

Chapter 13

Rural Women Entrepreneurship: A Catalyst for Achieving Sustainability Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurs bridge the gap between the SDGs and the country's socio-economic development. Women's entrepreneurship is crucial for long-term economic, sustainable societies. This is possibly a virtue of women's ability to inventiveness, prioritize sustainability, ecological soundness, and a sense of equality in the professional front catalyzes the attainment of SDGs. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sustainability and entrepreneurship has been affected remarkably. This is because digital inclusion and technologies pushed rural women to learn and adopt new behaviors of doing business post-lockdown. This chapter aims to provide insights into rural women's entrepreneurship in attaining Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs). The scope of the chapter incorporates "rural women entrepreneurship" and "sustainable development goals." The chapter scrutinized and evaluated papers based on keyword criteria from Google Scholar database. The chapter sheds a multifaceted view of rural women's entrepreneurship and SDGs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurs are highly active globally in the growth-oriented and innovative professional market. Women create jobs, focus on international markets, and are more likely to start enterprises without employees. Statistics state that almost half of women entrepreneurs worldwide are involved in the retail sector and one in five in the health, education, government & social service sectors (18.5% women versus 10.1% men). The choice of starting a business influences entrepreneurial intention. Notably ((GEM) Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022) report on 47 countries provides a proprietary analysis of region and country-specific patterns in entrepreneurial activities. Globally, the total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) for women is 10.4%, compared to 13.6% for men. The highest TEA rate (43.7%) is in the Dominican Republic, (24.1%) in Latin America & Caribbean, (26.4%) in Sudan, and (25%) in Chile.

Sustainable entrepreneurship aims to look for other aspects such as environmental and social along with economic profitable approach. It is more opportunity oriented which increases the quality of life. A sustainable entrepreneur creates new business goals, standards, and profitability by reducing inequalities among people, alleviating poverty, and protecting the planet. Now, this association between long-term sustainable development and entrepreneurship goals is referred to as 'Sustainable entrepreneurship.' A women entrepreneurs refer to a woman who takes the obligation of organizing, managing, and taking risks with the expectations of gaining profits; they are involved in managerial decisions (Coughlin & Thomas, 2002).

Women entrepreneurship is good for economic wealth, as they can foster innovative thinking, flexibility in ideas, and sustainable initiatives in the workers and increase the chance of preventing fraud and misuse of resources (Thomas, 2024). Women entrepreneurs promote gender equality (Joshi & Fartyal, 2024), and environmental sustainability (Joshi & Fartyal, 2024). Women in rural populations face greater difficulties like societal structures and predefined gender roles (Chatterjee et al., 2020). The author pointed out that these constraints the accessibility of technology among rural women micro-entrepreneurs. Studying women's entrepreneurship separately is essential for two main reasons. First, women's entrepreneurship has been recognized over the last decade as a vital yet largely untapped source of economic growth. Women entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others, offering unique perspectives and solutions to management, organization, and business challenges (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2001). Second, the topic of women in entrepreneurship has been largely neglected in both societal discourse and social sciences research. Women have lower participation rates in entrepreneurship compared to men and often choose to start and manage firms in different industries, making it critical to understand their specific contributions and challenges. The chapter provides a brief overview of rural women's entrepreneurship in India and the opportunities and barriers that rural women entrepreneurs have when trying to match the goals of the SDGs with their businesses.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research engrossed on the paper published on "Rural" AND "Women Entrepreneurship" AND "Sustainable Development Goals" OR "SDG" AND "India" on the database. The chapter purposively focused on papers between 2019 and 2024 and studied 'SDG', 'opportunities', 'challenges', or 'barriers' of rural women entrepreneurs in India. The research type is descriptive and exploratory. The chapter implemented the NITI Aayog report.

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