



Examining Indian Women's Risk-Taking Practices from a Modern Angle

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Abstract

This study explores the complexities of risk-taking behavior in Indian women, looking into the causes and effects of it. Despite social and cultural standards that frequently forbid women from taking risks, there is a growing movement among women to break down barriers and embrace risk in a variety of fields. This study investigates the socio-cultural, economic, and psychological aspects influencing risk-taking behavior, drawing on current research and empirical findings until 2020. It investigates how these risk-taking behaviors impact empowerment, autonomy in making decisions, and general well-being. The study also makes recommendations for future lines of inquiry and policy implications to encourage women in India to take risks and write papers.

Keywords

Indian women
Risk-taking behavior
Socio-cultural factors
Economic factors
Empowerment
Gender norms
Entrepreneurship
Education
Financial literacy

Preface

Individuals' lives are greatly shaped by their risk-taking behavior, which influences choices in a variety of areas, including social interactions, jobs, finances, and health. Within Indian society, women's agency is frequently restricted and risk-taking is discouraged by gender norms and societal expectations. Nevertheless, current patterns indicate a change in this paradigm, with an increasing number of Indian women defying social conventions and adopting risk-taking strategies in order to fulfill their ambitions. To better understand the complex relationship between risk-taking behavior and Indian women's empowerment and well-being, this article will look at a number of relevant elements.

Entrepreneurs are the backbone of today's economy, they stimulate growth and innovation in order to promote globalization and a progressive marketplace. An entrepreneur is someone who starts and innovates a new business. These individuals believe in taking high risks for the purpose of achieving high rewards. They are willing to take a chance with the confidence that they will receive a satisfactory outcome (Hayes, 2024). Entrepreneurs create and bring new products and services to the market allowing users to expand their outreach.

Statistically, around the globe, there are 150 million startups in action. But, only about 10% of these end up succeeding; 90% of startups fail due to a lack of mentorship, investments, credibility, and more (Shewale, 2024). Each year 50 million new startups emerge, approximately 137,000 per day, but to fit through the narrow margin of the 10% that succeed a startup must have proper marketing techniques, customer base, investments, and have the ability to handle critical feedback (Microsoft, 2022). In India specifically, 14% of the entrepreneurship thriving are female owned. Though this is an increase in the rate of female entrepreneurs in the industry, it is still not enough. A change can only occur if barriers are lifted, discriminatory views of the population are evolved, and the variance in risk is reduced (Saluja, 2024).

Factors affecting businesses and entrepreneurship include entrepreneurial problems, social and personal problems, technical problems, and marketing problems (Anitha and Sritharan, 2016). These factors are rooted in the lack of support and knowledge possessed by female entrepreneurs. In addition to running a successful business, women are forced to overcome public challenges. They have to overcome barriers of societal views and discriminatory policies. Furthermore, the difficulty in accessing resources such as technology, social media, and education is even greater for female entrepreneurs.

Technology plays a crucial role in growing businesses and entrepreneurship today. In India, specifically, it is used by entrepreneurs to understand discrepancies in the market, promote their businesses, understand new growth opportunities, and scope out areas of necessities for individuals. Entrepreneurs can use technology to understand the problems the public faces and research and find solutions for these problems in terms of goods and services. The use of technology allows entrepreneurs to "expand their scope of operations, and [improve their] internal and external knowledge (Matejun, 2016).

Methodology

Research Aim:

The present study aims to understand the risk taking ability of female entrepreneurs coming from various socioeconomic backgrounds. The qualitative approach of in person and Zoom interviews led to various understandings to be formed. Comparisons were deduced from the

respondents' answers to a variety of specified questions. From this comparison, a perception was formed of the willingness of female entrepreneurs to take business related risks.

Inclusion criteria:

- Women owned businesses
- Variety in financial background
- Primary/secondary income source
- Service business
- Located in India

Exclusion criteria:

- Male owned businesses
- Located out of India
- Not a service business

Tools Used:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 to 20 questions being asked per interview. These questions came from topics ranging from financial background, decision making approaches, and the role of technology. Financial background refers to other sources of income available and stability. Additionally, questions were asked on business information in terms of motive, expertise, and goals. Lastly, questions related to finance, risk, and technology were asked to understand risk taking ability and approach to making decisions.

Table 1: *Questions asked to the female respondents(N=3)*

Financial Background	Business Information	Role of Technology	Risk/Finance Decisions
Business profitability	Target audience	Use of technology and social media	Financial decision making approach
Income sources	Role/Expertise	Digital payments	Relationship with risk

Sample:

Information was collected from female entrepreneurs based in India. A convenience sampling model was carried out and 3 respondents were interviewed located in various cities around India. The women interviewed ranged from ages 35 to 45 who each ran service businesses.

Table 2: *Demographic details of female respondents (N=3)*



	Education	Profession
Respondent 1	Masters	Art teacher
Respondent 2	Masters	Counselor
Respondent 3	None	Creative services

Ethical considerations:

All data collected was collected with the consent of the respondents. All three respondents will remain anonymous and no personal information collected will be disclosed to the public. All pictures displayed have been taken with the consent of the respondents. All data and information used have been pre-approved by the respondents.

Data collection procedure:

Data was collected through face to face interviews. Respondent 1 and 2’s interviews were over Zoom, while Respondent 3’s interview was conducted in person.

Data Analysis:

Each interview conducted was recorded and transcribed. Through the transcriptions, data was categorized into one of the parameters classified above. From the classification, the risk taking position of each respondent was determined. Themes such as educational importance, the effect of location, and reliance on secondary income were deduced. The ability to analyze the risk taking capacity of each respondent was made simple through these themes.

As the education of the woman improves, her risk taking ability also increases. Having responsibilities and dependencies also decreased their risk taking ability. Having multiple sources of income gave them more autonomy in making decisions. The more financially independent the women were, the more they had control over decisions affecting their lives.

Results and Discussion

This section consists of themes dissecting the financial background of female entrepreneurs, their business information, the role of technology in their business, and their approach toward taking risks.

Table 3: *Themes explored on the financial background of female respondents (N=3)*

Themes
Profits in business
Dependency on the business
Seed investment
Assets invested in
Alternate sources of income
Primary source of income

Table 3 is a representation of the theme profits in business, extracted through interview responses. The sub-themes explored in this section are profits in business, dependency on the business, seed investment, and assets invested in alternate and primary sources of income. It was found that 2 of 3 respondents make regular profits in their business. Moreover, they take these profits and reinvest them in other assets.

Social and Cultural Factors Affecting Risk-Taking Behavior:

Gender roles are highly ingrained in Indian society, where women are frequently expected to put family responsibilities ahead of personal goals. Because of the cultural standards that dictate prudence and compliance, women's risk-taking behavior is greatly influenced by this background. But these conventions are being challenged by shifting social dynamics, easier access to education, and exposure to many viewpoints, enabling women to follow their goals and take measured risks. Research has illuminated the intricate relationship between gender, culture, and risk preferences among Indian women. Studies like Chakraborty & Mukherjee (2020) and Singh & Sharma (2020) have examined this relationship.

Determinants of Risk-Taking Behaviour in the Economy:

Female risk-taking behavior is largely determined by two factors: economic independence and financial resource accessibility. Economic variables have a powerful influence on women's risk-taking behavior in the areas of entrepreneurship, investing, and career choices. Insights into the socioeconomic and cultural elements impacting women's entrepreneurship in India are offered by Roy & Mukherjee (2020), who emphasize the importance of financial knowledge and capital access. Similarly, Sharma & Malhotra (2018) investigate how women's financial decision-making is impacted by the gender gap in financial literacy and stress the need for focused interventions to increase women's ability to take risks and feel empowered financially.

Psychological factors influencing Risk-Taking Attitude:

Psychological elements like personality traits, risk perception, and self-confidence are important in determining how likely women are to take risks. Many Indian women demonstrate strong levels of resilience and self-efficacy, which allow them to overcome challenges and confidently pursue their goals despite cultural restrictions. Research by Kaur & Goyal (2019) explores how education might support women's self-efficacy and empowerment, emphasizing the link between Indian women's risk-taking behavior and their educational attainment. Furthermore, women's entrepreneurial success has been associated with personality attributes such as openness to experience and willingness to take chances (Roy & Mukherjee, 2020), highlighting the need to remove psychological obstacles to taking risks.

Autonomy in Decision-Making and Empowerment:

Risk-taking behavior and women's empowerment and autonomy in making decisions are closely related. Women can improve their well-being and increase their prospects by questioning conventional wisdom and claiming their agency. Promoting women's empowerment and creating an atmosphere that encourages taking risks requires education, awareness campaigns, and supportive laws. Women entrepreneurs might be encouraged to take risks by participating in programs that increase their financial literacy, offer mentorship, and build networks (Chakraborty & Mukherjee, 2020; Roy & Mukherjee, 2020).

Health and Social Consequences of Risk-Taking Behavior:

Women's health and social welfare are also impacted by their risk-taking habits. Participation in social and political arenas, healthcare access, and reproductive options are among the areas where risk-taking behavior converges with larger societal challenges. In their 2020 study, Singh & Sharma examine how social support affects the psychological health of Indian working women, emphasizing the value of social networks in reducing the unfavorable effects of taking risks. Women can also be empowered to make decisions about their health and well-being by participating in programs that raise knowledge of women's health issues and improve access to healthcare services.

Conclusion

There are a wide range of sociocultural, economic, and psychological elements that affect Indian women's risk-taking behavior. Even while societal expectations and conventional gender norms still present difficulties, there is a growing understanding of the need to foster an atmosphere that supports women's empowerment and willingness to take risks. To comprehend the long-term impacts of risk-taking behavior on women's well-being and socioeconomic results, future research should concentrate on longitudinal studies. The goal of policy interventions should be to promote gender equality and remove structural



impediments so that women can reach their full potential and support India's socioeconomic development.

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