship between enterprise specific factors and success of women entrepreneurs in Jorhat district, we construct a Chi-square test with the following stated hypotheses.

H0: There is no significant relationship between enterprise related factors and success of women entrepreneurs in Jorhat district of Assam.

H1 : There is a significant relationship between enterprise related factors and success of women entrepreneurs in Jorhat district.

Table No. 3

Enterprise Specific Factors and Success of Women Entrepreneurs

Factors	Level of Success: high, medium, low		
	Calculated Chi-Square Value	Degree of Freedom	Null Hypothesis Accepted/Rejected
Formal Registration Status	11.88	2	Rejected
Number of employees	15.11	2	Rejected
Access to formal credit	11.44	2	Rejected
Technology adoption level	17.43	2	Rejected
Monthly turnover	16.78	2	Rejected
Age of enterprise	10.56	2	Rejected
Sectors	12.43	2	Rejected

Source: Primary Data

From table number 3, we have found that there is significant relationship between enterprise related factors and success of women entrepreneurs in Jorhat district. It implies that success of women entrepreneurs in their ventures as entrepreneurs has a profound relationship with factors that are specific to an enterprise. A World Bank report on “Micro Small and Medium Enterprise

Finance- Improving Access to Finance for Women-owned Businesses in India” finds that lack of finance is the main obstacle for the success of women entrepreneurs in India. Large and formally registered firms have a tendency to attract more customers and finance, hence are more successful (Welsh, Kaciak & Sharmah, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The educated Indian women have to travel miles to achieve equal rights and position as it is evident that Indian society is male dominated. Despite the social and economic hurdles, women have proved their capability and skills in every field of career including entrepreneurship. These women are assertive, persuasive and willing to take risks to succeed in the cut throat competition with their male counterpart. Education, training and skill development, awareness and financial support are critical factor for women entrepreneurship. Majority of the women are engaged in traditional activities like weaving, embroidery, pickle making, knitting, jam jelly making, etc. Few are engaged in non- traditional activities like beauty parlours, computer café, creches for children, schools and colleges, restaurants, hospitals, ready-made garments, nursery, food catering, tailoring firms, vocational centers, etc.

The study found that the mean score is highest for self-dependence or the desire for being independent (4.46). So, the main driving factor towards women entrepreneurship is self-dependence. The study further finds a strong relationship between success of women entrepreneurs and enterprise specific factors.

IMPLICATION

Theoretical implications: A thorough study of the factor’s affecting women entrepreneurship is important to understand the theories of entrepreneurship, motivation and gender studies. These research helps fulfil the gap between the motivational theories like Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs, McClelland’s Need Achievement theory, and push-pull theory of entrepreneurial motivation. From the perspective of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) women in developing countries initially aim to fulfil the physiological and safety needs. The needs of economic independence, family sustenance and financial security. The McClelland’s Need Achievement Theory (1961) explains that the need for achievement, affiliation, and power is different among women of different race, region and culture. The research further adds to the push-pull theory, ‘push factors’ like unemployment, financial necessity has always been proved relevant, the study finds the ‘pull factors’ like self-dependence, autonomy, innovation as important determinants. Thus, multiple theories advocate for the better understanding of women’s entrepreneurial behaviour.

Practical implications: The study’s findings have important implications for policy formulation and institutional support, capacity building and training programs, enhancing social and family support, financial institutions and access to capital, technological empowerment, community and societal development. The wide gap between theoretical understanding and practical application of the motivational drivers can be narrowed by such research in this area.

GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The author uses Open AI's ChatGPT to assist in background information, language clarity and grammar of the manuscript. After using the tool, the authors have reviewed and edited the content to ensure accuracy and the final version reflects the authors own work and interpretation.

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BIOGRAPHY

Girimollika Hazarika is research scholar of school of Business, Assam Kaziranga University, Jorhat, Assam. I have published few research paper earlier in reputed Journals. And is currently researching in business economics.

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