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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN TIRUPATTUR DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU

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### ABSTRACT

The study was taken up in three selected blocks of Tirupattur District of Tamil Nadu to assess the entrepreneurial performance of women entrepreneurs. A sample size of 300 women entrepreneurs managing various agro-based enterprises viz., vermicompost, dairy, poultry and handicraft making were selected as respondents for the study. The respondents were interviewed personally by a well structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were analysed and tabulated using appropriate statistical tools. The entrepreneurial performance Index was worked out by adding the scores of entrepreneurial behaviour, marketing ability and perceived profitability of the respondents. Around sixty per cent of women entrepreneurs possessed medium level (56.67 per cent) of entrepreneurial performance followed by low (32.33 per cent) and high (11.00 per cent) levels. The overall entrepreneurial behaviour of the respondents was found to be medium (60.67 per cent) among majority of the respondents. Majority of the respondents had medium level of entrepreneurial dimensions viz., decision making ability (60.30 per cent), achievement motivation (48.00 per cent), economic motivation (50.00 per cent), innovativeness (66.00 per cent), risk orientation (69.00 per cent) and competition orientation (67.00 per cent). They possessed high level of entrepreneurial dimensions like self-confidence (53.70 per cent), management orientation (72.30 per cent), leadership ability (61.00 per cent) and knowledge about the enterprise (60.00 per cent). Around forty per cent of them had low (39.00 per cent) decision making ability. Majority of them had medium to high level achievement motivation (94.30 per cent). The women entrepreneurs possessed low to medium level marketing ability (80.00 per cent). Around forty per cent of them perceived their enterprises as some what profitable followed by others who perceived as profitable (26.00 per cent) and least profitable (24.30 per cent).

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## INTRODUCTION

An entrepreneur is someone who feels the drive to start something new, plan production, take risks, and manage the economic unpredictability that comes with owning an enterprise (Shah et al. 2022). Rural women entrepreneurs are seen as a huge untapped source of economic growth (Srividhya et al. 2022). Women's substantial contribution to economic growth in the form of raising living standards, expanding employment possibilities for women and supporting family businesses are just a few examples. More women entrepreneurs are inspired by innovation and the development of new products. Desire to try something new, willingness to take risks, ability to coordinate and supervise tasks and capacity to contribute to both home and social life are all basic inborn traits for women entrepreneurs (Nithya Prem, 2022).

Women gain financial freedom through employment. Financial freedom or Economic independence in turn paves way for improved social status of women entrepreneurs in the society. Women entrepreneurship makes it possible to open the door for greater capital use and also unleashes the potential of women. Women may succeed as entrepreneurs and can work when they have free time. Women who work for themselves are not constrained by schedules or other obligations, which makes it simple for them to balance the demands of work, home, and childcare. Second, having a woman run a small firm suits her needs. Her dual function is suited to her small enterprise work style. With this, it is becoming increasingly clear that small enterprises owned by women are one among the resources that give a nation its power. Despite having two jobs, many women manage their life quite well and are able to fulfil their two duties in a seamless manner. Her exposure to the outside world has given her a fresh perspective on tradition in a world that is changing.

Furthermore, there is ample proof that women-owned small and micro businesses have made significant contributions to development (Shakeel et al., 2020) and have improved society by generating money, jobs, and inventions (Mozumdar et al., 2020). The most common, accessible and available occupation for rural women with a wide range of resources is agriculture. The women entrepreneurs choose agriculture-based businesses because they can be started with little capital outlay, they can utilise elderly family members as labourers and they may engage in agro-based businesses as their primary source of income due to a lack of professional skills in other industries. It has an extremely low failure risk and generates large returns. Raw materials and other resources were readily accessible for their enterprise. Entrepreneurs with less education can also succeed as agribusiness owners provided they are well-versed in the appropriate technology and how to employ them (Kharga et al., 2021). Keeping the above points into consideration, the present study was undertaken to analyse the entrepreneurial performance of women entrepreneurs managing agriculture based enterprises.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study was taken up in three selected blocks of Tirupattur District of Tamil Nadu. Twenty-three villages were randomly chosen from the selected three blocks depending on the availability of women entrepreneurs. In consultation with the Project Director of the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW) and the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission (Mahalir Thittam), a list of female entrepreneurs in each chosen village was obtained. About 75 entrepreneurs were randomly selected from each agriculture-based enterprises viz., vermicompost, dairy, poultry, and handicraft constituted the sample of 300 women entrepreneurs. In order to study the entrepreneurial performance, ten entrepreneurial behaviour dimensions were selected based on judges rating. EPI was developed as a weighted index of three components viz., entrepreneurial behavior, marketing ability and perceived profitability. The entrepreneurial behaviour consisted of ten dimensions namely self-confidence, decision making ability, achievement motivation, economic motivation, innovativeness, risk orientation, management orientation, leadership ability, competition orientation and knowledge about the enterprise.

$$EPI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K W_i \left[ \frac{X_i}{X_{max}} \right]}{\sum_{i=1}^K W_i}$$

EPI = Entrepreneurial performance index

K = No. of components

$W_i$  = Relevancy rating score

$X_i$  = Actual score of  $i^{th}$  dimension

$X_{max}$  = Maximum score of  $i^{th}$  dimension

The data were collected from the respondents through personal interview method. Percentage analysis and cumulative frequency methods were the statistical tools used in the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE

The entrepreneurial performance of the women entrepreneurs was computed by studying their entrepreneurial behaviour, perceived profitability and marketing ability. In this section, the overall entrepreneurial behaviour, various dimensions of entrepreneurial behaviour, perceived profitability, marketing ability and overall entrepreneurial performance of the respondents are discussed.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR OF RESPONDENTS

Results on distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial behaviour are presented in Table 1.

It could be noted from the Table 1 that majority (60.67 per cent) of the respondents were found to be medium in their entrepreneurial behaviour and 24.33 per cent of them had low entrepreneurial behaviour. While only 15.00 per cent were found to have high entrepreneurial behaviour. It could be inferred that most of the respondents had medium entrepreneurial behaviour.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their overall entrepreneurial behaviour**

(n=300)			
S. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Per cent
1.	Low	73	24.33
2.	Medium	182	60.67
3.	High	45	15.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As the women entrepreneurs were found to be medium in many of their entrepreneurial traits, this would have contributed for their medium level of entrepreneurial behaviour among the respondents. This finding is supported by Gokul Pranesh (2017), who also reported that majority of the entrepreneurs had medium level of entrepreneurial behaviour.

### DIMENSIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR OF THE RESPONDENTS

In this section, the entrepreneurial dimensions of the respondents viz., self-confidence, decision making ability, achievement motivation, economic motivation, innovativeness, risk orientation, management orientation, leadership ability, competition orientation and knowledge about the enterprise are discussed. The results on distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial dimensions are presented in Table 2.

**Self-confidence:** Self-confidence is the degree of individual's faith in her own ability. Self-confidence acquired by a women entrepreneur could help in making rational decisions in the entrepreneurial activities. Around half the proportion of the women entrepreneurs (53.70 per cent) had high level of self-confidence continuing which 38.00 per cent of the respondents with moderate level self-confidence. Only one-fourth (8.30 per cent) of the women entrepreneurs had a low-level self-confidence. As most of the women entrepreneurs had undergone formal education and possessed leadership which must have influenced them to gain self-confident. This finding derives support from the findings of Patel et al. (2014) and Jenila Stephency (2018) who also reported that the women respondents had moderate degree of self-confidence.

**Decision making ability:** Sixty per cent among the women entrepreneurs (60.30 per cent) were found to have medium level decision-making ability while 39.00 per cent of them had low level of decision-making ability. Only a negligible proportion (0.70 per cent) had high level of decision-making ability. This otherwise means that many women entrepreneurs took decisions in consultation with their family members. The respondents sought opinion from their family members for taking decisions related to the production of the products and its marketing. This finding derives support from the findings of Ahuja et al. (2016) and Indhumathi (2019).

**Achievement motivation:** Achievement motivation leads an individual on the way to reach their goals. Among the women entrepreneurs, around 48.00 per cent had a medium level of achievement motivation and 46.00 per cent had high degree of achievement motivation, whereas only 5.70 per cent of the entrepreneurs had low achievement motivation. The formal education possessed by majority of the respondents coupled with their leadership would have helped them to develop a strong sense of achievement motivation. These findings are in line with those reported by Ahuja et al. (2016), Monika Kholiya (2019) and Dhruva Jyoti Mudoi (2019) who also stated that most of the respondents were found to have medium level of achievement motivation.

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial dimensions**

S.No.	Entrepreneurial dimensions	Low		Medium		High		Total
		No. of respondents	Per cent	No. of respondents	Per cent	No. of respondents	Per cent	
1.	Self-confidence	25	8.30	114	38.00	161	53.70	100.00
2.	Decision making ability	117	39.00	181	60.30	2	0.70	100.00
3.	Achievement motivation	17	5.70	144	48.00	139	46.30	100.00
4.	Economic motivation	46	15.30	150	50.00	104	34.70	100.00
5.	Innovativeness	31	10.30	198	66.00	71	23.70	100.00
6.	Risk orientation	44	14.70	207	69.00	49	16.30	100.00
7.	Management orientation	19	6.30	64	21.30	217	72.30	100.00
8.	Leadership ability	46	15.33	71	23.67	183	61.00	100.00
9.	Competition orientation	49	16.30	201	67.00	50	16.70	100.00
10.	Knowledge about the enterprise	24	8.00	96	32.00	180	60.00	100.00

(n=300)

**Economic motivation:** Motivation is the inner spirit that activates a person to undertake entrepreneurial activities. Half the proportion of the respondents (50.00 per cent) possessed medium level of economic motivation while 34.70 per cent and 15.30 per cent of the women entrepreneurs possessed high and low levels of economic motivation respectively. As most of the respondents were educated, they might have realized the need of profit maximization and known the factors responsible for economic returns. This is concurrent with the findings of Thilagam (2012) and Monika Kholiya (2019).

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on their perceived profitability**

S. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Per cent
1.	Least profitable	73	24.30
2.	Somewhat profitable	124	41.30
3.	Profitable	78	26.00
4.	Most profitable	25	8.30
Total		300	100.00

**Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to their marketing ability**

S.No.	Category	Number of respondents	Per cent
1.	Low	83	27.67
2.	Medium	157	52.33
3.	High	60	20.00
Total		300	100.00

(n=300)

**Innovativeness:** Innovativeness is the skill and imagination to create new things i.e., the degree of a women entrepreneur's aspiration to seek changes in their entrepreneurial ventures and to incorporate those changes in her own enterprises as and when found practicable and feasible. It is inferred that majority of the women entrepreneurs (66.00 per cent) possessed a medium innovativeness while 23.70 per cent had high and 10.30 per cent had low levels of innovativeness. It is noted that innovativeness of most of the selected women entrepreneurs was medium. Further majority of the respondents possessed medium scientific orientation. As towards scientific procedures and making decisions related to developing their enterprise. All these factors might have contributed for their medium level of innovativeness. Similar findings were also reported by Bhosale et al. (2014), Patel et al. (2014), Ahuja et al. (2016), Indhumathi (2019), Monika Kholiya (2019) and Dhruva Jyoti Mudoi (2019).

**Risk orientation:** Around seventy per cent of the respondents (69.00 per cent) had medium level of risk orientation and 16.30 per cent possessed high risk orientation. Only 14.70 per cent of women entrepreneurs were found to have low risk orientation. Women entrepreneurs' ability to assume risk relies on their individual, psychological, and socio-economic traits. The high achievement motivation and self-confidence of women entrepreneurs might have enabled them to have better orientation towards risk in their business activities. This finding is in line with those of Janusia (2017) and Dhruva Jyoti Mudoi (2019).

**Management orientation:** Majority of the women respondents (72.30 per cent) had high level of management orientation followed

by 21.30 per cent of them with medium level of management orientation and only 6.30 per cent of them with low level of orientation towards managerial activities. As most of them are educated and possessed experience related to their enterprise, they might have developed proper orientation towards managing the entrepreneurial activities of the business. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Sundarram and Sreedaya (2016) who also stated that majority of respondents possessed high level of management orientation.

**Leadership ability:** Around three-fourth of respondents (61.00 per cent) had high level of leadership ability while about 23.67 per cent and 15.33 per cent had medium and low degrees of leadership ability, respectively. The respondent's education and their high self-confidence would have helped them in developing leadership skills. This result is in agreement with those reported by Tamilselvi and Balakrishnan (2007).

**Competition orientation:** Most of the respondents (67.00 per cent) had moderate level of competition orientation. Whereas, about 16.70 per cent had high and 16.30 per cent had low levels of competition orientation. The moderate level of risk orientation, innovativeness and achievement motivation would have enabled them to possess medium competition orientation. The results of Tamilselvi and Balakrishnan (2019), who also noted that majority of women entrepreneurs had medium to high level of competition orientation are consistent with this conclusion.

**Knowledge about the enterprise:** Majority of the women entrepreneurs (60.00 per cent) had high level of knowledge about their enterprises followed by 32.00 per cent possessed medium knowledge about their enterprise. Just 8.00 per cent of them exhibited a low knowledge about the enterprise. As most of the women entrepreneurs attended training programmes related to their enterprises, it would have resulted in high level of entrepreneurial knowledge among the respondents. Similar finding have also been reported by Gokul Praneesh (2017) and Sumana et al (2018).

**PERCEIVED PROFITABILITY:** Results on the distribution of respondents based on their perceived profitability are presented in Table 3. Table 3 shows that two-fifths of the respondents (41.30 per cent) perceived their enterprises as 'somewhat profitable' while 26.00 per cent of the women entrepreneurs who perceived their enterprises as 'profitable'. It was perceived to be 'least profitable' enterprise by 24.30 per cent of the respondents while, only 8.30 per cent of the respondents perceived their enterprises as 'most profitable'. The women entrepreneurs could not get more profit due to many reasons like high cost of production, fluctuation of prices in the market, tedious procedure of processing the product, stiff competition, poor demand of the product, etc.

#### MARKETING ABILITY

Results on the distribution of respondents according to their marketing ability are presented in Table 4. It could be observed from Table 5 that 52.33 per cent of the respondents were found to have medium level of marketing ability followed by 27.67 per cent of the

women entrepreneurs who had low level of marketing ability in marketing their produce. Only 20.00 per cent of the women entrepreneurs had high level of marketing ability. As most of the women entrepreneurs market their produce in local markets, they were unable to make many of the market decisions like price fixing, use of additional channels, consumer segmentation, etc., This might be the probable reason for the reported medium level of marketing ability. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Devika et al. (2012) and Gokul pranesh (2017) who also concluded that majority of the women entrepreneurs had medium level of marketing ability.

**Entrepreneurial Performance of the Respondents:** The entrepreneurial performance of the women entrepreneurs was computed by summing up the scores for entrepreneurial behaviour, perceived profitability and marketing ability. Results on distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial performance are presented in Table 5. It could be observed from the Table 5 that 56.67 per cent of the women entrepreneurs possessed medium level of entrepreneurial performance followed by 32.33 per cent with low entrepreneurial performance.

**Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial performance**

S.No	Category	Number of respondents	Per cent
1.	Low	97	32.33
2.	Medium	170	56.67
3.	High	33	11.00
	Total	300	100.00

Only 11.00 per cent of the women entrepreneurs were found to have high entrepreneurial performance. The medium level of entrepreneurial traits and low to medium level of marketing ability might have enabled the respondents to be medium in their entrepreneurial performance. This finding is similar to those reported by Tamilselvi and Balakrishnan (2007) and Gokul Pranesh (2017) who also reported that most of the women entrepreneurs were found to have medium level of entrepreneurial performance.

## CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the overall entrepreneurial performance of women entrepreneurs was found to be medium. They also had medium level of entrepreneurial behaviour and many of the entrepreneurial dimensions viz., decision making ability, achievement motivation, economic motivation, innovativeness, risk orientation and competition orientation. The other dimensions like self-confidence, management orientation, leadership ability and knowledge about the enterprise were found to be high among the entrepreneurs. They perceived their enterprises as somewhat profitable to profitable and possessed medium level of marketing ability. It is supposed to organise more number of training programmes on various women owned agriculture-based enterprises so as to impart knowledge and skill to start and manage the enterprises in a large scale. It is further suggested to provide a single window service to the women entrepreneurs who would enable them to avail technical, financial and marketing support at one point regarding their enterprises.

**Conflict of interests:** The authors declare that there is no competing interest.

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