ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 7| July 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

database of the women entrepreneurs in Chandwad, Nashik; criterion, snowball technique was used for sampling. Snowball sampling technique is applied when it is difficult to reach the subjects in the population that meet the target characteristics. The woman owns and runs the business whether in partnership or as a sole proprietorship and the business has been in operation for at least 3 years. The researcher asked in her social circle, contacted lady health workers in remote areas, and used social media platforms to find women entrepreneurs. Many women entrepreneurs suggested names of other entrepreneurs. A sample of 200 women entrepreneurs was chosen from those who fit the criteria and approached for the study.

DEFINITIONS OF AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

An entrepreneurial ecosystem is a complex, interconnected system that supports and fosters the creation and growth of new businesses within a specific geographic area. It encompasses colorful actors, associations, institutions, and processes that interact to give the necessary conditions for entrepreneurship. Basically, it's the terrain where entrepreneurs can thrive and new gambles can flourish.

Key Components of an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs mean the individuals which have been with the drive and vision to start as well as grow new businesses.

Support Organizations

These include incubators, accelerators, mentors, co-working spaces, and other entities that provide resources and guidance to entrepreneurs.

Financial Institutions

Access to funding through venture capitalists, angel investors, banks, and other financial intermediaries is crucial for startups.

Educational Institutions

Universities and research institutions play a vital role in generating new knowledge, talent, and ideas.

Government Policies and Regulations

Favorable policies, streamlined regulations, and supportive infrastructure can significantly impact the success of an ecosystem.

Culture and Networks

A culture that embraces risk-taking, innovation, and collaboration, along with strong business networks, is essential for fostering entrepreneurship.

Infrastructure

This is access to physical infrastructure (like high-speed internet, transportation, as well as affordable workspace) and also digital infrastructure is critical.

Markets

Access to potential customers and markets for new products and services is necessary for businesses to succeed.

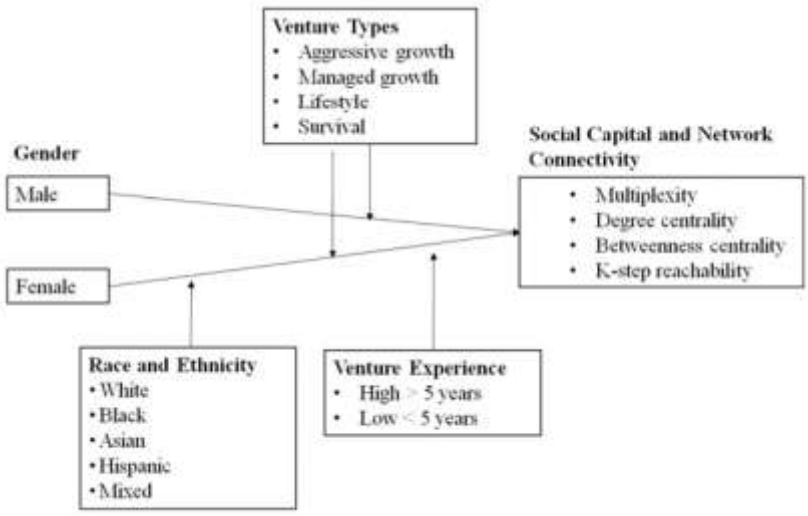


Fig. The effect of gender, venture type, race, ethnicity, and past venture experience on social capital and network connectivity in entrepreneurial ecosystems

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Entrepreneurial ecosystem for women entrepreneurs: The following are the indicators, which indicate that whether the entrepreneurial ecosystem run properly or not. All indicators are sub-divided into different questions.

Table 1 Policy

Sr. No.	Research Questions	Yes	No	Total
1	Knowledge about Laws and Policies	144	76	200
2	Knowledge of Tax Incentives	98	102	200

Above table indicate that 144 women entrepreneurs have knowledge regarding laws and policies while 76 are not aware about the same. On the other hand 98 women entrepreneurs have knowledge regarding tax incentives while 102 are not aware about the same.

Table 2 Finance

Sr. No.	Research Questions	Yes	No	Total
1	Knowledge and Misinformation about Financial Institutions	112	88	200
2	Knowledge regarding Investment Bias toward Women	78	122	200

Above table shows that 112 women entrepreneurs have knowledge regarding financial institutions while 88 are not known about the same. While 78 women entrepreneurs have known about investment bias toward women like wise 122 are not aware about it.

Table 3 Supports

Sr. No.	Research Questions	Yes	No	Total
1	Knowledge of Weak Infrastructures	112	88	200
2	Knowledge of Online Tools and Technological Infrastructure Facilitate Women-run Businesses	78	122	200
3	Knowledge of NGOs supports	110	90	200

Respondents were asked about the availability of physical infrastructure, the quality of infrastructure in the areas where they do business, and the quality of infrastructure in the areas where they work, the support they received and their perceptions of institutions including universities, business incubation centers, and business accelerators. Above table classify the response of women entrepreneurs.

Table 4 Human Capital

Sr. No.	Research Questions	Yes	No	Total
1	Business Education and Training Help Women Entrepreneurs	160	40	200
2	Need for Gender-specific Entrepreneurial Trainings	142	58	200
3	Lack of Practicality in Business Education	130	70	200
4	Limited Access to Skilled Human Capital	150	50	200
5	Preference on Hiring Female Employees	170	30	200

The key themes have been noticed from the participants' responses in the table above. Percentages regarding awareness about all above indicators are more while there are lessor numbers having knowledge about human capital indicators. Like training helps women, business education, skilled human capital or hiring female employee.

Table 5 Culture

Sr. No.	Research Questions	Yes	No	Total
1	Familial Support Effect the Business-related Decisions	162	38	200
2	Stereotypical Attitudes toward Women Entrepreneurs	144	56	200
3	Harassment and Inappropriate behavior adds to the Stress of Women Entrepreneurs	132	68	200

The above tables related to the cultural values regarding the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. The 162 respondents gave positive responses about Familial Support Effect the Business-related Decisions while 38 respondents gave negative responses. The other indicator Stereotypical Attitudes toward Women Entrepreneurs, there is quit same responses. And about Harassment and Inappropriate behavior 132 respondents gave positive responses and 68 gave negative responses.

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Table 6 Markets

Sr. No.	Research Questions	Yes	No	Total
1	Online Networks are Vital	156	44	200
2	Limited Access to Networks and Markets	137	63	200
3	Absence of one Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Can Result in Ineffectiveness of the other	149	51	200
4	Diversity in Training within the Same Area Can Prevent Market Saturation	175	25	200
5	Knowledge about the Markets	181	19	200

Above table reveals that knowledge regarding markets. As online markets 156 respondents in favor while 44 respondents are against the online networks. While 137 women entrepreneurs know the access to networks and markets and 63 are not aware about it. In case of absence of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem can result in ineffectiveness of the other 149 respondents give the positive response and 51 has gave negative response. Knowledge regarding the training diversity within same area to prevent markets 175 entrepreneurs aware about it while only 25 are not know the same. Simultaneously, 181 entrepreneurs have clear idea of Market and only 19 entrepreneurs are not well known to the market condition.

Recommendations

Below are some recommendations to improve the access of women entrepreneurs to the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Chandwad, Nashik:

- Mobilizing the community through culturally sensitive awareness and outreach programs to increase acceptance and social support for women entrepreneurs.
- Making microfinance lending more transparent and tracking who the end user of the loan is, and addressing gender-based lending practices.
- Introducing tax breaks and export incentives for companies purchasing from women entrepreneurs and women-run small and medium enterprises.
- Encouraging government agencies to purchase a certain percentage of goods from women-run businesses each year.
- Using coordinated strategies and partnerships across different components of the ecosystem.
- Translating laws into local languages to help women entrepreneurs understand them and grow their businesses legally.
- Initiating more gender-based research and data to create evidence-based policy for program planning and guide practices.
- Improving ICT to enable women to access larger markets, reduce costs, and utilize their capabilities in technology-related businesses. Women entrepreneurs living in rural areas of Chandwad far behind in the use of modern technology in their businesses and continue to use old methods for marketing, production, and sales. With ICT interventions, women entrepreneurs can grow their businesses and increase their income.
- A collaborative network of like-minded people and organizations to empower women by connecting them to entrepreneurial opportunities and resources.
- Having more women in decision-making processes and advisory boards to ensure gender inclusiveness in the policy-making process.
- Online platforms with resources for women entrepreneurs, information on start-up programs, and available grants can present success stories.
- Helping women gain access to global markets and organizing export workshops to educate women entrepreneurs about processes, laws, and opportunities to increase export knowledge.

CONCLUSION

An effective entrepreneurial ecosystem for women entrepreneurs can be assessed by examining factors like access to capital, mentorship opportunities, supportive networks, and inclusive policies. Other key indicators include the presence of role models, availability of gender-sensitive resources, and the overall culture of inclusivity and support for women-owned businesses. After analyzing the data from this research study, it can be concluded that an entrepreneurial ecosystem for and by women in Chandwad, Nashik, is partially present. These factors need to work more together. The major challenges facing women entrepreneurs are financing and cultural issues. For future research, we recommend conducting an analysis using quantitative data to understand the true scale of the problem, exploring gaps in the functioning of different components of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem as well as analyzing entrepreneurial ecosystems in other cities rest of Maharashtra or India.

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