

A Study on Issues and Challenges Faced by Women Homepreneurs with Special Reference to Madurai City

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurship has emerged as an important contributor to economic development and social empowerment. Home-based entrepreneurship, commonly referred to as homepreneurship, enables women to balance family responsibilities while generating income and achieving financial independence. This study examines the issues and challenges faced by women homepreneurs in Madurai City. The research focuses on factors such as financial constraints, marketing difficulties, technological barriers, work–life balance, and lack of institutional support. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from women homepreneurs, and statistical tools were used for analysis. The findings reveal that despite increased participation in entrepreneurial activities, women continue to face challenges related to access to finance, market exposure, training, and social support. The study concludes that policy interventions, skill development programs, and improved financial accessibility are essential to promote sustainable growth among women homepreneurs.

Keywords: *Women Entrepreneurship, Homepreneurs, Small Business, Financial Challenges, Work–Life Balance, Women Empowerment, Madurai City.*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is an important driver of economic development, employment generation, and innovation in modern economies. It contributes to income creation, poverty reduction, and social progress by encouraging individuals to utilize their skills and resources productively. In recent years, entrepreneurship has also become a significant tool for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, as more women participate in entrepreneurial activities due to improved education and growing awareness of financial independence. Among various forms of entrepreneurship, home-based entrepreneurship or homepreneurship has

gained increasing importance. It allows women to start and manage businesses from their homes with low investment and flexible working conditions. Home-based enterprises enable women to balance domestic responsibilities with income-generating activities, leading many to engage in businesses such as tailoring, food processing, handicrafts, online selling, and small-scale services. In India, women's participation in formal employment is often limited by socio-cultural norms, family responsibilities, and mobility constraints. Homepreneurship provides an alternative pathway for economic participation while allowing women to fulfil household roles. Through such activities, women contribute to family income and gain confidence, independence, and social recognition. Despite its advantages, women homepreneurs face several challenges, including limited access to finance, lack of marketing and technological skills, restricted market exposure, and inadequate institutional support. Managing business activities alongside domestic duties also creates time and operational constraints. Therefore, understanding these challenges is essential for promoting sustainable entrepreneurial growth. Madurai City, with its strong small-scale business environment, offers an appropriate context to examine the experiences of women homepreneurs. This study aims to analyze the issues and challenges faced by women homepreneurs in Madurai City and suggest measures to enhance their business sustainability and economic empowerment.

2.Literature Review

Women entrepreneurship has received significant attention from researchers and policymakers due to its contribution to economic development, employment generation, and social empowerment. Several studies have examined the opportunities and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, particularly those operating small and home-based enterprises.

Earlier research highlights that financial constraints remain one of the major barriers affecting women entrepreneurs. According to Sharma (2018), limited access to formal credit institutions and lack of collateral security restrict women's ability to expand their businesses. Similarly, Singh and Belwal (2017) observed that women entrepreneurs often depend on personal savings or informal sources of finance, which limits business growth and sustainability. Difficulty in obtaining loans and inadequate financial literacy further intensify these challenges.

A number of studies emphasize the role of knowledge and skill development in entrepreneurial success. Gupta and Aggarwal (2019) found that lack of entrepreneurial training,

marketing skills, and technological awareness significantly affects the performance of home-based enterprises. With the rapid growth of digital markets, technological competency has become essential for business promotion and customer reach. However, many women homepreneurs face barriers in adopting digital tools due to insufficient training and limited exposure to modern business practices.

Government policies and institutional support have also been identified as critical factors influencing women entrepreneurship. Das (2018) highlighted that government schemes, financial assistance programs, and entrepreneurship development initiatives can enhance women's participation in business activities. However, awareness and accessibility of such schemes remain relatively low among women entrepreneurs, particularly those operating from home. Entrepreneurial education and skill development programs are therefore considered essential for strengthening women-led enterprises.

Another important dimension discussed in literature is the challenge of balancing family responsibilities with business activities. Jennings and Brush (2013) noted that women entrepreneurs often experience role conflict due to dual responsibilities in household management and business operations. Time management difficulties, psychological stress, and lack of family support can negatively influence business performance and growth. Home-based entrepreneurship, while offering flexibility, may also blur the boundaries between personal and professional roles.

Overall, the existing literature indicates that women entrepreneurship is steadily growing and contributing to economic and social development. Nevertheless, structural, financial, and socio-cultural barriers continue to limit its full potential. These studies underline the need for improved financial access, skill development, institutional support, and policy interventions to strengthen women homepreneurs. Building upon these findings, the present study examines the specific issues and challenges faced by women homepreneurs in Madurai City.

3. Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the socio-economic profile of women homepreneurs in Madurai City.
2. To identify the major challenges faced by women homepreneurs.

3. To analyze financial, marketing, and operational issues affecting their businesses.
4. To study the level of support received from government and financial institutions.
5. To provide suggestions for improving the growth and sustainability of women home-based enterprises.

4. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the issues and challenges faced by women homepreneurs in Madurai City. Descriptive research is appropriate for this study as it helps in systematically describing the characteristics, experiences, and problems encountered by women engaged in home-based entrepreneurial activities. The design enables the researcher to analyze existing conditions and identify patterns related to financial, operational, and social challenges affecting business performance and sustainability.

Both primary and secondary data sources were used for the study to ensure comprehensive analysis. Primary data were collected directly from women homepreneurs through a structured questionnaire designed to gather information regarding their socio-economic background, type of business, financial accessibility, marketing practices, technological usage, and challenges faced in managing their enterprises. The questionnaire method was selected as it allows uniform data collection from a larger number of respondents and facilitates quantitative analysis. Secondary data were collected from various sources such as academic journals, books, government reports, research publications, and credible online resources related to women entrepreneurship and home-based enterprises. These sources provided theoretical support and background information for the study.

The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling method. This sampling technique was adopted due to the accessibility and availability of women homepreneurs operating in different parts of Madurai City. Convenience sampling enabled the researcher to gather relevant data within the available time and resource constraints while ensuring participation from women involved in diverse home-based business activities.

The study was conducted among selected women homepreneurs engaged in various small-scale home-based enterprises such as tailoring, food processing, handicrafts, beauty services, and online trading. The sample represents women entrepreneurs managing businesses from their homes, allowing the researcher to understand the practical challenges associated with homepreneurship.

For data analysis, simple percentage analysis and basic statistical interpretation techniques were used. Percentage analysis helped in presenting the distribution of responses clearly and in identifying major trends and patterns among respondents. The analyzed data were interpreted systematically to understand the key issues affecting women homepreneurs and to draw meaningful conclusions regarding their entrepreneurial experiences and challenges.

5. Findings and Discussion

i) Demographic Profile of Respondents (Sample Illustration)

Table 1: Age-wise Classification of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 25 years	12	12
25–35 years	38	38
36–45 years	30	30
Above 45 years	20	20
Total	100	100

Majority (38%) of women homepreneurs belong to the 25–35 years age group, indicating that young and middle-aged women actively engage in home-based entrepreneurship for income generation and family support.

ii) Types of Home-Based Business

Table 2: Nature of Business

Type of Business	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Tailoring & Boutique	26	26
Food Products (Pickles, Snacks, Catering)	24	24
Beauty & Wellness Services	18	18
Handicrafts & Handmade Products	14	14
Online Reselling / Digital Sales	18	18
Total	100	100

Tailoring and food-related businesses dominate because they require low investment and can be managed from home.

Major Challenges Faced by Women Homepreneurs

Table 3: Key Challenges Faced

Challenges	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Tough Market Competition	34	34
Work–Life Balance Issues	16	16
Lack of Family/Institutional Support	15	15
Unfavourable Business Environment	18	18
Family Restrictions	17	17
Total	100	100

The majority (34%) reported intense competition as the biggest challenge, followed by business environment difficulties and family restrictions.

This aligns with studies showing women entrepreneurs often struggle to secure stable market positions due to competition and limited networks.

Challenges Faced by Women Homepreneurs

Challenges (%) Distribution



Problems Faced in Business Operations

Table 4: Operational Problems

Problems	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Personal Problems	19	19
Raw Material Issues	10	10
Lack of Confidence	12	12
Social Problems	15	15
Financial Problems	13	13
Marketing Problems	19	19
Managerial Problems	12	12
Total	100	100

Marketing and personal problems ranked highest (19%), showing that women struggle to promote products and manage business alongside domestic responsibilities.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis reveals that the challenges faced by women homepreneurs in Madurai are multidimensional, encompassing economic, social, managerial, and personal aspects. From an economic perspective, lack of adequate finance and limited access to credit facilities significantly restrict business growth and expansion. In addition, intense market competition reduces profitability and creates difficulty in sustaining small home-based enterprises. Social challenges also play a crucial role, as family expectations and prevailing societal norms influence business decisions and limit women's entrepreneurial independence. Furthermore, limited networking opportunities reduce market exposure and restrict access to potential customers and business collaborations.

Managerial challenges are evident in the form of insufficient training in marketing and digital skills, along with low confidence in making business-related decisions. On a personal level, women homepreneurs struggle to balance domestic responsibilities with entrepreneurial activities, resulting in limited time and energy for business development and expansion. These findings confirm that although home-based entrepreneurship offers flexibility and income-generation opportunities, several structural and social barriers continue to hinder the entrepreneurial success of women.

The study indicates that women homepreneurs in Madurai primarily initiate businesses to achieve economic independence and to benefit from flexible working conditions that allow them to manage family responsibilities simultaneously. However, their business growth remains constrained due to financial limitations, social barriers, and gaps in managerial competencies. Strengthening entrepreneurial training.

6. Conclusion

Women homepreneurs play a significant role in promoting inclusive economic development and advancing women's empowerment. The study concludes that although home-based entrepreneurship provides valuable opportunities for financial independence and flexible employment, women continue to encounter persistent challenges related to access to finance,

marketing capabilities, skill development, and societal expectations. Strengthening institutional support mechanisms, improving financial accessibility, and enhancing entrepreneurial competencies through structured training programs can substantially improve business sustainability and growth. Furthermore, encouraging digital adoption and increasing awareness of government support schemes will contribute to expanding market opportunities and fostering the long-term success of women homepreneurs.

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