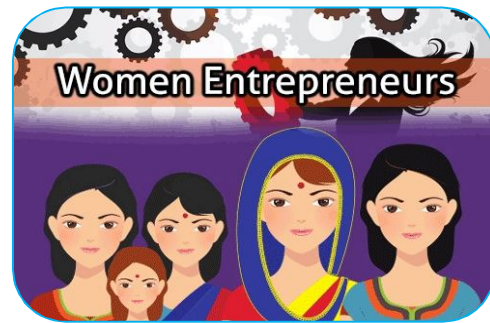




**EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN MSMEs:
A NORTH KARNATAKA PERSPECTIVE****Jayashree Shreeshail Jeratagi¹ and Prof. D. M. Madari²****¹Doctoral Research Scholar, Dept. of Economics,
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Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura (India).****ABSTRACT**

In the global context of progress and equality, the central role of women in promoting economic growth, as exemplified by their participation in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), remains a powerful message of empowerment. The state of Karnataka, known for its rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, provides a special context for studying this phenomenon. Karnataka has seen a transformation in recent years as women entrepreneurs have entered the SME sector with unwavering determination. This paradigm shift is challenging traditional gender norms and is serving as a catalyst for economic empowerment, social progress and gender parity. This research paper explores the dynamic landscape of women-led businesses in the MSME sector of Karnataka, focusing on the barriers and transformative impacts associated with this emerging trend. Through a comprehensive and original analysis, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the discourse on women empowerment and their vital role in promoting sustainable economic development. Karnataka government introduce various schemes to boost women entrepreneurs. The term micro, small and medium enterprises, or MSMEs refers to the Indian economy's "Growth Engines" since they provide significant contributions to the expansion and improvement as a result of industrialization and job creation. As the MSME sector has expanded, it has furthermore supplied women's access to business opportunities, which had had favourable India's socio economic influence. The goal of this study is to evaluate the situation that women entrepreneurs face today in the MSME sector. As the according to study findings, the proportion of women owned MSMEs in India makes up 20.37% of MSMEs, while men owned 79.63% of them. This states that how men predominate in the MSME sector. In contrast to west Bengal has the highest percentage 23.42% of women owned MSMEs, MSMEs have expanded over time but there is still need to work to increase the contribution of women entrepreneurs in the sector.

**KEYWORDS:** Women Entrepreneurs, MSMEs, Challenges, Financial Institution, Gender Equality.**1. INTRODUCTION:**

The participation of women entrepreneurs in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in North Karnataka represents a transformative force in the region's economic landscape. As the state seeks to enhance its industrial growth and foster inclusive development, women have emerged as key players in driving innovation, creating jobs, and contributing to local economies. Despite facing

challenges such as limited access to finance, social norms, and lack of mentorship, women entrepreneurs are increasingly taking the initiative to establish and expand their businesses.

In North Karnataka, a region rich in cultural diversity and resources, women are tapping into various sectors, from agriculture and handicrafts to technology and services. Their involvement not only empowers them economically but also serves to inspire future generations of women leaders. This introduction aims to explore the current landscape of women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector in North Karnataka, highlighting their contributions, challenges, and the policies that support their growth. By examining these dynamics, we can better understand the vital role of women in fostering sustainable economic development in the region.

Definition of MSMEs		
Types of Enterprises	Investment	Turnover
Micro	Rs. 1crore	Rs. 5 crore
Small	Rs. 10 crore	Rs.50 crore
Medium	Rs. 50 crore	Rs.250 crore

Source: Ministry of Micro, Small&Medium Enterprises.(n.d).<https://msme.gov.in>.

Women Entrepreneurship:

Women entrepreneurship refers to the process of women initiating, developing, and managing their own businesses. It encompasses a range of activities, from small-scale enterprises to larger, more complex ventures. Women entrepreneurs not only contribute to economic growth but also play a crucial role in job creation and community development.

Empowerment of Women through Participation in MSMEs:

The empowerment of women entrepreneurs through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is a significant driver of economic and social development manifests in various ways.

Economic Independence:

MSMEs provide women with the opportunity to generate their own income, reducing dependency on family or partners. This financial autonomy enhances their decision-making power and improves their overall quality of life.

Job Creation:

Women-led MSMEs contribute to job creation in local communities, fostering economic growth and providing employment opportunities for other women. This helps in reducing unemployment and boosting local economies.

Skill Development:

Engaging in MSMEs allows women to acquire and enhance their skills in areas such as management, marketing, and finance. Training programs and workshops further facilitate skill development, increasing their employability and business acumen.

Networking Opportunities:

Women entrepreneurs in MSMEs often engage in networks and support groups that provide mentorship, resources, and collaboration opportunities. These connections can lead to partnerships and knowledge sharing, enhancing their business prospects.

Access to Finance:

Many government and non-government initiatives focus on providing financial support and loans specifically for women entrepreneurs. Improved access to credit enables them to start and expand their businesses.

Policy Support:

Governments and organizations increasingly recognize the importance of supporting women in MSMEs. Initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in entrepreneurship help create a more conducive environment for women to thrive.

Social Change:

The rise of women entrepreneurs challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes. As women take on leadership positions in their businesses, they inspire other women in their communities to pursue entrepreneurship, fostering a culture of empowerment.

2. OBJECTIVES:

1. To Assessing the present level of women's involvement in MSMEs in North Karnataka.
2. To understand the activities and Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in north Karnataka.
3. To suggest suitable remedies for the involvement of women entrepreneurs.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Goyal and Yadav (2014) in their exploratory research on 'To be or not to be a Women Entrepreneur in a Developing Country' determines the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in developing countries which includes process difficulty in the access of finance, social-cultural biases against women and low self-esteem, existence of institutional voids and lack of skill and entrepreneurial education. By using content analysis method to evaluate shortlisted literature to unearth conceptual categories it has been resulted that although the challenges like institutional voids and lack of skill exist in case of male Counterpart also but the intensity is higher in female entrepreneurship.

(Chavan & Murkute, 2016) discussed about the role of women entrepreneurship in the Indian economy. They stated that female entrepreneurs face a lot of challenges into any entrepreneurial activity. But the government of India is providing support through various incentives and policies for the development of women entrepreneurship. The study reveals that women entrepreneurs can significantly contribute in the development of economy through capital formation, increasing per capita income, generating employment and innovations.

(Ilahi, 2018) analysed the status of women entrepreneurs in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in India based on the NSS 73rd round of NSSO. In addition, the author also discussed about the hindrances faced by the women entrepreneurs and various government initiatives to accelerate women entrepreneurship in MSME sector. The study revealed that in Indian MSME sector female entrepreneurs have only 20.37% share. In categorial basis micro enterprises has the highest share of female entrepreneurs i.e., 20.44% whereas this share is 5.26% and 2.67% in small and medium sized enterprises respectively.

(Vejju, 2018) has analysed the role of Self-Help Group (SHG) in promoting women entrepreneurship in Andhra Pradesh during the period 1981 to October 2016. The results of the study showed Nellore district has received the maximum benefit from SHG in promoting micro enterprises. The share of female entrepreneurs in SHG promoted micro enterprises was around 60% whereas the share of male entrepreneurs was approximately 40% which showed a positive growth in women entrepreneurs.

(Kamal & Chandrakala, 2023) examined the significant characteristics which influence the success of entrepreneurs by surveying 150 Bangalore based MSMEs. The results revealed that the previous occupation has significant impact on the success level of entrepreneurs whereas other factors

like age, education level, parental occupation and initial fixed capital investment do not have impact on the success level of the business.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

A descriptive research design is used in the Present study to examine how MSME empowers female entrepreneurs. To ensure a thorough and informed analysis, the data for this study was notably gathered from primary and reliable secondary sources such.

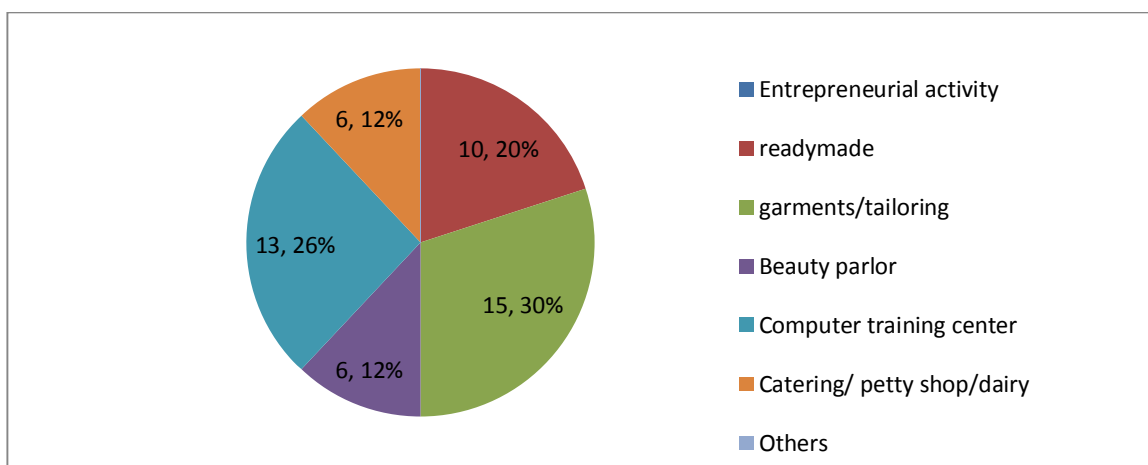
5. STUDY AREA:

The researcher has chosen the Gulbarga district of Karnataka State is chosen for collection of primary Data and selected 50 samples.

Table No. 1
Entrepreneurial Activities of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Entrepreneurial Activity	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Readymade Garments/Tailoring	10	20
2	Beauty Parlour	15	30
3	Computer Training Centre	6	12
4	Catering/Petty Shop/Dairy	13	26
5	Others	6	12
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data.



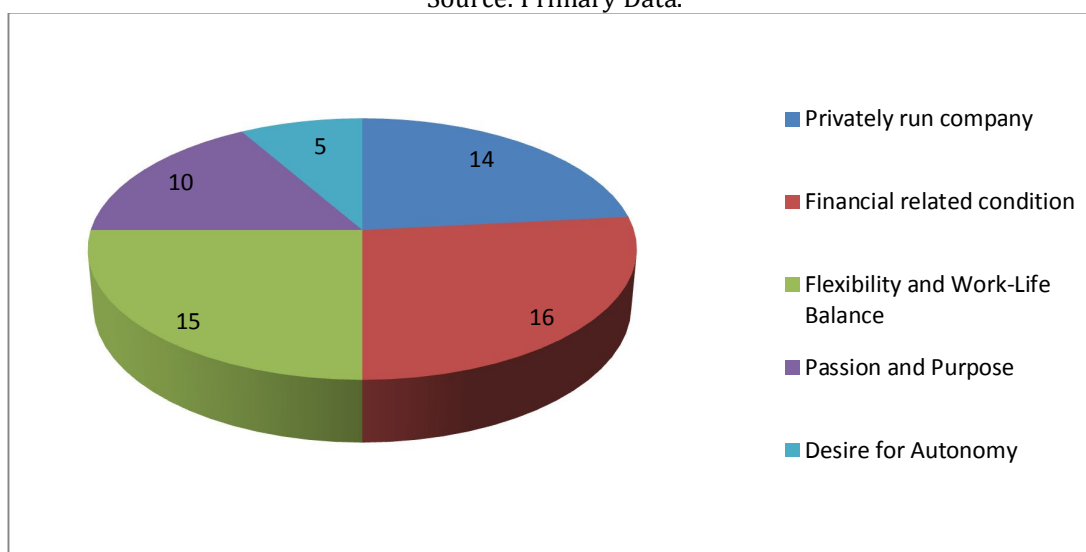
Source: Primary source

The table provides a breakdown of various entrepreneurial activities undertaken by women, including the number of respondents involved in each activity and their proportion as a percentage of the total respondents. 20% of the women engaged in entrepreneurial activities are in dressmaking or garments related business. The largest group 30% of women are running beauty parlours, indicating this is the most popular entrepreneurial activity. a smaller portion 12% are involved in computer training centre. 26% of women involved in business like catering, petty shops and dairy forms. 12% of women engaged in other unspecified entrepreneurial activities.

Table No. 2
Reasons for Starting Business by the Respondents

SL. NO.	Reasons	Frequency
1	Privately run company	14
2	Financial related condition	16
3	Flexibility and Work-Life Balance	15
4	Passion and Purpose	10
5	Desire for Autonomy	5
Total		50

Source: Primary Data.



The above table shows that the different reasons to start business among 50 respondent 14 women given the reason that being run company by privately, this suggests that women are drawn to private business either for control or unique work conditions. 16 women response is related to financial related conditions, indicating that monetary factors play the largest role in decision making in this context. 16 women response is related with to balance their work personal life. 10 women entrepreneurs are motivated by passion and purpose in their work and 5 entrepreneurs are started their business for their desire for autonomy.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in North Karnataka.

Women entrepreneurs in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Karnataka, as throughout various regions of India, confront numerous hurdles. These obstacles might be attributed to cultural, social, economic, and regulatory considerations. Here are some of the significant hurdles they face.

Table No.3
Challenges face by women entrepreneurs

Sl. No.	Challenges	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Access to Finance	12	24
2	Social and Cultural Barriers	10	20
3	Education and Skills Gap	8	16
4	Limited Access to Networks	4	8
5	Legal and Regulatory Barriers	6	12
6	Marketing and Market Access	4	8
7	Balancing Work and Family	6	12
Total		50	100

Source: primary source

The women enterprises are facing so many Challenges in their business enterprises in Gulbarga district. The some of them are presented in table Among 50 respondents, 24 percentages of women facing financial related problems, 20 percentages of women facing social and cultural barriers, 16 % of women are facing education and skills related issues, 12 % of women entrepreneurs are facing legal regulatory& balancing work and family related problems in their business. Also women entrepreneurs are facing problems like marketing and market access issues& limited access to networks are 8 % respectively.

Table No.04
Caste wise distribution of respondents

SL No	Caste	No of respondents	%
1	SC	14	28
2	ST	13	26
3	OBC	17	34
4	GENERAL	6	12
Total		50	100

Primary source

The above the Table shows that caste wise distribution of the respondents, among the 50 respondents schedule caste women respondents are 14 in number which accounted for 28%, 13women enterprises are belonging to the scheduled tribal community which accounted for 26 %, other backward community women enterprises are the maximum in 17 which accounted for 34%, the general category women enterprises are 6 in number which accounted for 12.

Government Policies for Boost Women Empowerment through Msmes

1. Tread Scheme:

(Trade-Related Entrepreneurship Assistance & Development):To run any business successfully, one needs certain amount of expertise which would further help in building the enterprise in a better way to compete in the market. To achieve this crucial step, PMEGP initiated this scheme called TREAD, which aims at empowering women by providing credit to projects, conducting specific training and counselling, and disseminating knowledge for

their business. The scheme provides for a government grant of up to 30% of the total project cost as appraised by lending institutions. These institutions would finance the other 70%.

B. Mahila UdyamNidhi Scheme:

Initiated primarily to offer financial assistance up to • 10 lakhs, to small-scale business models, this scheme aims to help women set up new projects and promotes upgrading and modernisation of existing projects. With interest rates varying according to the market rates, the loans are to be repaid within 10 year, and this includes a five-year moratorium period.

C. Annapurna Scheme:

As the name suggests, this scheme is especially for the hidden chefs inside women. Even a hobby as amazing as cooking can now make you an entrepreneur with the Annapurna Scheme. To start a catering unit, women can avail loans up to • 50,000 to purchase kitchen equipment such as utensils and water filters. Collateral in the form of assets and a guarantor is required to avail this scheme and the loan must be repaid within the span of 3 years. Women who avail this loan also get a grace period of one month before the repayment process starts. Interest rates under this scheme vary as per market rates and assets will be taken as collateral by the concerned bank.

D. Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs:

To avail loan under this scheme, women need to be enrolled in the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) in their respective state agency. They also would need to have majority ownership (over 50%) in a small business. Under the scheme, an interest concession of 0.05% can be availed on loans above • 2 lakh.

E. Udyogini Scheme:

Women entrepreneurs involved in agriculture, retail and similar small businesses between the ages 18-45, whose family's annual income is less than • 45,000, are eligible to avail up to • 1 Lakh. The main advantage of the Udyogini Scheme is low-interest rates on business loans and no income limit for widowed, destitute or differently-abled women and a subsidy of 30% of the loan, or • 10,000 (whichever is lower) is provided for them. Similar is the case for women falling under the SC/ST category as well. For women who belong to the general category, a subsidy of 20% of the loan or • 7500 (whichever is lower) is provided.

6. FINDINGS:

- Majority of women entrepreneurs have started their business by self so to be showing go to factor.
- 32 % of women entrepreneurs started their business for getting financial independence. Most important of them is weak financial condition.
- In Karnataka women entrepreneurs face maximum of general problems followed by financial problems due to personal interest and socio financial problems.
- The highest entrepreneurial activities are beauty parlour, catering and readymade garments.

7. LIMITATIONS:

This study is limited to the only in Gulbarga district of Karnataka and it did not show universal entrepreneurial profile of women. There are so many factors that can play in different regions. Moreover the data analysed only of registered women entrepreneurs in District Industry Centres.

8. FURTHER SCOPE OF THIS STUDY:

The role of female entrepreneurs in the MSME sector might also be researched in other parts of India. A comparative study of women entrepreneurs in Karnataka and its adjacent states, such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Telangana, could be an interesting research topic. Another area of research may be a comparison between female and male entrepreneurs.

9. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, empowering women through MSMEs in North Karnataka has proven to be a transformative force, not only for women themselves but also for the broader community. By fostering entrepreneurship, MSMEs enable women to achieve financial independence, contribute to their families' well-being, and become influential voices in local development. Despite challenges such as limited access to finance, education, and market opportunities, targeted support from government schemes and local initiatives can overcome these hurdles. The future of women's empowerment in the region is bright, especially if stakeholders continue to invest in capacity-building, financial inclusion and policy frameworks that promote gender equality in business. As more women in North Karnataka embrace entrepreneurship through MSMEs, they will continue to be catalysts for economic growth and social change, making the region a vibrant example of inclusive development. By focusing on these key areas, North Karnataka can unlock the full potential of its women entrepreneurs, leading to sustainable and equitable progress for all.

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