

Chapter 9

Empowering Rural Women in Harnessing Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development Goals in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

In the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the empowerment of rural women through entrepreneurship emerges as a pivotal strategy for fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development. This chapter explores the intersection of digital technologies and entrepreneurship as catalysts for economic empowerment among rural women. By leveraging digital platforms, innovative business models, and targeted support systems, rural women can overcome traditional barriers to entrepreneurship, including limited access to markets, resources, and information. Through a comprehensive analysis, this chapter demonstrates how empowering rural women entrepreneurs not only aligns with SDGs such as gender equality (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10) but also promotes sustainable communities and innovation. Ultimately, the integration of digital technologies in entrepreneurship provides a transformative pathway for rural women's empowerment, fostering resilience and sustainable development in rural regions.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship increases employment opportunities, inventiveness, and livelihood production, among other aspects that enhance reasonable mobility together with serve as crucial to obtaining more substantial social and financial security. Community members might address a range of fundamental societal concerns, like guaranteeing identical opportunity for men as well as women, eliminating inequalities, providing exceptional opportunities for learning, and creating a sustainable environment, by using their business capabilities and cleverness. Womenfolk partake grown further unified into the commercial sector in recent years, which has significantly contributed to the expansion of sustainable-based prospects.

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Female entrepreneurs are helping to stimulate the global marketplace; however, they also support equal access to opportunity and fostering social change (Orser & Elliott, 2015). Entrepreneurship's transformative influence on sustainable development is well recognized, particularly among rural women. Rural women generally face a number of hurdles that impede their advancement in society, including limited educational possibilities, training, financial resources, and business chances. However, the advancement of digital technology opens up novel avenues for overcoming these obstacles.

There found a relatively broad acceptance in addition to appreciation of the critical relevance of woman businesspersons for stable and proportionate progress in society and the marketplace, with particular emphasis on the need for recognizing human capacity, artistic ability, and attention. Bestowing to several assessments, female traders are extra mindful about the way the business practices, decisions, and circumstances effect their local communities and outside environment (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017). As a result, they usually endeavour to encourage a wide range of economic ventures in their communities and start firms that depend upon existing human and financial capital. Countries with little infrastructure, such as India, which has several resource-rich states, appear to provide limited opportunities for women to create and sustain long-term distant ventures and related economic operations. This is due mostly to the fact that natural resource-based sectors put forward an extensive range of financial resources and opportunities. Many highly qualified females prefer to remain housewives because they cannot find suitable, socially acceptable, and geographically pertinent career possibilities (Trask, 2013).

Along with contributing to monetary expansion, female entrepreneurship is critical for achieving long-term societal and environmental performance, while also fostering commercial diversification and resilience. As the 21st century grows stronger, propelling the enactment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become recognized as an extremely important global importance, with the intention of addressing challenging problems that span from poverty eradication to environmental preservation (Chatzistamoulou & Koundouri, 2020). In this scenario, women turning into prominent entrepreneurs is causing massive shifts in the natural and economic conditions and realms.

The intersection of the remote/local enterprises with the SDGs is a holistic approach for supporting broad development, new ideas, and adaptability across regions. Women entrepreneurs' creativity and imagination, resourcefulness, and persistence act as catalysts for improving society and environmental conservation, in addition to driving economic progress (Thomas, 2024; Raman, R., et al., 2022). Women throughout countries worldwide are committed to achieving the SDGs by adhering to their passion for business and working toward the common goal of a more egalitarian, environmentally sound, and prosperous society.

Learning about the numerous strategies that women-led enterprises have been using to successfully achieve sustainable development objectives reveals the constantly changing connection between women's commercial firms and the SDGs. It has made substantial and widespread contributions, spanning from gaining support for gender equality and reinforcing impoverished sectors to inventing revolutionary ways to environmental preservation and balanced economic growth (Mahajan & Bandyopadhyay, 2021). Governance, professionals, and other segments of society at large might pave up fresh opportunities for justified development and build a more unbiased, open-minded, and strong environment for the generations to come by encouraging women's entrepreneurial efforts.

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