



INNOVATION-DRIVEN START-UPS AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mrs. Pooja S Hegde* **Dr. Vinayak. M. Bhandari****

* Research Scholar, Srinivas University Institute of Management and Commerce, Mangalore-575001, India.

**Research Professor, Srinivas University Institute of Management and Commerce, Mangalore-575001, India.

Abstract

Startups that are driven by innovation are revolutionizing the global economy by bringing revolutionary technologies, scalable business models, and solutions that have a social impact. Women entrepreneurs have entered high-growth industries including finance, health tech, and clean energy, shattering conventional barriers and becoming important contributors to this changing landscape. This study examines how gender and innovation interact by examining secondary data from academic publications. Results show that, in spite of increasing societal advancement and policy support, women continue to confront barriers to funding, mentorship, and innovation infrastructure. The study also demonstrates how institutional prejudices and socio-cultural conventions still restrict women's involvement in startup leadership, especially in developing nations. However, many women have shown resilience and leadership in launching successful businesses with the aid of digital tools, focused legislative reforms, and inclusive support ecosystems. The study reaches the conclusion that enabling women in innovation-driven entrepreneurship is critical for sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, and gender equality. The article offers strategic suggestions for enhancing institutional support, expanding access to resources, and fostering an innovative culture that values fairness and diversity.

Key- Words: Women Entrepreneurs, Innovation, and Start-ups.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, innovation has become a main engine of employment generation, economic development and global competitiveness. Startups that focus on innovation are transforming industries by introducing disruptive technologies, creative business models, and sustainable solutions. These innovation-driven startups are quite important for solving modern day challenges such as climate change, healthcare access, financial inclusion, and digital transformation. At the heart of this entrepreneurial revolution is the growing participation of women entrepreneurs who are not only breaking gender stereotypes but also contributing significantly to the startup ecosystem. The involvement of women in innovation-driven enterprises has become an essential area of study as it reflects broader social changes and efforts toward inclusive development.

Innovation-driven startups are defined by their emphasis on novel products, services, or processes that offer unique value propositions. Unlike traditional businesses, these startups operate in high risk, high reward environments and often rely on cutting-edge technology, research, and market disruption. In recent years, many women have ventured into such spaces, launching companies in fields like health tech, edtech, fintech, agritech, and clean energy. These women-led startups often aim to solve problems with a social impact, creating inclusive solutions for underrepresented communities. Their presence is not only transforming industries but also reshaping the image of entrepreneurship itself. When it comes to starting and expanding innovation-driven businesses, women entrepreneurs still



encounter several obstacles. One of the biggest obstacles is still access to cash, since women-led firms receive a lower share of venture capital funding than their male rivals. The networks, industry-specific advice, and mentorship that are essential for the success of innovation-driven businesses are frequently inaccessible to female entrepreneurs.

The significance of encouraging women's participation in innovation-driven entrepreneurship goes beyond individual success. Women entrepreneurs contribute to inclusive economic development via employment creation, empowering communities, and offering diverse perspectives in problem solving. Their involvement leads to more balanced and holistic innovation, as women are more likely to address issues related to healthcare, education, and family welfare. Governments, international organizations, and civil society are increasingly recognizing this and implementing targeted policies to foster women's entrepreneurship through capacity-building programs, funding schemes, and legal reforms.

This research aims to explore the intersection of innovation and women entrepreneurship through the lens of secondary data. By understanding the current state of women in innovation-driven startups, the study will highlight both the achievements and the persistent challenges. It will also assess the impact of various support systems such as funding, mentorship, and government policies in enhancing women's entrepreneurial outcomes. Innovation-driven startups offer a powerful platform for economic transformation, and women entrepreneurs are essential players in this space. While challenges remain, the future looks promising as more women enter and excel in the innovation economy. By addressing structural barriers and promoting inclusive support mechanisms, societies can unlock the full potential of women in innovation and entrepreneurship.

1.1 Key-Features of Innovation-Driven Startups Led by Women Entrepreneurs

Innovation-driven startups led by women entrepreneurs exhibit unique features that distinguish them from traditional enterprises and male-led startups. These features are as follows:

- a. **Inclusivity & Diversity:** Creating inclusive teams with a range of skills, backgrounds, and viewpoints is a top priority for female entrepreneurs. This diversity encourages an open atmosphere, which boosts creativity and improves problem-solving skills. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that inclusive workplaces enhance innovation and employee satisfaction.
- b. **Sustainability and Social Impact Orientation:** Social and environmental goals are often included into company concepts by female entrepreneurs. Their startups frequently benefit marginalized groups, encourage ethical sourcing, or deal with community issues. Their projects' social worth and long-term viability are improved by these combined objectives of profit and purpose.
- c. **Embrace of Technology:** Many female entrepreneurs are tech-savvy and eager to incorporate new technologies, despite conventional assumptions to the contrary. They use AI, cloud computing, data analytics, and digital payments to boost consumer interaction, expand their market reach, and improve operations.
- d. **Effective Communication and Emotional Intelligence:** Communication is a core strength of women entrepreneurs. Their ability to convey vision, inspire teams, negotiate deals, and maintain stakeholder relationships is vital to the success of innovation-driven ventures. Emotional intelligence further enhances conflict resolution and team management.
- e. **Flexible Work Culture:** Women-led startups often reflect a sensitivity to work-life balance, especially for working mothers or caregivers. These businesses promote flexible work



arrangements, hybrid models, and inclusive HR policies, which improve employee retention and workplace satisfaction.

- f. Innovation and Problem Solving Focus:** Many women start businesses to solve specific problems they have personally encountered or observed in society. This leads to the development of highly relevant and user-centered innovations, often addressing unmet needs in areas like health, education, agriculture, or social welfare.

1.2 The Rise of Innovation-Driven Startups in the Global Economy

Innovation-driven startups also benefit from disruptive thinking and agile methodologies that enables them to swiftly adjust to the market demands and technological shifts. Moreover, they often operate at the intersection of science, entrepreneurship, and digitalization, bringing new products and services that challenge established incumbents. As a result, startups are no longer limited to industrialized nations; developing countries are now breeding grounds for tech-savvy entrepreneurs addressing local challenges with global potential. Yet, despite the promising growth, these startups face significant hurdles, including high failure rates, regulatory uncertainty, and talent shortages. Nonetheless, the promise of transforming industries and solving global problems keeps the startup movement resilient and forward looking. As the global economy becomes increasingly knowledge based and innovation centric, the role of startups in shaping the future of work, technology, and social impact cannot be overstated. This landscape offers fertile ground for diverse entrepreneurial voices, including those of women, whose participation can bring fresh perspectives and inclusive growth to innovation-driven sectors.

1.3 The Evolving Role of Women in Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Women entrepreneurs are taking on over more important significance in transforming the global business landscape, especially within innovation-driven startups. Traditionally underrepresented and often marginalized, women are now asserting their presence across startup ecosystems, launching ventures that not only aim for financial success but also drive social and environmental impact. Over the past two decades, rising educational levels, greater access to digital tools, supportive policy frameworks, and targeted investment programs have empowered more women to pursue entrepreneurship. Women's participation is no longer confined to traditional sectors like fashion to education; instead, many are leading cutting-edge innovations in Artificial Intelligence (AI), fintech, biotech, agritech, and climate tech. they are establishing and scaling startups that challenges gender stereotypes and redefine leadership norms. Networks such as women-centric incubators, accelerators, and venture capital funds have emerged to provide much needed support, mentorship, and resources tailored to the unique challenges women face.

1.4 Bridging the Gender Gap in Innovation and Startup Leadership

Despite notable progress, a significant gender gap persists in innovation and startup leadership. Women remain vastly underrepresented in founder roles, particularly within high-tech, high growth sectors. This gap is not just a reflection of individual choices but the result of complex, systematic issues, ranging from limited access to funding and mentorship to societal expectations and implicit biases. Women-founded startups obtain less than 3% of global venture capital funding, a statistic that underscores the structural inequalities embedded within financial ecosystems. Even when controlling for factors like industry and experience, women entrepreneurs are often subjected to more scrutiny and less confidence from investors compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, leadership stereotypes such as the belief that innovation and risk-taking are inherently masculine traits-continue to marginalize women's voices and contributions in entrepreneurial domains. Bridging this gender gap



is not merely a matter of social justice; it is critical for fostering innovation itself. Diverse leadership drives broader perspectives, enhances problem solving capacity, and leads to the creation of more inclusive products and services.

2. Objectives

1. To analyze the key challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in innovation-driven startups.
2. To examine the role of government policies. Funding access, and support systems in promoting women-led innovative ventures.

3. Review of Literature

Sl. No.	Field of Research	Focus	Outcomes	References
1.	Innovation, Entrepreneurship	Impact of T-Hub in transforming the entrepreneurial ecosystem.	Finding shows that T-Hub has notably boosted innovation and startup growth by providing support.	Dr. Kotthireddy. M. R. (2025)
2.	Women Entrepreneurs	This study looks at how women entrepreneurs' business performance can be enhanced by a balanced work-life balance.	Findings indicate that women entrepreneurs' success and development depend on striking a work-life balance.	Tahir R., (2025)
3.	Agricultural Startups, Innovation	Startups contribution to modernizing agriculture and increasing sustainability and production.	Findings show that even though agri-tech startups provide groundbreaking solutions, they continue to face key challenges such as financial constraints and adoption barriers.	Champia M. N. (2025)
4.	Agri-preneurship, Start-up	The study's intension is to ascertain the relationship between startup environments and agricultural entrepreneurship.	The dynamic agri-startup ecosystem is essential to the advancement of technology, job creation, and sustainability.	Jawad Ali., et, al, (2025)
5.	Agricultural Start-up	The study aims to examine the agricultural startup ecosystem to develop a model of entrepreneurship.	Taking necessary measures in the agricultural startup ecosystem, boosts sustainable entrepreneurship and facilitating agricultural development.	Dinarany et al,. (2025)



6.	Women Entrepreneurship	Chances and issues experienced by female business owners.	According to the findings, digital technology and post-pandemic changes in working norms present new potential for women entrepreneurs, but they also confront barriers including low digital literacy and restricted access to financing.	Arvik H. et al., (2025)
7.	Women Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Entrepreneurial Growth	Factors that either motivate or discourage women from starting their own ventures.	The results show that in order to motivate women to launch their independent businesses, it is important to improve social network, boosts informal financing, and address the perception of risk.	Mohammad S.M, et al., (2025)
8.	Women Startups, Viksit Bharat	Analyze the growth, support systems, and obstacles of women entrepreneurs in India's startup environment and their influence on economic development.	Government programs and funding have significantly increased women entrepreneurship in India's startup ecosystem, although social challenges still remain.	Dr. Rita R Raut. (2025)
9.	Women Entrepreneurship	Factors that lead to the dread of failure.	To investigate the fear of failure among female entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom, the researchers performed a qualitative analysis. They determined that this dread is influenced by important internal and external elements.	Shivansh M. and Robert A. (2025)
10.	Women-Led Startups, Artificial Intelligence, Technology	The study's purpose is to look into how Artificial Intelligence (AI) impacts on startups run by women.	The results offer factual proof of how AI affects the expansion and prosperity of women-led businesses.	Sultan A & Sura A. (2024)
11.	Female entrepreneurs	Obstacles in innovation encountered by female	According to the findings, in spite of increased political and social focus on innovation and female	Michela M, et al., (2024)



		entrepreneurs.	entrepreneurship, there are still a big gap in these two important fields of study.	
12.	Women Entrepreneurship, Tech-Startups	The study's aim is to investigate the difficulties confronted by female entrepreneurs in Brazil when they launch their businesses.	Despite demonstrating remarkable endurance and adaptation, women entrepreneurs encounter financial obstacles, gender bias, and credibility concerns.	Jeniffer. S.,et al., (2024)
13.	Innovation, Startups, and Women Empowerment	Role of Startups in Women Empowerment.	Startups play a vital role in breaking down barriers and empowering women to lead with innovation and resilience.	Shruti A. (2024)
14.	Female Entrepreneurship	An examination of the drivers and obstacles facing Moroccan women entrepreneurs in the service industry.	Uses feminist and institutional theory; highlights complexity of enablers and constraints at micro, meso, macro levels. Reveals intertwined agency and institutional factors influencing women entrepreneurship in a factor-driven economy. Contributes new empirical and theoretical insights for North African context.	(Naguib, 2024)
15.	Women Entrepreneurs, Innovation	Examining AIC programs that assist female entrepreneurs, investigating the elements that encourage female participation in startups through AIC, and comprehending the experiences of female entrepreneurs in this setting are the objectives of this study.	AICs positively influence women entrepreneurship through programs and initiatives, though obstacles like limited access resources and ecosystem barriers remain.	Siva Prakash C. S. et al., (2024)



16.	Women Entrepreneurs	The role and motivations of female entrepreneurs in the travel industry.	Women's contribution to the tourism industry can be enhanced by bolstering social/economic capital and goal-setting, which have a significant impact on business growth.	Mkini Lugalla et al., (2024)
17.	Gender, Innovation & Contextual Factors	Innovation performance among Ecuadorian women entrepreneurs.	Social and institutional factors (e.g., relationships, age) were more influential than education or experience in innovation outcomes.	(Chávez-Rivera et al., 2024)
18.	HR Development & Women Entrepreneurship	Increasing North Sumatra's female entrepreneurs' competitiveness through HR transformation in Society 5.0.	Identified skills gap, highlighted importance of digital marketing, IT skills, and HR development.	Siregar et al.,(2024)
19.	Women Entrepreneurship, Digital Platforms	Digital platforms' role and impact in empowering female entrepreneurs and increasing their involvement in the digital economy.	Digital tools enable women to tackle traditional hurdles and grow businesses globally. Though challenges like lack of financing, tech issues, and cultural barriers remains.	Preeti. Et al., (2024)
20.	Startup Innovation	Economic impact of startups in India and analyze the role GUSEC and government programs in boosting innovation and growth.	Startups, especially in fintech, edtech, and health tech, are stimulating economic growth, with GUSEC and supportive policies playing a pivotal role, though obstacles remain in smaller cities.	Bhavesh H. B. & Dr. Komal B. S. (2024)
21.	Women Entrepreneurship	Difficulties or barriers faced by female business owners.	Financial difficulties, a lack of knowledge and experience, difficulty with work-life balance, gender discrimination, sociocultural issues, and a lack of government backing are the six primary obstacles that female entrepreneurs must overcome.	Shafra F. & Ahmad A., (2023)



22.	Women Entrepreneurs, Behavioral Biases	Women entrepreneurs' investment decision-making and heuristic considerations.	Overconfidence and accessibility Investment decisions are influenced by heuristics; financial literacy moderate this relationship and promotes wise choices.	Iram et al., (2023)
23.	Gender Norms in Tech Start-ups	How gender imbalance in IT startups becomes normalized and impacts female founder.	Female founders are pressured to conform to male norms; lack of conformity reduces support; systematic bias persists despite support initiatives.	Sperber & Linder, (2023)
24.	Women Entrepreneurs, Innovation	Resource use in consumer vs. industrial sectors during COVID-19 pandemic.	Product improvements were made possible by socio-psychological resources such as resilience and networking. Consumer businesses benefited from networking, but industrial corporations needed to be resilient. Innovation was encouraged in both by an entrepreneurial mindset.	(Sahi G. et al., 2023)
25.	Women Entrepreneurs	COVID-19's effects on female entrepreneurs and how they use social media to maintain their enterprises.	Women entrepreneurs encountered various challenges like reduced sales, limited financial support etc, during COVID-19 pandemic, but used social media's like Facebook, Whatsapp, etc to keep their businesses running.	Rahayu et al., (2023)
26.	Women Entrepreneurs, Innovation	Innovation in women-led firms is influenced by human and social capital through absorptive capacities.	The relationship between innovation and human capital is strongly mediated by absorptive capacities; new causal links in the literature on women entrepreneurs.	Sumual et al., (2023)
27.	Environmental Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Women Entrepreneurs.	Female entrepreneurship, challenges, and eco-friendly innovation in Jambi Province.	Entrepreneurial environment mediates challenges and innovation; model of eco-innovation proposed.	Sriayudha et al., (2023)



28.	Women Entrepreneurship - India	The connection between psychological health and leadership styles.	Investigated how leadership style and demographics affect psychological well-being; transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles were examined.	(Challa & Perwez, 2023)
29.	Women Entrepreneurship	Assess the driving factors, obstacles, and societal perspectives influencing women entrepreneurs.	Findings show that women entrepreneurs experiences both support and obstacles, family and partner support considerably outweighs inherited resources, focusing the multifaceted role of gender in business growth perceptions.	Ahmetaj B, et al, (2023)
30.	Women Entrepreneurship - Zimbabwe	Factors affecting sustainable livelihoods and entrepreneurship among rural women	Financial, environmental, psychological, sociological factors drive entrepreneurship; challenges include lack of support, patriarchal society.	(Mashapure et al., 2023)
31.	Women Entrepreneurship	The study looks at the wellbeing of under-represented female entrepreneurs who are taking part in a program that teaches them how to start their own businesses.	he results demonstrate that even while the ventures were profitable, the women's experiences of well-being differed, with some experiencing success and others experiencing difficulties.	Ira Chatterjee, et al., (2022)
32.	Women Entrepreneurs	Creation of opportunities for female creators of start-up digital platforms.	Identity, social purpose, dissatisfaction with status quo, and cultural contexts drive opportunity development; digital platforms are tools for innovation and change.	(Swartz et al., 2022)
33.	Entrepreneurship & Islamic Contexts	Discursive strategies of low-income women entrepreneurs in moderate Islamic societies	Women use “virtuous repertoires” to legitimize entrepreneurship within patriarchal constraints, contributing to incremental change in gender norms.	(Ginting-Carlström & Chliova, 2023)
34.	Women Entrepreneurship	Segmentation of female	Identified 3 clusters: independence-driven	(Georgieva, 2022)



	- Bulgaria	entrepreneurs based on motivations and characteristics	(young, educated), necessity-driven (older, less educated), and intermediate; helps policy targeting	
35.	Women's Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Development Economics	Contribution of female entrepreneurship and innovation to household income during COVID-19.	Household income is greatly increased by education, firm size, time spent on business, and rural location. Emphasises the significance of gender-inclusive policies and their connection to SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 5 (Gender Equality).	(Ge et al., 2022)
36.	Women Entrepreneurs, Financial and Digital Literacy	Determine the possible industries based on the digital and financial literacy of female business owners.	The results indicate that digital and financial literacy significantly boosted MSME growth, especially when women were in charge of running the company.	Fitriya F. et al., (2021)
37.	Women Entrepreneurship & Marketing	The connection between women's marketing performance, innovative capacity, and entrepreneurship.	Women's entrepreneurship significantly influences marketing performance, both directly and indirectly through innovation capability. Emphasis on innovation enhances competitive advantage and marketing outcomes.	(Octavia & Sriayudha, 2021)
38.	Digital Social Innovation & Technology	Use of digital technology in women-led social innovation enterprises	Technology enables women to overcome individual, social, and structural barriers and supports social innovation in areas like education, employment, and healthcare. Two paths of DSI identified: technology-enabled and embodied innovations.	(Suseno & Abbott, 2021)
39.	Technology, Innovation, Women-Owned SMEs	Role of open innovation and technological adaptation in women-owned SMEs	Women-led SMEs actively engage in open innovation for market competitiveness. No significant sectoral differences observed. Innovation mainly driven by market pressures and customer demand. Supports	Lingyan M. et al., (2021)



			strategic decision-making in SMEs.	
40.	Women Entrepreneurs, Innovation	Examined the traits of creativity and the difficulties faced by Emirati women business owners in SMEs.	Identified risk-taking, vision, and technology adoption as crucial; recommended measures to encourage innovation	Huda AI. M, et al., (2021)
41.	Female Entrepreneurs	Female Entrepreneurs Women handcraft entrepreneurs' experiences and obstacles in cutthroat marketplaces.	Found passion-driven entrepreneurs face challenges like high rent, limited market, lack of digital skills. Recommended empowerment measures aligned with UN SDGs.	Wut. T. Ming. Et al., (2021)
42.	Women Entrepreneurs	The reasons behind launching a business, the challenges encountered, and the elements influencing women entrepreneurs' success.	In addition to facing obstacles including a lack of funding, gender bias, and work-family conflict, female entrepreneurs are driven by unemployment, financial independence, and personal freedom. They succeed through education, strong networks, and profit.	Mahi U. (2021)
43.	Women Entrepreneurs	Elements that affect women entrepreneurs' performance.	The results of the study indicate that a number of factors, such as educational background, prior entrepreneurial experience, access to business training, financial resources, knowledge, government backing, property ownership, and taxation, influence how successful women entrepreneurs are.	Endalew Terefe Alene. (2020)
44.	Female Entrepreneurs	The purpose of this study is to investigate the opportunities and difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs in Botswana.	According to the findings, female entrepreneurs faced a number of interrelated difficulties, such as restricted financial access, inadequate training, and fierce market competition. Despite this, Botswana's legal and regulatory	Norman R. et al., (2020)



			framework was quite favourable and encouraging for female entrepreneurs.	
45.	Gender Gap, Women Entrepreneurs	Gender gap in STEM entrepreneurship and innovation	Identified “double masculinity” at the STEM-entrepreneurship intersection; emphasized institutional, organizational, and individual barriers	Kuschel K., et al., (2020)
46.	Women Entrepreneurs	COVID-19's effects on female entrepreneurs.	Women entrepreneurs' faced greater challenges due to younger/smaller firms in vulnerable sectors; offered future gendered research questions.	Manolova, T. S., et al (2020)
47.	Social Capital, Women Entrepreneurs	Social capital's role in supporting or impeding women entrepreneurs' ability to launch innovative firms.	Women entrepreneurs' company success is positively impacted by social capital, but their growth is constrained by cultural obstacles, insufficient financial resources, and a lack of management and technological expertise.	Setini., M., et al., (2020)
48.	Women Entrepreneurs	Is to investigate the driving forces and significant challenges that female entrepreneurs encounter when managing small enterprises.	The primary drivers of women starting their own enterprises include things like the desire for self-identity, creativity, and innovation. The main source of difficulties for female entrepreneurs is unofficial institutional impediments.	Swati S. et al., (2019)
49.	Innovation, Women Entrepreneurs	Innovation capability in women-led small businesses in Malaysia	Innovation linked to machinery use, networking, and experience; emphasized importance of targeted policy programs	(Rhouse, 2019)
50.	Gender Stereotypes, Women Entrepreneurs	Gender stereotypes and culture's role in empowering and limiting female entrepreneurs in the Nabdam district.	Women are pushed towards necessity-driven entrepreneurship by culture and gender preconceptions, yet their success is limited since they are prevented from pursuing ventures into	Adom K. & Anambane G. (2019)



			larger or new industries. This study connects findings to global contexts and fills a research vacuum on Ghanaian culture and entrepreneurship.	
51.	Innovative Startups, Entrepreneurship	How local conditions influence the birth rate of innovative startups.	Findings show that all contextual factors positively influence innovative startup birth rates.	Bosco B. D. et al., (2019)
52.	Women Entrepreneurs	Factors affecting women entrepreneurs' success and failure rates in economies driven by factors.	Success is greatly influenced by one's information base, support networks, and personal direction. Even with expansion, women-owned enterprises are more likely to fail, particularly in economies that rely heavily on factors. Identifies important areas for enhancing the results of women entrepreneurs.	Dhaliwal A. (2019)
53.	Female Entrepreneurs	Differences in entrepreneurial motivations of women in Norway, Russia, Ukraine	Women pursue business for social needs over profits. Developed country (Norway) women show stronger desire for societal contribution vs. emerging economies (Russia, Ukraine). Cultural and social context influences motivations, with developed economies enabling more self-realization and societal focus in entrepreneurship.	M. Solesvik et al., (2019)
54.	Innovation and Technology, Women Entrepreneurs	Economic, cultural, and social capital in relation to women entrepreneurs' performance.	While economic capital and prior entrepreneurial experience may not significantly affect success, a doctorate and employment in the ICT industry are associated with lesser success, and social and cultural capital, such as partnerships and work	Cansiz M. & Tekneci P. D. (2018)



			experience, favourably influence entrepreneurial success.	
55.	Digital Innovation, Women Entrepreneurs	Challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs and how digital innovation can enable women to overcome these barriers in new startup creation.	Digital innovation and women's entrepreneurship demonstrates promising potential understanding how digital tools can help overcome gender specific challenges to venture creation.	Sundermeier J., et al., (2018)
56.	Women Entrepreneurs	Difficulties encountered by women entrepreneurs.	According to the report, women entrepreneurs encounter more difficulties, which are made worse by the adverse circumstances that exist in developing nations.	Swati Panda (2018)
57.	Innovation, Technology, Entrepreneurship	Analyze innovations, difficulties, and support for water hyacinth based entrepreneurship.	Findings show that with technological upgrades and government assistance, water hyacinth can drive novel entrepreneurship.	Mirando, M. B., et al., (2017)
58.	Financial Self Efficiency, Women Entrepreneurs	To analyze how education, age, work experience, financial self-efficiency etc, influence the success of women entrepreneurs.	Finding shows that financial self-efficiency and age considerably impact SME success, while education, experience do not have a notably impact.	Nadia A. & Achmad K. (2017)
59.	Startups, Women Entrepreneurs, and Economic Development	Investigates the similar effects of economic growth phases on female entrepreneurs in many countries.	Women entrepreneurs' personal challenges and family support shift as the economy grows. Personal issues are represented by an inverted U, moral support by an inverted S, and instrumental support by a S.	Welsh D, et al., (2016)



60.	Innovation, Women Entrepreneurs	This study looks at how female entrepreneurs use technology to grow their SMEs and develop an inventive organizational culture.	The results demonstrate that female entrepreneurs are quite creative and adept at using technology, and they credit good leadership and an innovative corporate culture for their success.	Subramaniam, P. & Islam, J. (2014)
61.	Rural Women Innovation	The study's goal was to identify the key elements influencing the growth of rural entrepreneurship.	Because of limited socio-economic status, legal rights, and access to knowledge and resources, women are less involved in climate strategies despite, their more dependence on agriculture and water.	Mirjana. R. M., et al (2013)
62.	Innovation, Women Entrepreneurs.	Differences between genders in social and human capital.	Women business owners showed lower level of advanced education, less senior management experience; limited targeted networking strategies and minor confidence in developing innovative ideas compared to men.	Susan. C., & Alicia. R., (2012)

4. Research Gap

- Lack of integrated studies linking individual, institutional, and systemic barriers for women in innovation-driven startups.
- Insufficient analysis on how government and international policies impact women-led innovation startups.
- Minimal focus on inter-sectionality (e.g., caste, class, rural-urban divide) in women's entrepreneurial experiences.
- Limited exploration of socio-cultural influences on women's access to technology and venture capital.
- Few comparative studies across regions to identify effective, context-specific support strategies.
- Over emphasis on success stories without examining failures and systemic exclusions.

5. Findings and Suggestions

5.1 Findings

5.1 (i) Persistent Barriers despite Growing Participation

The study reveals that although women's participation in innovation-driven startups has increased over the last two decades, they continue to face significant structural and systematic barriers. Access to capital remains one of the most prominent obstacles. Additionally, women entrepreneurs frequently



lack access to strong mentorship networks and sector specific guidance, which are crucial for startup success. Cultural expectations and traditional gender roles further limit women's decision making power and mobility, particularly in developing nations. Thus, while opportunities are growing, real and perceived challenges continue to restrict women's potential in innovation ecosystems.

5.1(ii) Role of Support Systems and Policy Interventions

Government regulations, incubators, and digital tools are examples of support structures that are crucial in boosting women-led innovation enterprises. Funding, training, and networking opportunities have been made available through programs like Startup India, the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), and international initiatives including the World Bank and UN Women. The results, however, show a discrepancy between the intention of the policy and its implementation at the ground level. Due to regulatory obstacles and a lack of digital literacy, many female entrepreneurs are either unaware of or unable to utilize these support programs. The significance of women-focused accelerators, role models, and locally relevant training is underscored by secondary evidence. Family and social support also plays a big role, particularly in unofficial endeavours.

5.2 Suggestions

To foster a more inclusive and equitable startups ecosystem, targeted strategies must be implemented to support women in innovation-driven entrepreneurship. First, increase access to gender-sensitive funding mechanisms, such as dedicated venture capital funds, microfinance schemes, and government backed grants for women-led startups. Investors must also be trained to overcome unconscious gender biases during funding decisions. Second, expand mentorship and networking platforms that connect women entrepreneurs with successful founders, investors, and industry experts-particularly in high-tech domains like AI, fintech, and clean energy. These platforms should be locally accessible and culturally sensitive to ensure broader participation. Third integrate entrepreneurial education and digital skills training into higher education curricula, especially for women in STEM fields, to bridge the innovation-readiness gap. Fourth, implement gender-disaggregated impact assessments for all startup and innovation policies to evaluate whether they are truly benefiting women. Fifth, amplify successful role models and case studies of women entrepreneurs to inspire and normalize women's presence in innovation sectors.

Lastly, collaboration across sectors is essential to challenge stereotypes, support work-life balance, and enable women from all backgrounds to thrive entrepreneurship.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes by highlighting the critical role that female entrepreneurs play in the expansion and vibrancy of innovation-driven companies in the global economy. More women are becoming entrepreneurs, especially in fields like sustainable energy, edtech, fintech, and health tech. Despite these advancements, there are still many obstacles to overcome. Obstacles like inadequate funding, under-representation, and cultural prejudices still affect women. Because of these obstacles, many female entrepreneurs are limited to unofficial or necessity-driven businesses. The growing availability of support systems—such as government policies, women-centric incubators, digital tools, and mentorship programs—presents a pathway for change. Initiatives like Startup India, the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), and global efforts by organizations like UN Women and the World Bank have laid the foundation for a more inclusive innovation ecosystem. Yet, the effectiveness of these programs depends on implementation at the grassroots level, accessibility to diverse



demographics, and active removal of institutional and cultural biases. Therefore, building a truly equitable startup ecosystem demands a multi-level approach. This includes promoting financial literacy, increasing access to risk capital, integrating entrepreneurship in education (especially for women in STEM), and providing continuous mentorship. Showcasing successful role models can inspire the next generation of women innovators. Empowering women in innovation-driven entrepreneurship is not merely a question of equity—it is a necessity for achieving sustainable economic growth and inclusive development. By dismantling structural barriers and nurturing women's potential, societies can unlock new frontiers of creativity, resilience, and progress.

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