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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTIVATION AMONG MIZO WOMEN AND MEN ENTREPRENEURS IN MIZORAM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the entrepreneurial motivation of Mizo women entrepreneurs and compares it with that of male entrepreneurs in Mizoram, India. The study is based on primary data collected from 350 women entrepreneurs and 46 male entrepreneurs from the districts of Aizawl, Kolasib, and Champhai using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The findings reveal that most entrepreneurs started their businesses independently and on a micro scale with relatively low initial capital, primarily financed through personal savings and family support. The study found that women entrepreneurs are mainly driven by intrinsic motivational factors such as personal satisfaction and growth, independence, need for achievement, and passion for business. Family support also emerged as an important motivational factor, while dissatisfaction with previous employment acted as a push factor for some respondents. The results further indicate a statistically significant difference in entrepreneurial motivation between male and female entrepreneurs, with male entrepreneurs recording comparatively higher motivational scores. The study highlights the importance of entrepreneurial self-reliance, social support systems, and psychological aspirations in shaping women entrepreneurship in Mizoram.

KEYWORDS: *Entrepreneurial Motivation, Women Entrepreneurs, Gender Comparison, Mizoram, Mizo Entrepreneurs, Women Empowerment.*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in economic growth, employment generation, innovation, and social transformation (Schumpeter, 1934). In recent years, women entrepreneurship has gained increasing attention due to its contribution toward economic participation, poverty reduction, and women empowerment (Minniti & Naudé, 2010). Women entrepreneurs are not only creating employment opportunities for themselves but are also contributing to the socio-economic development of society through productive and independent economic activities.

In Mizoram, entrepreneurship has gradually emerged as an important livelihood option due to limited employment opportunities in the formal sector and changing socio-economic conditions. Mizo women, in particular, are increasingly participating in entrepreneurial activities ranging from small-scale trading and retail businesses to service-oriented enterprises. Their participation reflects changing aspirations, the desire for economic independence, and the need for self-employment.

Entrepreneurial motivation refers to the factors that encourage individuals to initiate and sustain business ventures. These motivations may arise from intrinsic factors such as achievement, independence, self-fulfilment, and passion, or from extrinsic factors such as economic necessity, unemployment, family expectations, and social recognition (McClelland, 1961). Understanding the motivational factors behind entrepreneurship is essential for policymakers, educational institutions, and development agencies in designing effective support systems and entrepreneurship development programs.

Previous studies have shown that entrepreneurial motivation may differ across gender due to differences in socio-cultural expectations, family responsibilities, economic opportunities, and personal aspirations (Sarmah, Saikia, & Tripathi, 2022). Studies conducted in Mizoram also indicate that family support, self-achievement, and economic independence are important drivers of entrepreneurship among women (Lalmuanpuii, Singh, & Lalropuii, 2022). However, limited studies have specifically examined entrepreneurial motivation among Mizo women entrepreneurs and compared it with male entrepreneurs in Mizoram. Therefore, the present study attempts to identify the major motivational factors influencing Mizo women entrepreneurs and examine whether significant gender differences exist in entrepreneurial motivation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lalmuanpuii, Singh, and Lalropuii (2022) conducted a comprehensive study on 291 women entrepreneurs in Aizawl City, Mizoram, examining their demographic profiles, motivational factors, and business performance. The study identified that "building a business to pass on" and "entrepreneur was a lifelong goal" are the primary motivational factors driving Mizo women entrepreneurs. The

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research also revealed that emotional attachment to the entrepreneurial venture and improvement in entrepreneurial activities significantly strengthen their performance. A significant correlation was found between motivational factors and business performance.

Sarmah, Saikia, and Tripathi (2022) examined the association between entrepreneur gender and entrepreneurial motivation among 320 MSME entrepreneurs in Assam, a neighboring Northeast Indian state. Their findings revealed a strong, positive, and significant association between gender and entrepreneurial motivations. Male entrepreneurs were largely outcome of force (46.9%), create (26.9%), and chance (26.3%) motivational factors, while female entrepreneurs were primarily driven by chance (55.6%), force (30.6%), and create (13.8%). The study found that 70.6% of female respondents never intended to be entrepreneurs, citing reasons like societal judgment, fear of failure, and difficulty balancing personal and professional life, whereas only 48.1% of males reported similar concerns.

Khiangte, Lalremruati, and Lalengzama (2023) studied entrepreneurial attitude among educated youth in Lawngtlai District, Mizoram, comparing male and female respondents. The study found that females displayed higher mean scores than males across all entrepreneurial attitude dimensions, indicating that female youth have a stronger entrepreneurial mentality than males. Specifically, females scored higher on personal control (3.22 vs. 3.09), creativity (3.11 vs. 2.92), leadership (3.00 vs. 2.77), and achievement (2.81 vs. 2.79). The highest barriers identified were transportation problems (mean: 3.60) and high cost of raw materials (mean: 3.03), with females facing additional challenges in accessing startup finance.

Lalfakawmi and Pachuau (2021) traced the emergence of Mizo women as active participants in entrepreneurship, exploring the historical and socio-cultural conditions that shaped their entrepreneurial journey. The study highlighted that while entrepreneurship involves innovation and risk-taking, Mizo women's entry into business was influenced by unique cultural factors including family support from male members, which was imperative in shaping their careers. The study noted that entrepreneurship in Mizoram is at a beginning stage, with half of the 375 examined SMEs established between 2000–2010, indicating recent growth in entrepreneurial activity.

Lalhunthara (2019) studied factors inducing entrepreneurship among MSMEs in Aizawl District, Mizoram, emphasizing the predominant role of micro, small, and medium enterprises in the socio-economic development of the region. The research identified that micro enterprises allow marginalized and vulnerable sections, including women and the landless, to generate income, acquire entrepreneurial ability, and obtain economic independence. Economic independence was recognized as an effective tool to break the vicious cycle of poverty, particularly for women entrepreneurs. The study examined socioeconomic characteristics including gender, education, marital status, and father's occupation as factors influencing entrepreneurship in Aizawl district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the major motivational factors influencing Mizo women entrepreneurs to start and manage their businesses.
2. To examine whether significant gender differences exist in entrepreneurial motivation among Mizo entrepreneurs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection

Primary and secondary data were utilized for the study. The questionnaire method was used to acquire primary data from the entrepreneurs. Secondary data needed for the study were collected through various sources such as books, journals, etc.

Sampling Method

A total of 350 responses were collected from Mizo women entrepreneurs across the districts of Aizawl, Kolasib, and Champhai. In addition, data from 46 male entrepreneurs were collected for comparative analysis to examine gender differences in entrepreneurial motivation. The study adopted a combination of convenience and purposive sampling techniques, wherein only entrepreneurs with more than three years of business experience were selected for the study.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Location

Gender	Location			Total
	Kolasib	Aizawl	Champhai	
Female	80	200	70	350
Male	15	16	15	46
Total	95	216	85	396

** Source: Field Survey*

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents based on gender and city. Out of the total 396 respondents, 350 were female entrepreneurs and 46 were male entrepreneurs. Among the female respondents, the majority were from Aizawl district (200),

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followed by Kolasib (80) and Champhai (70). Similarly, among the male respondents, 16 respondents were from Aizawl, while Kolasib and Champhai contributed 15 respondents each.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Age of Respondents

Table 2 presents the classification of respondents based on gender and their age at the time of starting their business.

Table 2. Age

Particulars	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
20 and below	5%	6.5%	5.1%
20 to 29	34.1%	39.1%	34.7%
30 to 39	48.7%	34.8%	47%
40 to 49	9.3%	13%	9.8%
50 to 59	1.5%	0%	1.3%
60 to 69	0.9%	2.2%	1%
** Source: Field Survey*			

The findings reveal that the majority of both female and male entrepreneurs started their business between the ages of 30 to 39 years, accounting for 48.7% of female respondents and 34.8% of male respondents, with an overall total of 47.0%. This indicates that entrepreneurship is most common during the economically productive and mature stage of life.

The second largest group comprises respondents who started their business between 20 to 29 years, representing 34.1% of females and 39.1% of males, with a total of 34.7%. This suggests that a considerable proportion of entrepreneurs also entered business activities during early adulthood.

Marital Status of Respondents

Table 3 shows that the majority of both female and male entrepreneurs are married, accounting for 52.9% of female respondents and 54.3% of male respondents, with an overall total of 53.0%. This indicates that married individuals constitute the largest proportion of entrepreneurs among the respondents.

Table 3. Marital Status

Particulars	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Single	27.4%	17.4%	26.3%
Married	52.9%	54.3%	53%
Divorced	10.3%	17.4%	11.1%
Widow	9.4%	10.9%	9.6%
** Source: Field Survey*			

The proportion of single respondents is comparatively high among females (27.4%) than males (17.4%), contributing to 26.3% of the total respondents. This suggests that a considerable number of unmarried individuals are also involved in entrepreneurial activities.

Educational Background of Respondents

As shown in Table 4, the largest proportion of respondents fall under the category of Below HSLC, accounting for 38.6% of female entrepreneurs and 26.1% of male entrepreneurs, with an overall total of 37.1%. This indicates that a substantial number of entrepreneurs entered business activities despite having relatively low formal educational qualifications.

Table 4. Educational Background

Particulars	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Below HSLC	38.6%	26.1%	37.1%
HSLC	21.4%	37%	23.2%
HSSLC	18%	17.4%	17.9%
Graduate	18.9%	13%	18.2%
Post Graduate	2.6%	6.5%	3%
Others	0.3%	0%	0.3%
** Source: Field Survey*			

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The second largest category is HSLC, representing 21.4% of female respondents and 37% of male respondents, constituting 23.2% of the total respondents. Respondents with HSSLC qualification account for 17.9% overall, while graduates and post graduates constitute 18.2% and 3% of the respondents respectively.

Overall, the findings suggest that entrepreneurship among the respondents is not limited to highly educated individuals, as a majority possess educational qualifications below the higher secondary level. This may indicate that entrepreneurial engagement is influenced more by practical experience, economic necessity, and opportunity recognition rather than formal educational attainment alone.

Previous Occupation of Respondents

Table 5 presents the previous occupation of the respondents according to gender. The findings reveal that the largest proportion of respondents were previously unemployed before starting their business, accounting for 50.3% of female entrepreneurs and 26.1% of male entrepreneurs, with an overall total of 47.5%. This suggests that entrepreneurship served as an important means of employment generation and livelihood creation, particularly for women.

Table 5. Previous Occupation

Particulars	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Unemployed	50.3%	26.1%	47.5%
Self employed	41.7%	58.7%	43.7%
Worked in Private Company	4.3%	2.2%	4%
Worked Government job	2%	4.3%	2.3%
Any other	1.7%	8.7%	2.5%

** Source: Field Survey*

A significant proportion of respondents were already self-employed prior to their present business venture, comprising 41.7% of female respondents and 58.7% of male respondents, representing 43.7% of the total respondents. This indicates that many entrepreneurs had prior experience in independent economic activities before establishing their current enterprise.

Method of Business Establishment by the Respondents

Table 6 presents the manner in which the respondents started their business according to gender. The findings reveal that the vast majority of both female and male entrepreneurs founded their businesses on their own, accounting for 81.1% of female respondents and 78.3% of male respondents, with an overall total of 80.8%. This indicates a strong tendency among respondents toward initiating independent entrepreneurial ventures rather than relying on existing businesses.

Table 6. Method of Business Establishment

Particulars	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Purchased	13.4%	15.2%	13.6%
Founded	81.1%	78.3%	80.8%
Inherited	5.1%	4.3%	5.1%
Others	0.3%	2.2%	0.5%

** Source: Field Survey*

A smaller proportion of respondents started their business through purchase, representing 13.4% of female entrepreneurs and 15.2% of male entrepreneurs, with an overall total of 13.6%. This suggests that some entrepreneurs entered business by acquiring already established enterprises. Only 5.1% of respondents inherited their business, showing that family succession or inherited enterprises play a relatively limited role among the respondents.

Initial Capital Invested by the Respondents

Table 7 presents the amount of initial capital invested by the respondents while starting their business according to gender. The findings reveal that the largest proportion of respondents started their business with an initial capital ranging from Rs 10,001 to Rs 50,000, accounting for 34.9% of female entrepreneurs and 26.1% of male entrepreneurs, with an overall total of 33.8%. This indicates that most respondents started their enterprises with relatively small financial investments.

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Table 7. Initial Capital			
Particulars	**Gender**		**Total**
	Female	**Male**	
Less than Rs 10,000	13.4%	15.2%	13.6%
Rs 10,001 to Rs 50,000	34.9%	26.1%	33.8%
Rs 50,001 to Rs 1,00,000	22.6%	19.6%	22.2%
Rs 1,00,001 to Rs Rs 5,00,000	16.6%	28.3%	17.9%
Rs 5,00,001 to Rs 10,00,000	4.3%	2.2%	4%
More than Rs 10,00,000	0.3%	2.2%	0.5%
** Source: Field Survey*			

A considerable proportion of respondents invested between Rs 50,001 and Rs 1,00,000, constituting 22.2% of the total respondents. Similarly, 17.9% of respondents started their business with capital ranging from Rs 1,00,001 to Rs 5,00,000, with a comparatively higher percentage among male entrepreneurs (28.3%) than female entrepreneurs (16.6%).

Respondents who started their business with less than Rs 10,000 account for 13.6% of the total respondents. Only a very small proportion invested higher amounts, such as Rs 5,00,001 to Rs 10,00,000 (4.0%) and more than Rs 10,00,000 (0.5%).

Source of Capital

Table 8 presents the sources of capital used by the respondents for starting their business according to gender. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents relied on their personal savings as the primary source of capital, accounting for 50.9% of female entrepreneurs and 60.9% of male entrepreneurs, with an overall total of 52%. This indicates that self-financing is the most common method of funding entrepreneurial activities among the respondents.

Table 8. Source of capital			
Particulars	**Gender**		**Total**
	Female	**Male**	
Savings	50.9%	60.9%	52%
Funded by Relatives	20.3%	32.6%	21.7%
Borrowed from relatives	6%	6.5%	6.1%
Borrowed from friends	3.4%	0%	3%
Money lenders	2%	0%	1.8%
Banks	17.4%	0%	15.4%
** Source: Field Survey*			

The second major source of capital is funding from relatives, which constitutes 20.3% of female respondents and 32.6% of male respondents, with an overall total of 21.7%. This suggests that family support plays an important role in helping entrepreneurs establish their businesses. A smaller proportion of respondents borrowed capital from relatives (6.1%) and friends (3%). Only 1.8% of respondents depended on money lenders for business capital.

Interestingly, 17.4% of female entrepreneurs obtained capital through banks, whereas none of the male respondents reported banks as their source of capital. This may indicate comparatively greater institutional financial access among female entrepreneurs, possibly due to government schemes and financial support programs targeted toward women entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial Motivation

A total of 45 statements were given to the respondents who were asked to give their agreement with the statements based on a 5-point Likert scale where *1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.* The reliability of the data was tested using Cronbach's Alpha for the 45 items under the study. The result showed a value of 0.907 as shown in Table 9 indicating the reliability of the data to fall under *'excellent*' category.

Table 9. Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	**N of Items**
0.907	45

The following table indicates the most strongly expressed motivational factors among Mizo women entrepreneurs. Out of the 45 statements, the following statements in Table 10 recorded a mode of 4 ("Agree") or higher. Since the mode represents the most frequently selected response in Likert-scale analysis, these findings highlight the dominant motivations influencing women to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

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Table 10. Entrepreneurial Motivation			
Sl.No.	**Statement**	**Mode**	**Percentage**
1	I started it for my own satisfaction and growth	4	67.1
2	I wanted to be independent	4	64
3	My need for achievement	4	60.9
4	I have a passion for my business	4	56.9
5	I was dissatisfied with my previous job	4	51.1
6	Support from my family	4	49.1
**1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree*			
** Source: Field Survey*			

Among the statements, "I started it for my own satisfaction and growth" recorded the highest percentage (67.1%) with a mode of 4, indicating that personal fulfilment and self-development are among the strongest motivating factors for women entrepreneurs. This suggests that entrepreneurship is viewed not merely as an economic activity, but also as a means of achieving self-identity, confidence, and personal growth.

Similarly, "I wanted to be independent" (64%) and "My need for achievement" (60.9%) also emerged as major motivating factors. These findings reveal that many Mizo women are driven by intrinsic motivations such as autonomy, self-reliance, and the desire to accomplish meaningful goals.

The statement "I have a passion for my business" (56.9%) further indicates that emotional attachment and genuine interest in business activities play an important role in motivating women entrepreneurs. This finding suggests that entrepreneurship among Mizo women is not solely necessity-driven but is also influenced by personal interest and enthusiasm.

The responses also show the importance of social and family support. "Support from my family" recorded 49.1%, indicating that family encouragement contributes significantly to women's entrepreneurial engagement. In the socio-cultural context of Mizoram, where family relationships are strong, emotional and practical support from family members may help women overcome barriers associated with entrepreneurship.

In addition, "I was dissatisfied with my previous job" (51.1%) indicates that dissatisfaction with prior employment acted as a push factor motivating women to start their own businesses. This suggests that some women turned to entrepreneurship in search of better opportunities, flexibility, or job satisfaction.

Gender Differences in Entrepreneurial Motivation

An index score for entrepreneurial motivation was created by combining the scores of all 45 statements for each respondent. Since the data were ordinal in nature and did not satisfy the assumptions of normal distribution, the Mann–Whitney U test, a non-parametric statistical test, was used to examine whether significant differences existed in entrepreneurial motivation between male and female entrepreneurs.

Table 11. Gender Difference	
Statistic	**Value**
Mann-Whitney U	1656.500
Wilcoxon W	62731.500
Z	-8.757
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001

The results revealed a statistically significant difference in motivation scores between the two groups ($U = 1656.500$, $Z = -8.757$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 12. Ranks	
Gender	**Mean Rank**
Female	179.75
Male	336.49

The mean rank scores indicated that male entrepreneurs (Mean Rank = 336.49) exhibited higher entrepreneurial motivation than female entrepreneurs (Mean Rank = 179.75).

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FINDINGS

1. Majority of entrepreneurs under study started their businesses between the ages of 20 and 39 years, indicating that entrepreneurship is most common during the economically active and productive stages of life.
2. Most respondents were married, suggesting that marital status does not act as a barrier to entrepreneurial participation among Mizo entrepreneurs.
3. A significant proportion of respondents possessed educational qualifications below the higher secondary level, indicating that entrepreneurship is not limited to highly educated individuals and is often influenced by practical experience, economic necessity, and opportunity recognition.
4. The findings revealed that many women entrepreneurs were previously unemployed before starting their businesses, highlighting entrepreneurship as an important source of employment generation and economic participation for women.
5. The majority of respondents founded their businesses independently rather than inheriting or purchasing existing enterprises, reflecting strong entrepreneurial initiative and self-reliance.
6. Most entrepreneurs started their businesses with relatively low initial capital, particularly within the range of Rs. 10,001 to Rs. 50,000, indicating the prevalence of small-scale entrepreneurial activities in Mizoram.
7. Personal savings emerged as the primary source of business capital, followed by financial support from relatives. This shows that entrepreneurs largely depend on self-financing and family-based resources rather than institutional borrowing.
8. Among women entrepreneurs, “I started it for my own satisfaction and growth” emerged as the strongest motivational factor, followed by independence, achievement, and passion for business. This indicates the dominance of intrinsic and self-fulfilment motivations among women entrepreneurs.
9. Family support was identified as an important motivating factor, reflecting the influence of social and family environments in encouraging women entrepreneurship in Mizoram. This finding supports earlier studies conducted in Mizoram.
10. Dissatisfaction with previous employment also acted as a push factor motivating some women to establish their own businesses.
11. The Mann–Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference in entrepreneurial motivation between male and female entrepreneurs ($p < 0.001$). Male entrepreneurs recorded higher mean rank scores in entrepreneurial motivation compared to female entrepreneurs, indicating comparatively stronger motivational intensity among male respondents.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Government agencies and financial institutions should strengthen financial assistance schemes and improve access to credit facilities for women entrepreneurs, particularly for startups and small-scale enterprises. Awareness programs regarding government support schemes, subsidies, and institutional financing opportunities should be expanded.
2. Entrepreneurship development programs and skill-based training should be conducted regularly to enhance entrepreneurial confidence, managerial ability, and business sustainability among women entrepreneurs.
3. Special attention should be given to improving market access, digital literacy, and business networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Mizoram.
4. Educational institutions may introduce entrepreneurship-oriented education and practical training to encourage entrepreneurial attitudes among youth at an early stage.
5. Policies promoting women entrepreneurship should focus not only on financial assistance but also on psychological empowerment, self-confidence, and long-term business sustainability.
6. Family and community support systems should be encouraged, as the study indicates that social support plays a significant role in motivating women entrepreneurs.

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