

**“A Study on Challenges and Opportunities Faced by Women  
Entrepreneurs in Surat City”**

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## **Abstract:**

Women entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in economic development, employment generation, and social empowerment. The purpose of this study is to examine the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and identify the opportunities available for their growth in Surat City. The research is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires from 100 women entrepreneurs operating different types of businesses in Surat. Secondary data was collected from books, journals, and government reports related to women entrepreneurship. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, charts, Chi-square test, and Kruskal–Wallis test were used for data analysis. The study reveals that women entrepreneurs face several challenges such as financial constraints, work–life balance issues, lack of training, and social barriers. At the same time, opportunities such as government schemes, digital platforms, and financial institutions help women entrepreneurs grow and sustain their businesses. The study concludes that with proper institutional support, training programs, and financial assistance, women entrepreneurship can significantly contribute to economic and social development.

## **Introduction:**

Entrepreneurship is one of the key drivers of economic growth, innovation, and employment generation. In recent years, women entrepreneurship has gained significant importance across the world, including in India. Women entrepreneurs are women who initiate, organize, and manage business enterprises by taking financial risks with the aim of earning profit and achieving economic independence.

In India, the participation of women in entrepreneurship has increased due to better education, supportive government policies, and the expansion of small and medium enterprises. Women entrepreneurs are actively involved in sectors such as retail, services, food processing, textiles, handicrafts, beauty services, and digital businesses.

Despite these developments, women entrepreneurs continue to face many challenges such as limited access to finance, social barriers, lack of business training, and difficulties in balancing family responsibilities with business activities. At the same time, new opportunities have emerged due to government schemes, microfinance institutions, digital platforms, and skill development programs.

Therefore, this study focuses on examining the **challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in Surat City** and understanding how these factors influence their business growth and development.

## Review of Literature

**Sherwani, Shaikh, Behal, and Siddiqui (2023)** examined the role of women entrepreneurship in economic development and concluded that women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to innovation, employment generation, and financial independence despite facing barriers such as limited access to finance and social restrictions.

**Mashapure et al. (2022)** studied gender inequality in entrepreneurship and found that gender discrimination and unequal access to resources restrict women's participation in business activities.

**Rajamani (2022)** highlighted that socio-cultural expectations and family responsibilities act as major obstacles for women entrepreneurs, particularly in semi-urban and rural regions.

**Ganeshan and Vethirajan (2021)** emphasized the importance of skill development initiatives and entrepreneurial training programs in improving the sustainability and success of women-owned businesses.

**Hossain et al. (2019)** analyzed the role of entrepreneurial skills and human capital in women entrepreneurship and concluded that education, training, and personality traits significantly influence entrepreneurial success.

Previous studies have mainly focused on financial and social challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. However, limited research has been conducted at the city level, particularly focusing on Surat City. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge this gap by examining the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in Surat.

## Research Methodology

### Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.
2. To examine the opportunities available for women entrepreneurs in Surat.
3. To analyze the role of government schemes in promoting women entrepreneurship.
4. To study the role of education, training, and digital platforms in promoting women entrepreneurship.

## Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in financial challenges among women entrepreneurs with different education levels.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference in financial challenges among women entrepreneurs with different education levels.

## Research Design

The study uses a **descriptive research design** to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in Surat City.

## Sources of Data

### Primary Data:

Structured questionnaires and personal interviews with women entrepreneurs.

### Secondary Data:

Books, journals, government reports, and online resources related to women entrepreneurship.

## Sampling Design

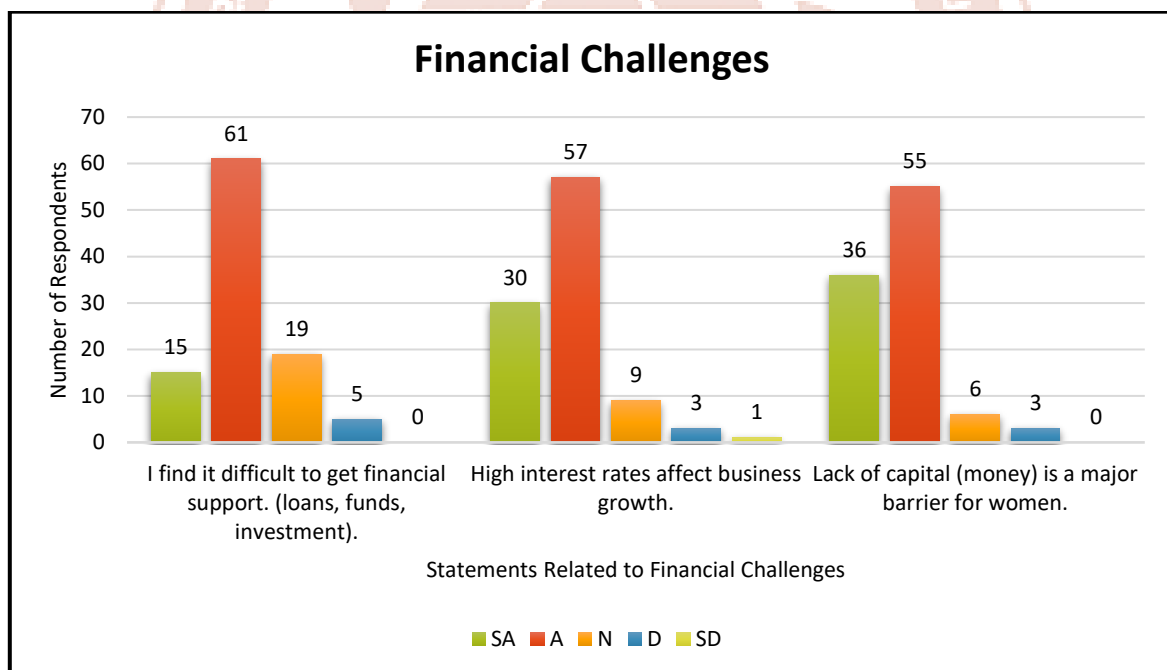
- Sampling Method: Convenience Sampling
- Sample Size: 100 Women Entrepreneurs
- Sampling Area: Surat City
- Sampling Period: December 2025 to January 2026

## Tools for Data Analysis

- Percentage Analysis
- Charts and Tables
- Kruskal–Wallis Test
- Chi-Square Test

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### 1. Financial Challenges :



### Interpretation:

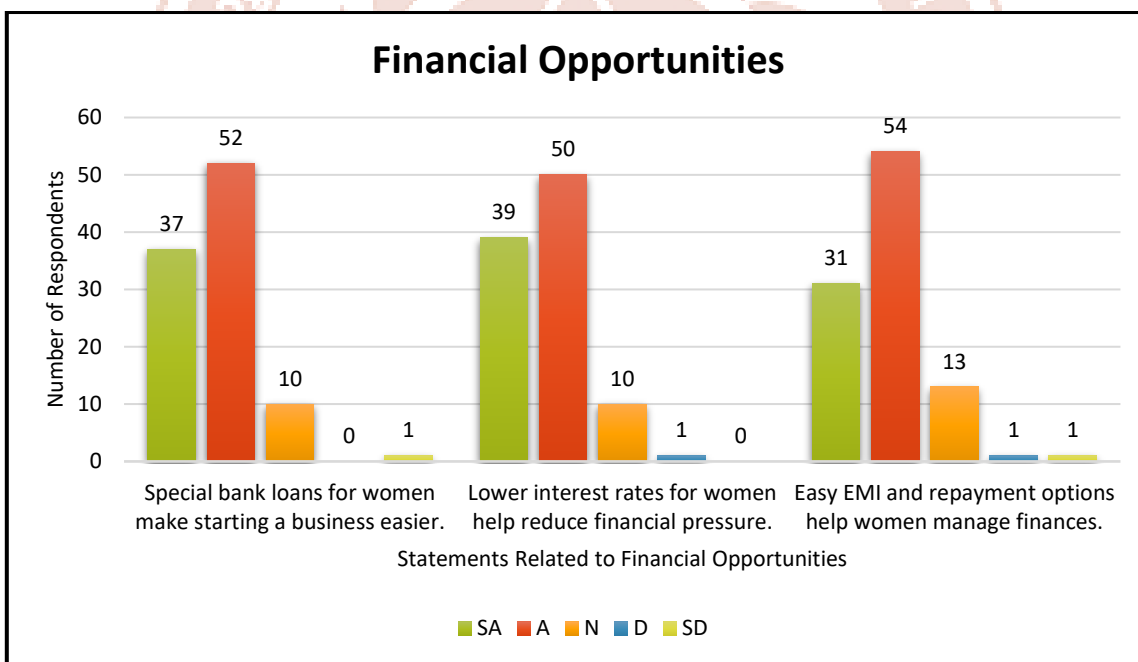
**From the above table and chart, it can be interpreted that:**

- Difficulty in getting financial support (loans, funds, investment):

15 respondents strongly agree and 61 agree, while 19 are neutral. Only 5 respondents disagree and none strongly disagree. This shows that 76 respondents agree that accessing financial support is a major financial challenge.

- High interest rates affect business growth:  
30 respondents strongly agree and 57 agree, with 9 neutral. Only 3 respondents disagree and 1 strongly disagree. This indicates that 87 respondents agree, showing that high interest rates significantly restrict business growth.
- Lack of capital is now a major barrier for women:  
36 respondents strongly agree and 55 agree, while 6 are neutral. Only 3 respondents disagree and none strongly disagree. This means 91 respondents agree, making it one of the most strongly recognized financial barriers.
- Across all financial challenge statements, the number of respondents who agree or strongly agree is much higher than those who disagree, confirming that financial constraints are widely recognized as major obstacles to business development, especially for women.

## 2. Financial Opportunities:



### Interpretation:

**From the above table and chart, it can be interpreted that:**

- Special bank loans for women make starting a business easier:  
37 respondents strongly agree and 52 agree, while 10 are neutral. No respondents disagree and only 1 strongly disagrees. This shows that 89 respondents agree that special bank loans help women start businesses more easily.

- Lower interest rates for women help reduce financial pressure:  
39 respondents strongly agree and 50 agree, with 10 neutral. Only 1 respondent disagrees and none strongly disagree. This indicates that 89 respondents agree, highlighting the importance of lower interest rates in reducing financial burden.
- Easy EMI and repayment options help women manage finances:  
31 respondents strongly agree and 54 agree, while 13 are neutral. Only 1 respondent disagrees and 1 strongly disagrees. This means 85 respondents agree, showing that flexible repayment options support better financial management.
- Across all financial opportunity statements, the number of respondents who agree or strongly agree is significantly higher than those who disagree, confirming that financial support measures such as special loans, lower interest rates, and flexible repayment options are viewed as valuable opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

**Common Table:**

No.	Statement	Pearson Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	H <sub>0</sub> Accepted / Rejected	Short Interpretation
1	Difficulty in getting financial support (loans, funds, investment) based on education level	1.353	0.508	Accepted	Financial challenges are similar for women entrepreneurs regardless of their education level.
2	High interest rates affecting business growth based on education level	1.280	0.527	Accepted	Women with different education levels face similar problems related to high interest rates.
3	Lack of capital as a barrier for women entrepreneurs based on education level	0.052	0.974	Accepted	Lack of capital is a common problem for all women entrepreneurs regardless of education level.
4	Managing family responsibilities and business based on business experience	2.101	0.552	Accepted	Work–family balance challenges are similar for women entrepreneurs regardless of their business experience.
5	Women expected to handle household duties based on business experience	2.994	0.393	Accepted	Household responsibilities affect women entrepreneurs equally at all experience levels.
6	Lack of childcare support affecting business work based on business experience	1.872	0.599	Accepted	Childcare responsibilities remain a challenge for women entrepreneurs regardless of experience.
7	Lack of social support based on type of business	4.938	0.294	Accepted	Women entrepreneurs face similar social support

					problems across different types of businesses.
8	Gender discrimination in business based on type of business	3.342	0.502	Accepted	Gender discrimination affects women entrepreneurs in all types of businesses.
9	Society discouraging women from starting a business based on type of business	3.449	0.486	Accepted	Social discouragement is experienced by women entrepreneurs across different business sectors.
10	Government schemes helping women start businesses based on education level	1.824	0.402	Accepted	Government schemes are available to women entrepreneurs regardless of education level.
11	Subsidies and grants helping business growth based on education level	5.461	0.065	Accepted	Access to subsidies and grants is similar for women entrepreneurs with different education levels.
12	Government training programs helping women learn skills based on education level	0.861	0.650	Accepted	Training opportunities are equally available for women entrepreneurs regardless of education level.
13	Special bank loans for women based on business experience	0.171	0.982	Accepted	Special bank loans are equally accessible to women entrepreneurs regardless of business experience.
14	Lower interest rates for women based on business experience	2.435	0.487	Accepted	Women entrepreneurs experience similar financial opportunities regardless of business experience.
15	Easy EMI and repayment options based on business experience	2.133	0.545	Accepted	Repayment facilities are available to women entrepreneurs regardless of their experience level.
16	Association between age group and reason for starting business	21.702	0.041	Rejected	Age significantly influences the reason why women start businesses.
17	Association between education level and source of business funding	16.192	0.040	Rejected	Education level influences the source of funding used by women entrepreneurs.
18	Association between marital status and business management type	7.890	0.246	Accepted	Marital status does not significantly influence how women manage their businesses.
19	Association between type of business and years of experience	38.165	0.000	Rejected	Business experience significantly influences the type of business chosen by women entrepreneurs.

The Chi-Square analysis was conducted to examine the association between demographic variables and the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs at a 5% level of significance. The results indicate that the majority of factors show no significant association, as the null hypothesis is accepted in most cases ( $p > 0.05$ ). Financial challenges such as difficulty in obtaining financial support, high interest rates, and lack of capital are experienced similarly by women entrepreneurs regardless of their education level. Likewise, work–life balance issues, including managing family responsibilities, household duties, and lack of childcare support, do not significantly differ based on business experience. Social challenges such as lack of social support, gender discrimination, and societal discouragement are also uniformly faced across different types of businesses. Furthermore, government support in the form of schemes, subsidies, training programs, special loans, lower interest rates, and repayment options is equally accessible to women entrepreneurs irrespective of their education level or business experience. Additionally, marital status does not significantly influence business management practices. However, a few variables show significant associations ( $p < 0.05$ ), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Specifically, age group significantly influences the reason for starting a business, education level affects the source of business funding, and business experience significantly impacts the type of business chosen. Overall, the findings suggest that while women entrepreneurs face similar financial, social, and family-related challenges across different demographic groups, factors such as age, education, and experience play an important role in shaping their entrepreneurial decisions and strategies.

### **Conclusion**

Women entrepreneurship plays an important role in promoting economic growth, employment generation, and women empowerment. The findings of the study indicate that women entrepreneurs in Surat City face multiple challenges such as financial constraints, social barriers, lack of training, and work–life balance issues.

Despite these challenges, several opportunities exist in the form of government support, microfinance institutions, digital platforms, and skill development programs. These opportunities help women entrepreneurs overcome barriers and expand their businesses.

The study concludes that strengthening institutional support, improving access to finance, and promoting entrepreneurial training programs can significantly enhance the growth of women entrepreneurship in Surat City and contribute to inclusive economic development.

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