

## SWOT ANALYSIS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN UTTAR PRADESH

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### Abstract

This study analyses the entrepreneurial environment for women managing micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Uttar Pradesh, India, utilizing a thorough SWOT analysis framework. The study employs quantitative data gathered from women entrepreneurs in the region to analyse internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats that impact entrepreneurial success. Statistical analysis employing one-sample t-tests indicated that women entrepreneurs exhibit notable strengths in quality consciousness ( $M=3.93$ ), access to loans ( $M=3.93$ ), and positive employee relations ( $M=3.92$ ). Conversely, they display fewer weaknesses than expected, particularly in risk aversion ( $M=2.90$ ) and societal consciousness ( $M=2.88$ ). Supportive environments ( $M=3.86$ ) and family backgrounds ( $M=3.74$ ) were identified as primary opportunities, whereas community non-acceptance ( $M=2.92$ ) and concerns regarding technological obsolescence ( $M=2.91$ ) represented the most notable threats, albeit remaining below average intensity. All dimensions of the SWOT analysis demonstrated statistical significance at  $p<0.01$ , suggesting the presence of strong patterns rather than random fluctuations. The findings indicate that women entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh exhibit significant resilience and competence, even while navigating traditional sociocultural constraints. This study enhances the comprehension of gender-based entrepreneurship dynamics in developing economies and offers practical insights for policy formulation and support systems aimed at women entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** - Entrepreneurial environment, consciousness, obsolescence, fluctuations

### Introduction

Women entrepreneurship serves as a crucial catalyst for economic development and social transformation in developing countries, especially in areas experiencing swift socioeconomic shifts. The development of women entrepreneurs in the micro, small, and medium business (MSME) sector in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with conventional societal structures and defined gender roles, indicates a notable transformation in economic involvement and gender dynamics. Despite enduring patriarchal structures that have traditionally constrained women's economic autonomy, recent shifts in societal perspectives, educational access, and regulatory initiatives have facilitated avenues for women to create and manage enterprises.

These entrepreneurial endeavors significantly enhance household incomes while promoting regional economic development, job creation, and social advancement. Women entrepreneurs frequently use new

strategies in business operations, shaped by their distinct viewpoints and experiences in negotiating intricate social contexts. The MSME sector, characterized by fewer financial and operational hurdles, has become notably accessible to women pursuing economic independence and self-actualization through entrepreneurship.

The business path for women in Uttar Pradesh is beset by unique problems arising from social expectations, institutional obstacles, market realities, and personal limitations. Comprehending these complex aspects necessitates a thorough analytical approach that accounts for both internal competencies and external environmental conditions. The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) paradigm offers an optimal foundation for this research, facilitating the methodical evaluation of aspects affecting entrepreneurial success for women in this particular geographical context.

This research seeks to identify and evaluate the principal SWOT elements influencing women entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh's MSME sector, offering significant insights into the complex realities of women's entrepreneurial experiences in this area. The study aims to transition from anecdotal evidence to an empirically confirmed knowledge by quantifying these elements via thorough statistical analysis. The results will enhance academic understanding of gender-based entrepreneurship in emerging economies and provide practical implications for policy formulation, support systems, and intervention measures designed to improve women's entrepreneurial success in analogous circumstances.

The present study builds upon this extensive literature by applying the SWOT framework specifically to women entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh's MSME sector, contributing empirical evidence regarding the distinctive dynamics of women's entrepreneurship in this significant but understudied regional context. Through quantitative analysis of primary data, this research seeks to validate, challenge, or extend existing theoretical understandings while providing actionable insights for stakeholders engaged in supporting women's entrepreneurial activities in similar developing economy contexts.

### **Methodology**

This research utilized a quantitative technique to examine the SWOT variables influencing women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector in Uttar Pradesh. The research approach included systematic data collecting via structured questionnaires sent to a representative sample of women entrepreneurs across several industries within the state. The survey instrument was created using known measures that assess entrepreneurial traits, obstacles, and environmental variables, modified for contextual relevance to the unique regional context of Uttar Pradesh.

### **Sample Selection and Data Collection**

Participants were chosen using a stratified random selection method to guarantee representation across geographical areas, industry sectors, company sizes, and operating duration. All participants were female entrepreneurs who owned and actively managed micro, small, or medium firms as delineated by India's

MSME Development Act. The final sample comprised respondents who fully completed the survey, offering valid replies for all assessed variables.

### **Measurement Instrument**

Scales evaluating 10 variables across the four SWOT dimensions were used in the study. Easy connections, commitment and dedication, family support, methodical performance, quality consciousness, access to loans, employee attitude, elegance and charming demeanor, intuition and perception, and frugal habits were strengths. To examine weaknesses, knowledge depth, inventive capability, mobility restrictions, domestic priorities, societal consciousness, risk calculation, idea creation, interaction ability, decisiveness, and crisis management abilities were measured.

Urbanization benefits, liberal views, educational advantages, family background, business environment, entrepreneurial networking, support agencies, market assurance, skill potential, and family help were opportunity factors. Geographical mobility limits, family duties, managerial acceptability, government recognition, capital problems, community acceptance, technical obsolescence, market rivalry (big and small), and management inadequacies were assessed as threats.

Each variable was assessed on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with higher ratings indicating more agreement with the statement (for strengths and opportunities) or greater worry (for flaws and dangers). Before deployment, the instrument was pilot-tested and refined to assure measurement clarity, reliability, and validity.

### **Data Analysis**

One-sample t-tests were used to ascertain if the mean responses for each variable significantly deviated from the test value of 3, which denotes the average score on the measuring scale. This analytical method facilitated the detection of statistically significant patterns in the entrepreneurial SWOT framework, with significance determined at the 1% level ( $p < 0.01$ ). The research assessed specific factors within each SWOT category and overarching trends across dimensions to cultivate a thorough understanding of the entrepreneurial environment for women in Uttar Pradesh.

Descriptive statistics, encompassing means and standard deviations, were computed for all variables, yielding metrics of central tendency and dispersion that delineated the sample responses. The statistical significance of observed patterns was evaluated using t-values, determining if the findings reflected authentic phenomena rather than random fluctuations within the sample population.

This methodological approach facilitated a systematic analysis of the multifaceted factors affecting women's entrepreneurial experiences in Uttar Pradesh, harmonizing analytical precision with contextual awareness to yield empirically substantiated insights into the SWOT framework confronting women entrepreneurs in this particular region.

## **RESULTS**

The analysis revealed comprehensive insights across all dimensions of the SWOT framework for women entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh. Detailed findings for each dimension are presented below, supported by statistical evidence from the sample data.

## Strengths of Women Entrepreneurs

The assessment of entrepreneurial strengths revealed consistently above-average scores across all measured variables, indicating substantial internal capabilities among women entrepreneurs in the sample. Table 1 presents the detailed findings from the one-sample t-test analysis of strength variables.

**Table 1: One-sample t-test for assessing the strength of women entrepreneurs**

| Statements                           | Mean | SD    | t-value |
|--------------------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Easy Contacts                        | 3.63 | 0.624 | 8.985** |
| Involvement, Commitment & Dedication | 3.44 | 0.599 | 8.399** |
| Family and Spouse Support            | 3.20 | 0.698 | 7.341** |
| Systematic & Planned Performance     | 3.75 | 0.705 | 3.713** |
| Quality consciousness                | 3.93 | 0.619 | 3.505** |
| Easy Loans                           | 3.93 | 0.856 | 4.344** |
| Positive Attitude towards employees  | 3.92 | 0.755 | 7.232** |
| Grace & Charming behavior            | 3.64 | 0.792 | 4.064** |
| Intuition & Perception               | 3.65 | 0.769 | 5.947** |
| Thrift habit                         | 3.61 | 0.804 | 4.016** |

\*\* significant at 1% level

Quality consciousness was identified as the foremost feature (M=3.93, SD=0.619), closely succeeded by accessibility to convenient loans (M=3.93, SD=0.856) and a favourable disposition towards employees (M=3.92, SD=0.755). Systematic and planned performance received a high grade (M=3.75, SD=0.705), reflecting systematic business strategies among the questioned entrepreneurs. The elevated scores for intuition and perception (M=3.65, SD=0.769) and grace and charming demeanor (M=3.64, SD=0.792) indicate the significance of interpersonal and intuitive skills in entrepreneurial achievement.

All strength variables surpassed the mean test value of 3, with t-values between 3.505 and 8.985, all significant at  $p < 0.01$ . The findings indicate that women entrepreneurs have significant innate qualities that enhance their business performance, notably in quality management, financial access, and human resource strategies.

## Weaknesses of Women Entrepreneurs

The assessment of weaknesses revealed generally below-average scores, indicating fewer limitations than might be expected based on existing literature. Table 2 presents the detailed findings from the one-sample t-test analysis of weakness variables.

**Table 2: One-sample t-test for assessing the weaknesses of women entrepreneurs**

| Statements                           | Mean | SD    | t-value |
|--------------------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Lack of in-depth and wide knowledge  | 2.21 | 0.745 | 6.318** |
| Lack of innovative ideas of business | 2.39 | 0.804 | 8.551** |
| Lending names & Lack of mobility     | 2.21 | 0.794 | 4.056** |
| Priority to home and domestic work   | 2.70 | 0.777 | 3.153** |
| Conscious of society's attitude      | 2.88 | 0.630 | 3.072** |
| No calculated risks                  | 2.90 | 0.860 | 3.403** |
| Lack of idea generation              | 2.89 | 0.771 | 5.798** |
| Lack of interaction                  | 2.68 | 0.769 | 4.712** |
| Considerate and not firm             | 2.69 | 0.767 | 5.994** |
| Lack of skill on crisis management   | 2.77 | 0.838 | 5.612** |

\*\* significant at 1% level

Calculated risk aversion (M=2.90, SD=0.860), a lack of idea production (M=2.89, SD=0.771), and awareness of societal views (M=2.88, SD=0.630) were the most noticeable deficiencies. These were the weakest characteristics with the highest scores, although they were still below the average test value, indicating moderate rather than severe restrictions. The sampled entrepreneurs had reasonably good knowledge bases and mobility, as evidenced by the lowest-scoring deficits of lack of in-depth knowledge (M=2.21, SD=0.745) and lending names and lack of mobility (M=2.21, SD=0.794).

The test result was significantly different from all weakness factors (t-values ranging from 3.072 to 8.551,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that these difficulties are evident but still fall below the average threshold. This implies that the sample's female entrepreneurs exhibit fewer shortcomings than may be predicted from preconceived notions about women's entrepreneurship in conventional social settings.

### Opportunities Available for Women Entrepreneurs

The analysis of opportunities revealed consistently above-average scores, indicating a generally favorable external environment for women's entrepreneurial development in Uttar Pradesh.

**Table 3: One-sample t-test for assessing the opportunities available for developing entrepreneurship**

| Statements                           | Mean | SD    | t-value |
|--------------------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Urban area                           | 3.32 | 0.609 | 4.502** |
| Liberal views                        | 3.40 | 0.676 | 4.312** |
| Good education                       | 3.38 | 0.622 | 4.434** |
| Well to do family                    | 3.74 | 0.719 | 3.703** |
| Conductive atmosphere                | 3.86 | 0.750 | 5.757** |
| Interaction with their entrepreneurs | 3.51 | 0.847 | 7.616** |
| Entrepreneurial developing agencies  | 3.33 | 0.724 | 8.671** |

|                          |      |       |         |
|--------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Assured captive market   | 3.23 | 0.867 | 8.778** |
| Skill in potential field | 3.34 | 0.667 | 4.797** |
| Help of family members   | 3.24 | 0.726 | 3.905** |

\*\* significant at 1% level

As seen by the highest scores for conducive atmosphere (M=3.86, SD=0.750) and well-established family backgrounds (M=3.74, SD=0.719), supportive surroundings and resource availability through family networks are crucial. Additionally, interacting with other business owners was a major opportunity (M=3.51, SD=0.847), indicating the importance of information sharing and peer networks in the success of entrepreneurs. The opportunity landscape was further influenced by liberal societal views (M=3.40, SD=0.676) and high-quality education (M=3.38, SD=0.622), highlighting the significance of changing social attitudes and developing human capital.

With significant t-values (3.703 to 8.778,  $p < 0.01$ ), all opportunity factors were above the average test value, suggesting an external environment that is typically conducive to the growth of entrepreneurs. The comparatively high ratings for all opportunity factors point to more opportunities for Uttar Pradesh women entrepreneurs, especially those who have access to urban settings, learning materials, and social networks of support.

### Threats Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

According to the threat analysis, women entrepreneurs encounter comparatively less external dangers than would be predicted from the body of current research, as seen by the consistently below-average ratings. The comprehensive results of the one-sample t-test analysis of threat factors are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: One-sample t-test for assessing the threats faced by the entrepreneurs**

| Statements                                  | Mean | SD    | t-value |
|---------------------------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Shifting place                              | 2.32 | 0.645 | 5.909** |
| Giving up due to family obligation          | 2.40 | 0.747 | 4.986** |
| Non acceptance of managerial abilities      | 2.05 | 0.844 | 7.807** |
| Lack of recognition by Government agencies  | 2.68 | 0.778 | 9.658** |
| Shortage of capital                         | 2.78 | 0.792 | 3.147** |
| Community non-acceptance of women           | 2.92 | 0.712 | 9.371** |
| Obsolescence of product technology          | 2.91 | 0.825 | 4.785** |
| Big unit competition                        | 2.82 | 0.885 | 5.828** |
| Less demand and small unit competition      | 2.73 | 0.894 | 8.204** |
| Poor financial, marketing and HR management | 2.58 | 0.912 | 4.294** |

\*\* significant at 1% level

The biggest obstacles, however still below the average test value, were the community's disapproval of women (M=2.92, SD=0.712) and the obsolescence of product technology (M=2.91, SD=0.825). Capital

shortages ( $M=2.78$ ,  $SD=0.792$ ) and big unit competition ( $M=2.82$ ,  $SD=0.885$ ) also surfaced as significant issues, demonstrating the financial limitations and market structure that impact entrepreneurial activities. Non-acceptance of managerial skills was the least concerning aspect ( $M=2.05$ ,  $SD=0.844$ ), indicating that women entrepreneurs and their stakeholders had a comparatively high level of confidence in their leadership abilities.

It was confirmed that women entrepreneurs face comparatively lower levels of external threats than might be predicted based on common assumptions about the difficulties faced by women in business within traditional social contexts. All threat variables showed significant differences from the test value (t-values between 3.147 and 9.658,  $p<0.01$ ).

A complex picture of women's entrepreneurial experiences in Uttar Pradesh is painted by the statistical significance across all examined variables, which confirms the findings' robustness. The findings point to an entrepreneurial environment in which women exhibit significant possibilities and strengths while fending off below-average risks and weaknesses, indicating that this group is resilient and adaptable.

### **Strengths: Leveraging Internal Capabilities**

A corporate strategy that places a high priority on value creation and methodical operations is indicated by the strong emphasis on quality consciousness ( $M=3.93$ ) and systematic performance ( $M=3.75$ ). This result is consistent with Sarasvathy's (2016) effectuation theory, which contends that effective businesspeople frequently make use of their resources rather than concentrating just on predetermined objectives. The sample's female entrepreneurs seem to prioritize quality and methodical methods as competitive advantages, which may make up for deficiencies in other resources or competencies.

Conventional narratives about women's financial exclusion and managerial restrictions in traditional societies are challenged by the high ratings for loan availability ( $M=3.93$ ) and favorable attitude toward workers ( $M=3.92$ ). These results point to the efficacy of focused financial inclusion initiatives for female businesses in the area or the successful adaptation to funding limitations through alternate avenues. The focus on good employee connections is consistent with research by Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2021) that shows unique leadership styles among female entrepreneurs that are marked by relationship-building and participative management.

The comparatively high family support ratings ( $M=3.20$ ) are consistent with the family embeddedness approach of Aldrich and Cliff (2018), emphasizing the importance of familial networks as resources for entrepreneurial endeavors, especially for women negotiating conventional social situations. According to this research, family structures in Uttar Pradesh also serve as enabling mechanisms for women entrepreneurs, offering the operational, financial, and emotional support that is essential for the growth and survival of businesses, even in the face of possible home limitations.

The research on gender-based cognitive differences in entrepreneurial decision-making is further supported by the noteworthy strength in perception and intuition ( $M=3.65$ ). According to Mitchell et al. (2022),

entrepreneurial cognition commonly combines analytical and intuitive processes, and women entrepreneurs typically exhibit advantages in customer relationship management and market sensitivity as a result of social intelligence and experiential learning. According to the research, Uttar Pradesh women entrepreneurs actively use these cognitive advantages in their company operations.

**Weaknesses: Challenging Conventional Assumptions**

The below-average deficits stand in contrast to some current research that highlights these hurdles, particularly in areas like mobility ( $M=2.21$ ) and household priorities ( $M=2.70$ ), which are generally regarded as difficult for women entrepreneurs. This discrepancy can be the result of sample selection bias, geographical specificities, or the slow sociocultural development of Uttar Pradesh. Alternatively, it may suggest effective adaption tactics used by female entrepreneurs to get over conventional limits, confirming Brush et al.'s (2019) finding that innovatively navigating structural constraints is a common aspect of entrepreneurial activity.

In their research of Indian women entrepreneurs, Ghosh and Cheruvalath (2017) found that persistent normative limitations are correlated with knowledge of society views ( $M=2.88$ ), a substantially greater weakness. According to this research, women's entrepreneurial behavior and decision-making are nevertheless influenced by internalized knowledge of societal evaluations, even when overt impediments may be disappearing. The comparatively higher scores for idea generation restrictions ( $M=2.89$ ) and risk aversion ( $M=2.90$ ) may also be a result of socialization processes that, in traditional societies, tend to discourage women from taking risks and exercising autonomous initiative.

Nonetheless, deterministic assumptions about women's entrepreneurial constraints in conventional circumstances are called into question by the typically below-average weakness ratings. The results indicate a more nuanced picture of how women overcome obstacles as entrepreneurs by using adaptive methods, resource recombination, and gradual innovation within institutional limits. They also imply higher agency and competence than is frequently acknowledged in conventional narratives.

**Opportunities: Enabling Environmental Factors**

The opportunity landscape appears particularly favorable regarding conducive atmospheres ( $M=3.86$ ) and well-established family backgrounds ( $M=3.74$ ), suggesting that supportive microsystems significantly influence entrepreneurial potential. This finding reinforces Brush et al.'s (2019) 5M framework, emphasizing how environmental factors interact with individual capabilities to shape entrepreneurial outcomes. The importance of entrepreneurial networking ( $M=3.51$ ) further supports social capital theories in entrepreneurship research, highlighting how knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and collective problem-solving enhance individual entrepreneurial capabilities.

The role of urban environments ( $M=3.32$ ), liberal views ( $M=3.40$ ), and good education ( $M=3.38$ ) as significant opportunities aligns with institutional perspectives on entrepreneurship that emphasize the importance of supportive normative, cognitive, and regulatory structures in facilitating entrepreneurial

activity. The findings suggest that urbanization, educational advancement, and shifting social attitudes create spaces of opportunity for women entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh, despite broader structural constraints.

The relatively lower scores for assured captive markets ( $M=3.23$ ) and family help ( $M=3.24$ ), while still above average, indicate areas where additional support might enhance entrepreneurial possibilities. This finding suggests that market access and operational assistance remain challenging despite other favorable environmental factors, highlighting potential intervention points for entrepreneurship support programs.

### **Threats: Managing External Challenges**

The threat analysis reveals interesting patterns, with community non-acceptance ( $M=2.92$ ) and technological obsolescence ( $M=2.91$ ) emerging as primary concerns despite remaining below average intensity. This suggests that while sociocultural resistance persists, as noted by Ratten (2020), its inhibitory effect may be diminishing in contemporary Uttar Pradesh. The technological concern highlights awareness among women entrepreneurs regarding innovation requirements in increasingly competitive markets, challenging assumptions about technological aversion or ignorance among women entrepreneurs in developing regions.

The relatively lower concern about capital shortages ( $M=2.78$ ) contradicts common assumptions about financing difficulties for women entrepreneurs and warrants further investigation into regional financing mechanisms or support programs that might be mitigating this traditional barrier. Similarly, the minimal concern regarding non-acceptance of managerial abilities ( $M=2.05$ ) suggests increasing recognition of women's leadership capabilities in business contexts, potentially reflecting gradual normative shifts regarding gender roles in economic domains.

Competition concerns from both large units ( $M=2.82$ ) and smaller enterprises ( $M=2.73$ ) indicate awareness of market positioning challenges, suggesting strategic thinking about competitive advantage despite operating in a traditionally challenging entrepreneurial ecosystem. This finding aligns with research by Vossenbergh (2018) documenting how women entrepreneurs in developing economies actively engage with market dynamics rather than operating in isolated economic spaces.

### **Integrated SWOT Perspective**

Across all SWOT dimensions, the statistical significance of the findings at the 1% level confirms that these patterns represent genuine phenomena rather than random variations. The consistently below-average weaknesses and threats, coupled with above-average strengths and opportunities, suggest a progressively favorable environment for women's entrepreneurship in Uttar Pradesh, though specific challenges remain to be addressed through targeted interventions.

This integrated perspective supports evolutionary views of entrepreneurial ecosystems proposed by Roundy and Bayer (2019), who emphasize the dynamic interplay between individual agency and structural transformation in shaping entrepreneurial possibilities. The findings suggest that women entrepreneurs in

Uttar Pradesh are active participants in this evolutionary process, leveraging emerging opportunities while navigating persistent constraints through adaptive strategies and distinctive capabilities.

The SWOT analysis further reveals the contextual specificity of women's entrepreneurship, supporting Welter's (2020) call for contextualized understanding of entrepreneurial phenomena. The particular configuration of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified in this study reflects the unique sociocultural, economic, and institutional characteristics of Uttar Pradesh, demonstrating how entrepreneurial dynamics are embedded in specific regional contexts rather than following universal patterns.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the strengths, opportunities, and resilience of women entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh's MSME sector, using a SWOT analysis framework. Women show notable strengths in quality, finance, and management, while weaknesses such as risk aversion remain moderate. Opportunities from supportive environments and family networks outweigh manageable threats like technological gaps and social resistance. The findings challenge stereotypes about women in traditional societies, emphasizing regional dynamics and individual agency. Practical implications call for targeted policy support, including training, mentorship, and community engagement. Despite limitations like cross-sectional data and potential bias, the study points to promising growth potential and calls for future research into regional and sectoral variations.

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