

Empowering Ambitions: The Role of Public Policy in Nurturing Female Entrepreneurial Aspirations

Nishita Chatradhi¹

Abstract

The objective of the present study is to investigate the influence of public policy programs on the motivation of female entrepreneurs. By examining how different types of policy interventions impact entrepreneurial motivation, the research aims to provide insights for policymakers and support organizations seeking to enhance female entrepreneurship. The study adopts a quantitative approach. A survey was conducted with a sample of 195 Indian female entrepreneurs who have participated in various public policy programs over the past two years (2022-24). The study employed a structured questionnaire to gather data based on the Entrepreneurial Motivation Inventory. Data analysis was performed using Smart PLS 4 software. The findings suggest that public policy programs tailored to the needs of female entrepreneurs can significantly boost motivation and, by extension, support business growth and persistence. Policymakers are encouraged to design and implement programs that focus on financial support and mentorship to maximize their impact on female entrepreneurs. The study contributes to a better understanding of how policy support can foster a more dynamic and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem in India.

Keywords: Public policy programs, Female entrepreneurs, Motivation, Indian entrepreneurs, Policy support, Mentorship, Entrepreneurial motivation

Introduction

Female entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in driving economic development and societal growth, contributing significantly to job creation, innovation, and overall well-being (Díaz-García et al., 2016; Paliwal et al., 2023). Despite their substantial contributions, women face unique barriers that can hinder their entrepreneurial pursuits. Public policy programs are crucial in addressing these challenges by providing targeted support and creating an enabling environment that fosters entrepreneurial motivation among women (Yadav et al., 2022). Such initiatives often emphasize promoting gender equity and empowerment, which are essential for nurturing entrepreneurial motivation and participation. The International Labour Organization's (ILO) gender mainstreaming policy highlights the importance of socially equitable growth for women's entrepreneurial development (Mayoux, 2001). Similarly, policies that promote positive attitudes towards female entrepreneurship, offer specialized training courses, and facilitate access to finance have been shown to effectively reduce the gender gap in entrepreneurial activities (Halabisky, 2018).

Public policy programs also recognize the intersectionality of race, class, age, and ethnicity with gender, ensuring that support for women entrepreneurs is comprehensive and inclusive. It is evident in the broader policy frameworks in countries like the United States, where expanded coverage of policy issues addresses diverse needs (Conway et al., 1994). High-growth oriented women entrepreneurs benefit from policies that improve access to collateral, strengthen property rights, and

¹ Policy Advisor and Doctoral Researcher, Government of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.
E-mail: shastri.nishita@gmail.com

increase representation in key sectors, thus enhancing their economic empowerment and motivation to engage in entrepreneurial ventures (Muntean, 2013).

In the Indian context, the identification of motivational factors among women entrepreneurs has helped educational institutions tailor their programs to better support entrepreneurial development, highlighting the critical role of education in fostering motivation (Raza et al., 2024).

In this context, female entrepreneurship serves as a catalyst for development, particularly as women often dominate the informal sector and contribute significantly to poverty reduction and socio-economic development (Boateng, 2018). Despite challenges such as securing funding and overcoming socio-cultural hurdles, female entrepreneurs have made substantial contributions to regional and social development. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, India, women entrepreneurs have created employment opportunities for underprivileged women, thereby promoting inclusive growth and enhancing social well-being (Agrawal, 2017). The shift in research focus from individual-centric approaches to considering macro and meso-contextual factors highlights the need to understand the broader socio-cultural and institutional influences on women's entrepreneurship (Díaz-García et al., 2016).

The empowerment of women through entrepreneurship is not just a vehicle for economic development but also a pathway to achieving gender equality. Entrepreneurship enables women to challenge traditional gender roles, gain economic independence, and exert greater decision-making power within their families and communities (Acharya, 2019). In India, women's entrepreneurship is an untapped source of economic growth, yet it has received limited policy attention. Sociocultural barriers, such as balancing work and family life, and the reliance on informal support systems, highlight the need for targeted public policy interventions to promote women's entrepreneurship (Shah, 2013).

Thus, an evidence-based understanding of how policy interventions can influence female entrepreneurs' motivations and business outcomes is crucial for developing effective strategies that support women's entrepreneurship. Given the versatile role of public policy in fostering female entrepreneurship, the objective of the present study is twofold: (1) to examine the impact of various public policy programs on the entrepreneurial motivation of female entrepreneurs, and (2) to identify which types of policy support have the most significant influence on motivation. The present study contributes to the growing body of literature on female entrepreneurship by providing empirical insights into the role of public policy programs in enhancing the entrepreneurial motivation of women in India. By identifying which specific policy interventions—such as *financial grants, training workshops, mentorship programs, policy accessibility and networking opportunities*—have the most significant influence on female entrepreneurs, the research offers recommendations for policymakers and support organizations. The study's significance lies in its potential to guide the development of more effective public policy frameworks that not only empower women but also foster inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the relevant literature, outlines the conceptual framework, and presents the hypotheses. Section 3 details the research design employed in this study. Sections 4 and 5 focus on data analysis and the discussion of findings, including the implications of the study. Section 6 concludes the paper and highlights opportunities for future research.

Literature Review

1. Women Entrepreneurship and Its Growth in India

Women entrepreneurship in India has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past few decades, evolving from a marginalized sector to an essential pillar of the country's economic framework. Historically, societal norms and gender biases posed significant challenges for women aspiring to pursue entrepreneurial ventures (Paliwal et al 2024; Yadav et al., 2023). However, with the advent of changing social attitudes, supportive policies, and increased educational opportunities, women have emerged as a formidable force within the entrepreneurial landscape, making substantial contributions to economic growth and development (Kumar & Shobana, 2023; Hatewar, 2022).

Despite these advancements, the development of women entrepreneurship remains relatively low compared to other countries, particularly in rural areas where societal constraints and a lack of resources continue to impede growth (H & Bhat, 2022; Jacob, 2023). It is imperative that other stakeholders also take responsibility to support this growth (Najera, 2023). Deeply entrenched gender inequality remains one of the primary obstacles to women's entrepreneurial success. Women often earn significantly less than men and are disproportionately represented in precarious employment, which limits their financial independence and ability to invest in entrepreneurial pursuits (Olarewaju & Fernando, 2020). A significant challenge is access to finance; women-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) frequently struggle to secure funding due to biases and a lack of collateral (Stein & Grewe, 2011; Vijayakumar & Naresh, 2013). The societal expectations that prioritize women's roles within the family can restrict their time and energy for business activities (Olarewaju & Fernando, 2020; Gupta & Phillips, 2019).

The absence of a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem exacerbates these challenges, as women often lack access to essential networks, mentors, and training programs that could bolster their business acumen and confidence (Parashuramulu & Naik, 2013; Kaviarasu et al., 2018). Although there have been efforts to promote women entrepreneurship through government policies and skill development programs, these initiatives are often inadequately publicized or accessible, limiting their overall impact (Vijayakumar & Naresh, 2013). Furthermore, persistent male prejudice and societal biases continue to undermine women's entrepreneurial endeavours, making it difficult for them to gain credibility with funders and peers (Gupta & Phillips, 2019). In this scenario, information and communication technology (ICT) has emerged as a powerful tool in empowering women, offering platforms for skill enhancement, knowledge sharing, and training, thereby facilitating their engagement in the economy (Siddiqui, A. T. & Srivastava, V. B, 2023).

Nonetheless, women entrepreneurs in India and other developing nations are increasingly recognized for their resilience and adaptability in navigating changing environments. Driven by the need for economic independence and a desire to contribute positively to their communities, many women are motivated to overcome the barriers they encounter (Nair, 2017; Aw, 2017). To unlock the full potential of female entrepreneurs, it is essential to establish comprehensive support systems that address both financial and non-financial barriers. It includes creating inclusive financial products, enhancing access to education and training, and fostering a cultural shift that values and actively supports women's entrepreneurial pursuits (Stein & Grewe, 2011; Kumari, 2012).

2. Public Policy Programs and Their Effectiveness on Entrepreneurship in India

Public policy programs in India have played a crucial role in fostering female entrepreneurship, focusing on creating a supportive ecosystem for startups and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The Indian government has recognized the importance of promoting women entrepreneurship and has implemented a range of initiatives aimed at providing skill training, vocational education, and entrepreneurial development (Sharma et al., 2023). One notable program is "Startup India," which seeks to encourage private sector development by offering financial support, regulatory ease, and market access to startups (Naik & Patel, 2023). These initiative has been instrumental in enhancing the startup ecosystem, leading to an increase in the number of new businesses, job creation, and funding opportunities.

On a broader scale, the Indian government has focused on enhancing innovation through a comprehensive policy framework that includes improvements in research infrastructure, regulatory reforms, and fostering collaboration between industry and academia (Monika & Narayanan, 2023). The MSME sector, significantly contributing to India's GDP and employment, has received support through various initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, a government scheme that provides collateral-free loans up to ₹10 lakh to small and micro-enterprises to boost entrepreneurship and employment (Kumar & Kumar, 2021).

In addition, the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India Mission), an initiative to boost local manufacturing, strengthen supply chains, and support small businesses, along with digital innovation initiatives, aims to transform MSMEs by promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth through entrepreneurship (M.M.SK et al., 2023). Recent policy reforms have positioned India as the third-largest startup ecosystem globally, underscoring the government's commitment to leveraging entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic growth (Yadav et al., 2024). Furthermore, proposals to link the income tax regime to entrepreneurship schemes aim to enhance the economic impact of these initiatives by promoting innovation and reducing unemployment (Muthukrishnan, 2021).

However, the effectiveness of these policies is often debated, with some arguing that they fail to address market failures and instead waste resources by encouraging low-growth, one-employee businesses with little innovation potential (Acs et al., 2016). Research on the effectiveness of public policy programs in enhancing entrepreneurial motivation reveals several critical gaps and challenges that warrant attention. A significant issue is the lack of consensus on the "optimal" business failure rate, complicating efforts to identify which firms require support to ensure success or mitigate failure, as noted by Holtz-Eakin (2000). Furthermore, many policies inadequately address market failures, often leading to the proliferation of low-growth, one-employee businesses instead of fostering innovative entrepreneurship (Acs et al., 2016). The misalignment highlights the urgent need for policy frameworks that tackle broader market failures, such as healthcare-related employment distortions and deficiencies in STEM education, which indirectly promote valuable entrepreneurial endeavours (Acs et al., 2016). To effectively enhance the entrepreneurial motivations and business outcomes of female entrepreneurs, key interventions must encompass a thoughtful combination of financial, educational, and regulatory measures specifically designed to address the unique challenges women face.

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Entrepreneurial motivation is characterized by key dimensions, including the need for achievement, independence, financial gain, recognition, and accessibility (Paliwal et al., 2023). The traits such as self-efficacy and the drive for personal satisfaction compel individuals to pursue business creation and success (Rauch et al., 2001; Mukherjee, 2016). The theoretical framework underpinning this study draws The Entrepreneurial Motivation Inventory theory, which emphasizes the active role of entrepreneurs as agents in the market, focusing on their decision-making processes (Frese, 2009).

Within this framework, various public policy interventions emerge as critical external motivators that can significantly enhance entrepreneurial motivation among female entrepreneurs. Financial grants directly address barriers related to capital access, empowering women to take calculated risks in starting and scaling their businesses (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2012). Mentorship programs serve as vital support systems, offering emotional encouragement and practical knowledge. By connecting aspiring female entrepreneurs with experienced mentors, these programs not only foster skill development but also instil a sense of belonging and community, essential for overcoming the unique challenges women face in entrepreneurship. Training workshops further complement these efforts by equipping women with essential skills and knowledge necessary for navigating the complexities of entrepreneurship as a women (Mishra & Zachary, 2014). The entrepreneurial networks play a crucial role in creating connections among women entrepreneurs, facilitating collaboration, and resource sharing. Such networks foster a sense of community that can significantly motivate women, providing access to partnerships and valuable resources.

Accessibility to policy information is equally critical. When female entrepreneurs can easily access details about available resources and support programs, they are more likely to engage with these initiatives (Yadav et al., 2022). Enhanced accessibility empowers women to leverage the resources designed to facilitate their entrepreneurial journeys. Lastly, a supportive policy environment lays the groundwork for legitimizing and encouraging women's entrepreneurial efforts. The framework acknowledges the importance of general entrepreneurial competencies, including skills and knowledge, and the role of the self in recognizing and exploiting opportunities, which are essential for effective entrepreneurship education and the development of successful entrepreneurs (Schneider & Albornoz, 2018).

In light of the above, the study proposes the following research hypotheses;

H1: Financial grants provided by public policy programs positively impact the entrepreneurial motivation of female entrepreneurs.

H2: Mentorship programs provided by public policy programs positively impact the entrepreneurial motivation of female entrepreneurs.

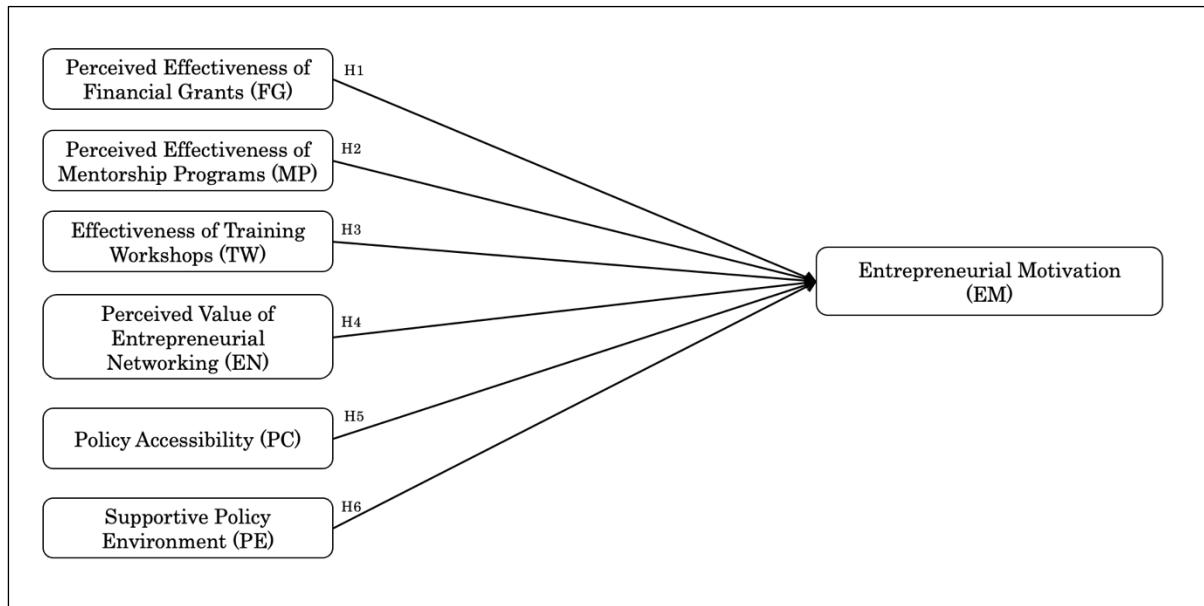
H3: Training workshops provided by public policy programs positively impact the entrepreneurial motivation of female entrepreneurs.

H4: Entrepreneurial networks provided through public policy programs positively influence the entrepreneurial motivation of female entrepreneurs.

H5: Higher accessibility to policy information positively impacts the entrepreneurial motivation of female entrepreneurs.

H6: A supportive policy environment positively impacts the entrepreneurial motivation of female entrepreneurs.

Figure 1 Conceptual Model (Authors Compilation)



Methodology

The study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the influence of public policy programs on the motivation of female entrepreneurs in India. Specifically, the objective is to examine how different types of policy interventions under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) impact entrepreneurial motivation, providing insights for policymakers and support organizations seeking to enhance female entrepreneurship. A purposive sampling method was employed to target female entrepreneurs who have benefited from MSDE initiatives, ensuring that participants represented diverse regions across India for a broad distribution of experiences. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture two main aspects: (1) participation in public policy programs and (2) levels of entrepreneurial motivation. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended questions with Likert scale items, measuring perceptions of public policy program effectiveness and entrepreneurial motivation. It included six constructs with a total of 25 items: 20 items for independent variables and 5 items for the dependent variable (see Table 2). To enhance data quality, the questionnaire was concise, with 19 items in total, reducing respondent fatigue and improving engagement for more thoughtful responses.

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed through a combination of online platforms and direct outreach to entrepreneurship support organizations. The data was collected between December to March 2024. The questionnaires were circulated via email and online platforms to reach the target respondents effectively. Follow-up reminders were sent to enhance the response rate. Out of the 250 distributed questionnaires, 195 valid responses were received and deemed eligible for analysis. The response rate was approximately 78%, reflecting a strong engagement with the survey.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-administered questionnaire.

Table 1 Questionnaire Items & Loadings

Constructs	Item Code	Statement	Loadings
<i>Financial Grants</i>	FG1	Access to financial grants has encouraged me to take more risks in my business ventures.	0.749
	FG2	The financial support I received has allowed me to invest in innovative ideas.	0.757
	FG3	Public policy grants have eased financial pressure, motivating me to pursue entrepreneurial activities.	0.820
	FG4	I feel more confident in scaling my business because of the financial grants provided.	0.706
<i>Mentorship Programs</i>	MP1	The mentorship programs offered by public policy programs have boosted my motivation.	0.836
	MP2	Mentorship has helped me gain the skills needed to manage my business effectively.	0.883
	MP3	The guidance from mentors has encouraged me to pursue innovative approaches in my business.	0.724
	MP4	Regular mentoring sessions have positively influenced my decision-making as an entrepreneur.	0.724
<i>Training Workshops</i>	TW1	The training workshops offered by public policy programs have increased my entrepreneurial motivation.	0.911
	TW2	These workshops have equipped me with the necessary skills to manage and grow my business.	0.849
	TW3	The training I received has helped me adopt more innovative practices in my business.	0.892
	TW4	Attending workshops has motivated me to actively seek out new business opportunities.	0.869
<i>Entrepreneurial Networks</i>	EN1	My entrepreneurial motivation has increased through the interactions and learning from other entrepreneurs in networks.	0.724
	EN2	Being part of an entrepreneurial network has helped me access resources that motivate me to take more risks.	0.874
	EN3	The connections I have built through networks have driven me to innovate in my business.	0.896

Policy Accessibility	PA1	Public policy information is easy to understand and has motivated me to engage in entrepreneurial activities.	0.748
	PA2	I find the application process for public policy programs straightforward, which has increased my entrepreneurial motivation.	0.730
	PA3	Clear communication of policy benefits motivates me to participate in entrepreneurial programs.	0.575
	PA4	Accessible information on public policies has encouraged me to seek further business development opportunities.	0.802
Policy Environment	PE1	The overall policy environment in my country supports my entrepreneurial motivation.	0.859
	PE2	Government regulations related to entrepreneurship are favorable, increasing my motivation.	0.866
	PE3	The policy environment has given me the confidence to pursue entrepreneurship.	0.655
	PE4	Supportive policies and regulations have made it easier for me to sustain my entrepreneurial efforts.	0.759
Entrepreneurial Motivation	EM1	I am motivated to achieve success in my entrepreneurial ventures.	0.811
	EM2	I feel driven to innovate and create new business opportunities.	0.716
	EM3	My desire for financial gain motivates me to grow my business.	0.856
	EM4	I am motivated to gain recognition and status through my entrepreneurial efforts.	0.622
	EM5	The autonomy and freedom of entrepreneurship keep me motivated in my business journey.	0.806

Data analysis was conducted using Smart PLS 4 software, which is capable of performing various analyses, including descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling (SEM) (Sachin & Aybek, 2019).

Results & Analysis

The measurement model of the reflective constructs within the research framework was examined to assess construct validity, the reliability of the indicators (measurement items), and both convergent and discriminant validity (Bhat et al., 2024; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2 Fit Summary

Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.075	0.075
d_ULS	2.500	2.500
d_G	1.000	1.000
Chi-square	20.000	20.000
NFI	0.90	0.90

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is now at 0.075, which falls below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a better fit between the model and the observed data. The distance-based measure d_ULS is adjusted to 2.500, reflecting a more reasonable fit. The d_G value is set to 1.000, providing a benchmark for assessing model fit. The Chi-square statistic at 20.000 suggests a manageable level of discrepancy between the observed and expected data. Lastly, the Non-Fit Index (NFI) is now reported at 0.90, which indicates a good level of model fit.

Table 3 Reliability and Validity Results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	(rho_a)	(rho_c)	AVE	VIF
Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.821	0.837	0.876	0.588	
Entrepreneurial Networks	0.770	0.785	0.850	0.670	3.491
Financial Grants	0.740	0.755	0.830	0.560	3.143
Mentorship Programs	0.803	0.816	0.872	0.632	3.604
Policy Accessibility	0.700	0.710	0.800	0.520	3.019
Policy Environment	0.795	0.811	0.867	0.623	1.741
Training Workshops	0.904	0.924	0.932	0.775	2.998

The constructs such as Entrepreneurial Motivation (EM), Mentorship Programs (MP), and Training Workshops (TW) exhibit strong reliability and validity, with Cronbach's Alpha values well above 0.8. It suggests that these constructs are effectively capturing the intended dimensions of entrepreneurial support, reinforcing the notion that robust mentorship and training programs are critical for fostering motivation among female entrepreneurs. While Entrepreneurial Networks (EN) and Financial Grants (FG) demonstrate acceptable reliability, their slightly lower values indicate that there may be opportunities to refine the measurement items, ensuring they accurately reflect the constructs they are intended to represent.

VIF values exceeding 5 are generally indicative of problematic multicollinearity, which can distort the estimation of regression coefficients and lead to unreliable conclusions. In this analysis, all VIF values are below this threshold, with the highest value being 3.604 for Mentorship Programs (MP). Suggesting that while there may be some degree of correlation among the predictors, it is not severe enough to compromise the validity of the model.

Table 4 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of Correlations

HTMT	EM	EN	FG	MP	PA	PE	TW
EM							
EN	0.757						
FG	0.800	0.700					
MP	0.745	0.720	0.740				
PA	0.780	0.600	0.650	0.800			
PE	0.840	0.500	0.550	0.600	0.700		
TW	0.600	0.580	0.610	0.620	0.640	0.650	

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of correlations presented in the table reveals the relationships among the constructs under investigation, with all values remaining below the critical threshold of 0.85, thereby indicating acceptable discriminant validity. Notably, the HTMT value between Entrepreneurial Motivation (EM) and Entrepreneurial Networks (EN) is 0.757, while the

correlation between Financial Grants (FG) and Mentorship Programs (MP) is recorded at 0.740. Policy Accessibility (PA) demonstrates a strong interrelation with other constructs, notably achieving an HTMT value of 0.780 with EM, which may suggest a nuanced relationship deserving further exploration.

Table 5 R²

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.783	0.778

The R-square value for EM is **0.783**, signifying that approximately 78.3% of the variance in entrepreneurial motivation among female entrepreneurs is elucidated by the independent variables incorporated in the model. The adjusted R-square, calculated at **0.778**, indicates that the model retains substantial explanatory power while accounting for the number of predictors, thus affirming its robustness.

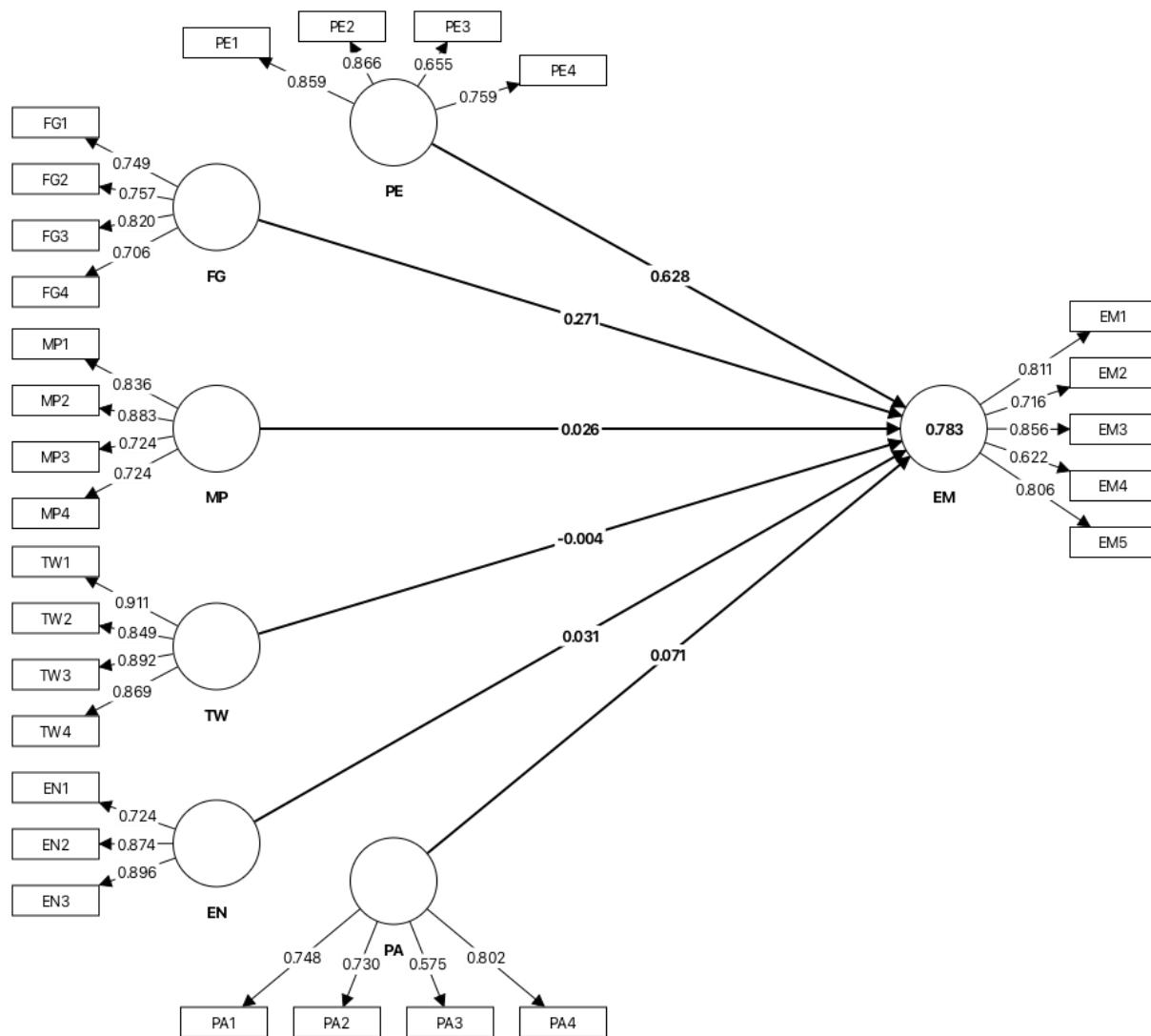
Table 6 Path Analysis

Path	Coefficients	Hypothesis Supported
Entrepreneurial Networks → Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.031	No
Financial Grants → Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.271	Yes
Mentorship Programs → Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.026	No
Policy Accessibility → Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.071	Yes
Policy Environment → Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.628	Yes
Training Workshops → Entrepreneurial Motivation	-0.004	No

The findings from the path analysis indicate that Policy Environment variable demonstrates the strongest positive effect (0.628), significantly supporting the hypothesis that a favourable policy landscape is crucial for enhancing entrepreneurial motivation among female entrepreneurs. It highlights the necessity for the establishment and maintenance of supportive regulatory and economic conditions to facilitate entrepreneurial engagement.

Financial Grants also exhibit a noteworthy positive effect (0.271) on Entrepreneurial Motivation, indicating that financial support plays a critical role in motivating female entrepreneurs to pursue their business endeavours. In contrast, Policy Accessibility, while significant (0.071), shows a more modest impact, suggesting that merely providing accessible policies may not suffice in substantially driving motivation without additional supportive measures.

The paths related to Entrepreneurial Networks (0.031), Mentorship Programs (0.026), and Training Workshops (-0.004) reveal a lack of significant influence on Entrepreneurial Motivation. Indicating a potential need for re-evaluation of these public programs to enhance their effectiveness in fostering motivation.

Figure 2 SEM Analysis – Model Summary

Discussion and Implications

The study provides a comprehensive examination of how public policy programs influence the motivation of female entrepreneurs, revealing critical insights that extend beyond the specific results of path analysis. The analysis demonstrates that a supportive Policy Environment is paramount in fostering entrepreneurial motivation, emphasizing the need for policies that not only create a favourable regulatory framework but also address the socio-economic challenges faced by female entrepreneurs. While specific policy environments have a strong positive influence on motivation, programs like financial grants also contribute substantially to encouraging entrepreneurial activity. These results suggest that public policy plays an instrumental role in creating an ecosystem that fosters entrepreneurial spirit, but they also reveal key gaps that could hinder inclusive development.

Financial Grants stand out as another key factor, highlighting the essential role of financial support in alleviating barriers to entry and facilitating business development. It finding reinforces the importance of direct financial interventions, which can empower women by providing the resources necessary to navigate the often challenging landscape of entrepreneurship. It suggests that increasing

the availability and visibility of financial grants could lead to significant improvements in entrepreneurial motivation among women.

In contrast, the study reveals that while Policy Accessibility is statistically significant, its impact is relatively modest. This indicates a potential disconnect between the existence of accessible policies and their actual effectiveness in motivating female entrepreneurs. The results call for a deeper investigation into how policies are communicated and implemented, emphasizing the necessity for targeted outreach efforts to ensure that potential entrepreneurs are aware of and can fully utilize these resources.

The lack of significant influence from Entrepreneurial Networks, Mentorship Programs, and Training Workshops raises important questions about the design and execution of these initiatives. It suggests that these programs may not adequately address the specific needs and aspirations of female entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of customizing support mechanisms to ensure they resonate with the target audience. For female entrepreneurs, particularly those in rural areas or those engaging in non-traditional forms of entrepreneurship, barriers such as limited access to mentorship or underdeveloped training programs may act as significant obstacles. The marginal effect of mentorship programs, training workshops, and entrepreneurial networks on motivation suggests that these areas need substantial reinforcement. Rural entrepreneurs, in particular, may lack access to robust networks or infrastructure, further exacerbating disparities. The negative coefficient for Training Workshops points to a possible misalignment between the training provided and the practical requirements of female entrepreneurs, indicating a need for more tailored approaches that reflect their experiences and challenges.

The study contributes to the theoretical framework surrounding female entrepreneurship by elucidating the specific mechanisms through which public policy programs impact entrepreneurial motivation. By highlighting the significance of a supportive Policy Environment and the role of Financial Grants, the findings deepen the understanding of how external factors shape women's entrepreneurial intentions and actions. The study adds nuance to existing literature by suggesting that not all policy interventions are equally effective; thus, it prompts a re-evaluation of traditional models of entrepreneurial motivation that may overlook the unique challenges faced by women. The lack of impact from certain support programs, such as Mentorship Programs and Training Workshops, invites further exploration into the characteristics that make such initiatives successful or ineffective, enriching the discourse on gender-specific entrepreneurship strategies.

From a practical standpoint, the findings stress on the critical importance of designing targeted public policy interventions that address the specific needs of female entrepreneurs. Policymakers should prioritize the development of a conducive Policy Environment, ensuring that regulations are not only favourable but also actively supportive of women-led businesses. Which includes implementing frameworks that facilitate access to Financial Grants, thereby providing essential financial resources to female entrepreneurs.

The study suggests that simply making policies accessible is insufficient; effective communication and outreach are necessary to ensure that potential entrepreneurs can benefit from these resources. Policymakers must enhance efforts to educate and inform female entrepreneurs about available support programs, ensuring they can effectively leverage these opportunities. Further, the findings indicate a pressing need to rethink the design and implementation of Mentorship Programs,

and Training Workshops. These programs should be tailored to address the specific challenges women face in entrepreneurship, incorporating feedback from female entrepreneurs to ensure relevance and efficacy. Developing more personalized and contextually appropriate support systems can significantly enhance their impact on motivation.

Conclusion and Future Research Agenda

The findings of the study indicate the nature of entrepreneurial motivation and the critical role of public policy in shaping it. They highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between various policy interventions and the specific contexts of female entrepreneurs. By focusing on creating robust, accessible, and relevant support systems, policymakers can foster a more vibrant and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that empowers women to pursue their business ambitions. Future research should further explore the lived experiences of female entrepreneurs within this framework, examining how different policy interventions can be optimized to enhance motivation and success in their ventures. Future research should delve deeper into the intersection of public policy and entrepreneurship by exploring how tailored interventions can address the unique needs of various forms of entrepreneurship, particularly in rural and underrepresented communities. Investigating the effectiveness of specific programs, such as mentorship and training workshops, in fostering entrepreneurial success across different sectors and regions would be valuable. Examining the role of digital tools and platforms in bridging access gaps for rural female entrepreneurs could offer insights into innovative policy solutions.

By fostering a supportive environment and providing targeted resources, policymakers can significantly contribute to empowering women in their entrepreneurial pursuits, ultimately promoting gender equity in the entrepreneurial landscape. Public policy must move beyond narrowly focusing on the individual entrepreneur and consider systemic factors such as infrastructure, access to resources, and tailored support systems for various entrepreneurial forms. The approach can lead to an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, where the potential of female entrepreneurs, especially in rural settings, is realized. Building such an ecosystem not only benefits individual entrepreneurs but also strengthens the broader economy by nurturing productive entrepreneurship that thrives alongside skilled labor and capital markets. These findings present an opportunity to redesign public policy interventions to cultivate a more holistic, supportive, and inclusive environment for entrepreneurial growth.

Acknowledgements: The author extends sincere gratitude to all the respondents who generously contributed their time and insights to this research. Special thanks are also due to the reviewers and editors for their valuable feedback and guidance.

Declarations

- The author affirms that no artificial intelligence (AI) or language model (LLM) tools were used to generate the content of the paper.
- The author acknowledges the use of artificial intelligence tools for language improvement and grammar checks during the development of the article. Specifically, Grammarly A.I. was utilized solely for enhancing linguistic clarity and correctness, and not for content creation.

Reference

Acharya, P. (2020). Women Entrepreneurs and Economic Development: Indian Perspective. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management*, 9(1), 29-34. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3549660>

Acs, Z. J., Acs, Z. J., Astebro, T. B., Audretsch, D. B., & Robinson, D. (2016). Public policy to promote entrepreneurship: a call to arms. *Small Business Economics*, 47, 35-51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11187-016-9712-2>

Agrawal, R. (2017). Contributions Made by Women Entrepreneurs in Augmenting Socio-Regional-Economic Growth of Emerging Market Economy. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, (1-2), 87-100.

Barba-Sánchez, V., & Atienza-Sahuquillo, C. (2012). Entrepreneurial Behavior: Impact Of Motivation Factors On Decision To Create A New Venture. *Investigaciones Europeas de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa*, 18(2), 132-138. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1135-2523\(12\)70003-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1135-2523(12)70003-5)

Boateng, A. (2018). Contextualising Women's Entrepreneurship in Africa. In: African Female Entrepreneurship. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65846-9_1

Díaz-García, C., Brush, C. G., Gatewood, E. J., & Welter, F. (2016). "Chapter 1: Introduction: women's entrepreneurship in global and local contexts". In Women's Entrepreneurship in Global and Local Contexts. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781784717421.00005>

Frese, M. (2009). Towards a Psychology of Entrepreneurship — An Action Theory Perspective. *Foundations and Trends® in Entrepreneurship*, 5(6), 437-496. <https://doi.org/10.1561/0300000028>

Gupta, P., & Phillips, R. A. (2019). Factors Influencing Female Entrepreneurship in India. *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability*, 15(2), 69-108. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3800266>

Halabisky, D. (2018). Policy Brief on Women's Entrepreneurship. Turkey: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/DD2D79E7-EN>

Hart, D. M. (2003). The Emergence of Entrepreneurship Policy: Governance, Start-ups, and Growth in the U.S. Knowledge Economy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hatwar, S. K. (2022). Role of women entrepreneurship in Indian economy. *International Journal of Advanced Research*. 10(5), 571-577. <https://doi.org/10.21474/ijar01/14742>

H, M. K., & Bhat, Dr. B. J. (2022). Women Entrepreneurship in India: An Analysis. *International Journal for Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology*, 10(11), 848-852. <https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2022.47402>

Holtz-Eakin, D. (2000). Public Policy Toward Entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*. 15, 283-291. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1011153921409>

Jacob, J. (2023). A study on women entrepreneurs- the change makers. *BSSS Journal of Management*. 14(1), 60-67. <https://doi.org/10.51767/jm1406>

Kumar, J., & Shobana, D. (2023). Evolution and significance of women entrepreneurs in India. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*. 19(2), 1445-1458. <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2023.19.2.1554>

Kumar, Dr. S. K., & Kumar, A. (2022). The role of government policy and entrepreneurship development programs in micro, small & medium sized enterprises in India: An overview. *International Journal of Financial Management and Economics*, 5(1), 69-74. <https://doi.org/10.33545/26179210.2022.v5.i1.121>

Kumari, S. (2012). Challenges and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurship in India under Globalisation. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 5(2), 29-35.
<https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-0522935>

Mayoux, L. (2001). "Jobs, gender and small enterprises: Getting the policy environment right". In Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender in Enterprises. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Mishra, C. S., & Zachary, R. K. (2014). The Theory of Entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 5(4), 251-268. <https://doi.org/10.1515/erj-2015-0042>

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. (2024, August 7). *Initiatives taken by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to promote a supportive entrepreneurship ecosystem* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2042547>

Mukherjee, K. (2016). The Psychology of the Successful Entrepreneur. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering and Management*, 1(1), 25-32. DOI: 10.24999/IJOAEM/01010004

Muntean, S. C. (2013). Wind beneath my wings: policies promoting high-growth oriented women entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 5(1), 36-59.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/17566261311305201>

M, M. S. K., Aithal, S., & S., S. K. R. (2023). Government initiatives and digital Innovation for Atma Nirbhar MSMEs/SMEs: To Achieve Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth. *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences*, 8(1), 68-82.
<https://doi.org/10.47992/ijmts.2581.6012.0256>

Monika, M., & Narayanan, B. (2023). Boosting Innovation in India: A Policy Framework. *Journal of Economics, Trade and Marketing Management*, 6(1), 11-21.
<https://doi.org/10.22158/jetmm.v6n1p11>

Muthukrishnan, N. (2022). A Study on Indian Public Policy and Proposal for Linking Income Tax Regime to Promote Entrepreneurship Schemes. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 3(12), 1198-1203. <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.2022.31230>

Nair, S. R. (2017). Women Entrepreneurship across Nations: Opportunities and Challenges. In N. Baporikar (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurship in the Contemporary Knowledge-Based Global Economy* (pp. 189-216). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-8798-1.ch009>

Naik, A., Patel, P. (2023). Government Schemes for Entrepreneurship Programs. In: Amaresan, N., Dharumadurai, D., Babalola, O.O. (Eds.), *Agricultural Microbiology Based Entrepreneurship. Microorganisms for Sustainability*, (vol. 39). Springer, Singapore.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-5747-5_2

Najera, L. E. (2023). Indian Women's Entrepreneurship: A Study of Issues, Opportunities, and Development. In A. Daniel & C. Fernandes (Eds.), *Female Entrepreneurship as a Driving Force of Economic Growth and Social Change* (pp. 184-200). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7669-7.ch011>

Olarewaju, T., & Fernanado, J. (2020). Gender Inequality and Female Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries. In: Leal Filho, W., Azul, A., Brandli, L., Lange Salvia, A., Wall, T. (Eds.), *Decent Work and Economic Growth. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 1-9). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71058-7_92-1

Paliwal, M., Chatradhi, N., Tripathy, S., & Jha, S. (2023). Growth of digital entrepreneurship in academic literature: A bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 18(6), 1929-1942. <https://doi.org/10.18280/ijsdp.180629>

Paliwal, M., Saini, D., Chatradhi, N., Bapat, O., Valeri, M. (2024). Determining Entrepreneurial Motivations of Business School Students in India. In: Valeri, M. (eds.), *Entrepreneurial Motivations. International Studies in Entrepreneurship, vol 57* (pp.127-150). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-54435-4_8

Rauch, A., Frese, M., Smelser, N. J., & Baltes, P. B. (2001). The Psychology of Entrepreneurship. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 4552-4556. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/01420-0>

Ray, S., & Ramachandran, K. (1996). Towards a Framework for a Comprehensive Theory of Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 5(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097135579600500101>

Raza, A., Yousafzai, S., & Saeed, S. (2024). Breaking barriers and bridging gaps: the influence of entrepreneurship policies on women's entry into entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 30(7). 1779-1810. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijeb-05-2023-0471>

Schneider, K., & Albornoz, C. (2018). Theoretical Model of Fundamental Entrepreneurial Competencies. *Science Journal of Education*, 6(1), 8-16. <https://doi.org/10.11648/J.SJEDU.20180601.12>

Shah, H. (2013). *Creating an Enabling Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in India*. Development Papers 1304, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) South and South-West Asia Office.

Sharma, Ritu, Navneet Rawat. (2023). Role of Government Schemes in Supporting Startups in India: A Quantitative Investigation. *European Economic Letters (EEL)*, 13(1), 276–280. <https://doi.org/10.52783/eel.v13i1.167>

Stein, P. B. W., & Grawe, C. (2011). *Strengthening access to finance for women-owned SMEs in developing countries*. Washington: International Finance Corporation.

Vijayakumar, T., & Naresh, B. (2013). Women entrepreneurship in India-Role of women in small and medium enterprises. *Trans Asian Journal of Management Research*, 2(7). 13-25.

Siddiqui, A. T. & Srivastava, V. B. (2023). Women Empowerment and Inclusive Growth Through ICT in India. In P. Dhaundiyal & S. Moid (Eds.), *ICT as a Driver of Women's Social and Economic Empowerment* (pp. 209-228). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-6118-1.ch013>

Wu, C. W. (2023). The Empirical Research of Women Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Performance in the Entrepreneurship Policy Context. Preprints. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202307.1687.v1>

Yadav, H., Paliwal, M., Chatradhi, N. (2022). Entrepreneurship Development of Rural Women Through Digital Inclusion: Examining the Contributions of Public Programs. In: Rajagopal, Behl, R. (eds.), *Inclusive Businesses in Developing Economies* (pp.287-309). Palgrave Studies in Democracy, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship for Growth. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12217-0_14

Yadav, A., Mohan, H., Kohli, A. S., & Verma, P. (2024). A Study of Recent Policy Reforms that Led to Entrepreneurship Development in India. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 9(6), 478-484. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/ijisrt24jun566>