

# The Normative Perspective of Women's Involvement in Managing Enterprises: A Study on Punjab

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## Abstract

Awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities among women are rising and women-centric businesses are becoming significant in national economies, especially in emerging countries. Women contribute substantially to economic growth, yet a wide gender gap persists at international, national and state levels. The essence of women entrepreneurship lies in the level of women's active involvement in managing their businesses. A ten-dimension index was created to quantitatively analyse the involvement among women managing MSMEs in Punjab. Among 204 respondents, 111 were classified as less involved, with below-average Entrepreneurial Involvement Index (EII), while 93 were highly involved, with above-average EII. The t values are computed to find out the significant difference between the two groups of women entrepreneurs. In recent years, the promotion of women entrepreneurs has become a key focus for academics, policymakers and support agencies. The analysis can further be used to enhance the implementation of programmes designed for entrepreneurial development, particularly among women. This targeted approach will ensure more effective support and empowerment for women entrepreneurs, fostering greater participation and success in various sectors.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Women Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Involvement

becoming significant in national economies, especially in emerging countries (Mathews, 2008). Women contribute substantially to economic growth, yet a wide gender gap persists at international, national and state levels (Schumpeter, 1949). Although women are increasingly starting their businesses, their numbers remain low in a male-dominated entrepreneurial world. Even in developed countries, women often hold clerical or low managerial positions, with men occupying most senior roles. In developing countries like India, few women have established small enterprises. However, women are gradually becoming more active in entrepreneurship, applying natural management skills honed in household tasks to business activities (Green & Cohen, 1995). Since the mid-eighties, changing environments and opportunities have led women to embrace entrepreneurship, significantly impacting economic development. The essence of women entrepreneurship hinges on the extent of their involvement in managing their businesses. Women who actively engage in all aspects of their enterprises, from inception to daily operations, demonstrate the significant impact they can have on economic growth (Copper, 1985). Their dedicated participation not only fosters innovation and resilience within their businesses but also contributes to broader economic development. Recognising and supporting this involvement is crucial for creating a more inclusive and thriving entrepreneurial landscape (Brush, 1992).

## Review of Literature

The review underscores that women entrepreneurs play pivotal roles in major decisions throughout various stages of business growth, highlighting the essence of

## Introduction

Awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities among women are rising, and women-centric businesses are

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their involvement in entrepreneurship. It is highlighted with the help of observations from previous research

that demographic and environmental factors significantly influence their engagement in daily business activities.

### Researchers' Reviews Supported by Literature

Researcher	Reviews
Pathak (1972)	The study examines 12 industrial units with similar amenities to classify women entrepreneurs based on their involvement in key business decisions throughout different development stages. It assesses their engagement in project planning, pricing policies, production planning, financial management, investment decisions, and market studies during inception, operations, and expansion or diversification.
Kalyani and Chandralekha (2002)	A study of 300 women entrepreneurs from four districts in Andhra Pradesh was conducted. An Enterprise Involvement Index was developed to measure their engagement in business activities. It found high involvement in management (4.24/5) and starting businesses (3.89/5 and 3.88/5), with the lowest in professional bodies (1.25/5). Significant factors included marital status, number of children, economic status, experience, husband's occupation, and education, while age and family background were not significant.
Kusakabe (2003)	In-depth case studies and meetings with 11 female aquaculturists in Thailand were conducted to examine their roles and decision-making in aquaculture. It was found that women in sustenance aquaculture view it as an extension of household maintenance, while those in rigorous aquaculture have more resources but less decision-making power.
Salimath (2010)	The study highlights the importance of effective operations management for start-ups in a globalised world, emphasising the critical role of operational efficiencies in procurement, production, and distribution. Key strategies for success include reducing carbon footprints, minimising waste, shortening inventory and market times, and promoting eco-friendly products. Additionally, hiring and retaining the right personnel, along with proper financial compensation, are crucial for maintaining a motivated workforce and achieving organisational goals.
Derera et al. (2014)	A study on women entrepreneurs in South Africa found that most face challenges accessing start-up capital, often relying on personal resources and paying higher interest rates due to perceived high risk by bankers. To navigate this, they typically start small and gradually expand as funds permit.
Selvaraj (2016)	Research on 225 entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu highlighted that entrepreneurial involvement varies with demographic and environmental factors. The most significant involvement areas were managing functions, major decisions, and training. Higher educational qualifications led to greater entrepreneurial involvement, with significant differences observed across age groups and personal indexes.

Source: Collected and compiled by researchers from previous studies.

## Research Methodology and Objectives of the Study

To examine how women entrepreneurs in Punjab's MSMEs manage their businesses and assess their involvement in decision-making, a structured questionnaire was designed. It included questions addressing key aspects of involvement, such as motivation, time spent, satisfaction levels and management roles. The primary data was collected from the women entrepreneurs registered with DIC's. 10 districts of Punjab, namely Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Sangrur, Patiala, Gurdaspur, S.A.S. Nagar, Kapurthala, Bathinda and Moga were selected for drawing the required sample. Response from 204 women entrepreneurs were collected and recorded.

A ten-dimension index was created to make a quantitative analysis of the involvement of women in the management of MSMEs in Punjab. The enterprise involvement index EII consists of studied women entrepreneurs' motivation, their role in business initiations, role in management, role in decision-making, time spent on business-related work, satisfaction level in life, training obtained, work-life conflict, membership in professional bodies and future plans. The above-mentioned ten enterprise involvement variables are rated on a five-point scale, three-point scale and two-point scale depending upon the number of items in each variable, carrying a 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 score as per their nature of involvement. The sum of scores obtained by the entrepreneurs from all ten variables and the rated sum of maximum scores of all enterprises involvement variables are used to find EII. The formula used for calculating EII is given below:

$$\text{Enterprise involvement index (EII)} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \text{EIS}_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n \text{MEIS}_i} \times 100$$

Whereas, EIS =Enterprise Involvement Score

MEIS =Maximum of Enterprise Involvement Score  
i..... n = Number of Enterprise Involvement Variables

The scoring procedure adopted for calculating the EII is presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Enterprise Involvement Index - Scoring Procedure and Average Score of Women Entrepreneurs**

Variables	Values	Score	Average Score
Motivation (Based on Mean Values of Motivation)	High	3	1.87
	Medium	2	
	Low	1	
Business Initiation	Started by Own	3	2.65
	Purchased from Someone	2	
	Inherited from Family	1	
Management of Enterprise	Independently Managing	2	1.29
	Managing with the Help of Family Members	1	
Decision Making (Decisions Related to Hiring Employees/ Management of Income Acquired from Business/ Purchasing Raw Materials/ Price Fixation and Promotion/ Advertisement Decisions)	All Five Decisions	5	2.56
	Four Decisions	4	
	Three Decisions	3	
	Two Decisions	2	
	One or Less Than One Decision	1	
Time Spent on Business Related Work (Per Day)	Above 8 Hours	3	1.75
	4-8 Hours	2	
	2-4 Hours	1	
Satisfaction Level	Positive	3	2.23
	Mixed	2	
	Negative	1	
Training Obtained	Yes	2	1.25
	No	1	
Work-Life Conflict	Never	3	2.79
	Sometimes	2	
	Always	1	
Membership	Yes	2	1.22
	No	1	
Future Plans	Definite Plans	3	1.76
	Some Plans	2	
	No Plans	1	

Source: Primary Data.

Table 1 highlights that the majority of the variables used in the construction of the involvement index have a maximum score of 3 or 2 and only one variable, i.e., decision making, has the highest score of 5. As a result, the overall score of the involvement index is low. The average score of the overall involvement index is 0.49, and it ranges between a minimum of 0.33 and a maximum 0.73.

Based on EII, the study focuses on the following two primary objectives:

- To classify women entrepreneurs into two groups - less involved and highly involved women entrepreneurs.
- To analyse the mean difference between less involved and highly involved women entrepreneurs.

The t values are computed to find out the significant difference between the two groups of women entrepreneurs.

## Results and Discussion

### Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs According to Enterprise Involvement Index

EII of studied women entrepreneurs is divided into three categories ranging from minimum to maximum:

women entrepreneurs having an EII between 0.35 and 0.45; 0.46 and 0.60 and 0.61 and 0.75. Women entrepreneurs, according to their EII, are classified into two groups – less-involved women entrepreneurs and highly involved women entrepreneurs. The distribution of women entrepreneurs according to their EII is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs according to Enterprise Involvement Index**

Enterprise Involvement Index	Less Involved n (%)	Highly Involved n (%)	Total n (%)
0.30-0.45	111(100)	0	111(54.4)
0.46-0.60	0	32(34.4)	32(15.7)
0.61-0.75	0	61(65.6)	61(29.9)
Total	111(100)	93(100)	204(100)

Source: Primary Data.

Note: Figure within parentheses shows percentage of total respondents.

According to the above table, 54.4% of the studied women entrepreneurs in Punjab's MSME sector has an EII between 0.35 and 0.45; 15.7% have between 0.46 and 0.60 and 29.9% have between 0.61 and 0.75. In the less involved group, all the respondents have low EII, ranging between 0.35 and 0.45. On the other hand, in the highly involved group, 34.4% of respondents have medium EII ranging between 0.46 and 0.60, and 65.5% have EII ranging between 0.61 and 0.75.

It is concluded that 54.4% of women entrepreneurs in Punjab's MSME sector exhibit a low EII ranging from 0.30 to 0.45, below the average EII of 0.49. Conversely, 45.6% have an EII above the average (0.46–0.75). Among those highly involved in managing business operations, 65.6% have the highest EII (0.61–0.75). This indicates that while fewer women are independently managing businesses; those who do are significantly

more engaged, highlighting the correlation between independent management and high involvement in business operations.

### Enterprise Involvement among Women Entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs are classified into highly involved and less involved based on their EII. Out of the 204 respondents, 111 of them prove to be less involved as they have less than average EII, and the remaining 93 are highly involved as their EII is more than the average EII. For detailed analyses, the mean score of each variable in the involvement index for both groups is calculated. The t values are computed to find out the significant difference between the two groups of women entrepreneurs. The resultant mean scores, standard deviation and related t values are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Mean Difference between Less Involved and Highly Involved Women Entrepreneurs**

Variables	General Mean	Less Involved (n=111)		Highly Involved (n=93)		t-Value	df	p-Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Motivation	1.87	1.14	0.34	2.74	0.51	-26.79	202	0.00**
Business Initiation	2.65	2.63	0.77	2.68	0.68	-0.45	202	0.65
Management	1.29	1.00	0.00	1.63	0.48	-13.81	202	0.00**
Decision- Making	2.56	1.02	0.13	4.40	1.25	-28.26	202	0.00**
Time spent	1.75	1.12	0.32	2.52	0.64	-20.27	202	0.00**

Variables	General Mean	Less Involved (n=111)		Highly Involved (n=93)		t-Value	df	p-Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Satisfaction	2.23	1.77	0.71	2.78	0.51	-11.55	202	0.00**
Training Obtained	1.25	1.05	0.23	1.49	0.50	-8.28	202	0.00**
Work-life Conflicts	2.79	2.94	0.24	2.61	0.59	5.27	202	0.00**
Memberships	1.22	1.14	0.35	1.31	0.47	-2.92	202	0.00**
Future Plans	1.76	1.08	0.27	2.57	0.60	-23.49	202	0.00**

Source: Primary Data, df is within the group.

Note: \*\*Significant at 0.01 level.

According to Table 3, the significant difference between less-involved women entrepreneurs and highly involved women entrepreneurs are noticed in all enterprise involvement variables except for business initiations (t-value: -0.45). Women with high involvement levels do not differ from women who are less involved with respect to whether the business was started by them, purchased by them, or inherited by them as group means of both categories (2.68 and 2.63, respectively) are almost equal to the general mean (2.65) of business initiations, implying not much difference between the two groups as far as the starting of business is concerned. The higher group mean differences are found in their motivation levels (t-value: -26.79\*\*), role in management (t-value: -13.81\*\*), role in decision making (t-value: -28.26\*\*), time spent (t-value: -20.27\*\*), their satisfaction level (t-value: -11.55\*\*), training obtained (t-value: -8.28\*\*), work-life conflicts (t-value: 5.27\*\*), memberships (t-value: -2.92\*\*) and future plans (t-value: -23.49\*\*). Women entrepreneurs who are highly involved in their business operations have group mean (2.27) above the general mean, and less involved women have a group mean (1.14) below the general mean for motivation (1.87). With regard to their role in managing business, highly involved women entrepreneurs have a group mean (1.63) above the general mean and less involved women have a group mean (1.00) below the general mean for management (1.29). Higher mean differences are found with regard to their involvement in decision-making. Highly involved women have much higher group mean (4.40) than the general mean, and less involved women have a much lower group mean (1.02) than the general mean for decision-making (2.56). Similarly, for total time spent in a day by them on business-related activities, women entrepreneurs who are highly involved in their business operations have group

means (2.52) above the general mean and less involved women have group mean (1.12) below the general mean (1.75). Women entrepreneurs who are highly involved in their business operations have a group mean (2.78) above the general mean, and less involved women have group mean (1.77) below the general mean for perceived satisfaction in life (2.23). As far as training obtained is concerned, highly involved women entrepreneurs have higher group means (1.49) than the general mean and less involved women have a lower group mean (1.05) than the general mean for training obtained before starting business (1.25). Women entrepreneurs having memberships are more in case of highly involved group as their group mean (1.31) is above the general mean than less involved women groups as their group mean (1.14) is below the general mean for belongingness to business associations or their memberships (1.22). Women entrepreneurs who are highly involved in their business operations have group means (2.57) above the general mean, and less involved women have a group mean (1.08) below the general mean of future plans (1.76). Only in the case of work-life conflicts, the less involved women have a higher group mean (2.94) than the general mean of work-life conflicts (2.79). Highly involved women have a lower group mean (2.61) than the general mean.

The significant variables, having higher mean differences between the two groups – highly involved women entrepreneurs and less involved women entrepreneurs are ranked accordingly. The maximum difference is found in women entrepreneurs' role in decision-making followed by their motivation level, future planning, time spent, perceived satisfaction in life, their role in management, training obtained, work-life conflicts, memberships and business initiations.

## Conclusion

A ten-dimension EII was developed to analyse women's involvement in managing MSMEs in Punjab. The EII covers aspects such as motivation, decision-making, management roles, time spent, satisfaction, training, work-life conflict, professional memberships and future plans. Among 204 respondents, 54.4% had a low EII (0.30–0.45), while 45.6% scored above average (0.46–0.75). Women with high or moderate involvement in business operations had the highest EII (0.61–0.75), indicating that those independently managing their enterprises are more engaged.

The independent t-test revealed significant differences between highly involved and less involved women entrepreneurs across most EII variables, except for business initiation. The largest differences were observed in decision-making, followed by motivation, future planning, time spent, life satisfaction, management roles, training, role conflicts and memberships.

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## Annexure

### Questionnaire

1. Please rate the following reasons which motivated you to start your own business. Would you indicate how important the following reasons were to you when you were starting the business and the degree to which each of the following factors are still important to you on the scale to 1-5 with 1 least important & 5 to most important?

Factor/Ranks	1	2	3	4	5
Couldn't find a good suitable job					
To utilise my skills & talent					
Wanted to capitalise on a business idea that I had					
Always wanted to have my own company					
Working for someone else didn't appeal to me					
Influenced by success story of my family member / friend					
To get recognition / better status in society					
Dissatisfaction from the previous job					
To be part and contribute towards family business entity					
To be independent					
Wanted to be role model for others					
For generating additional income for bright future of my children					
Encouraged by government incentives & policies					
To help father / husband clear their old debts					
No other family member was capable of earning					
To overcome boredom as there was no other work					
Encouragement from my family					
Favourable market conditions					

2. Was the business: Started by you  Inherited by you  Purchased from someone
3. Are you managing the enterprise on your own?  
Independently Managing   
Managing with the Help of Family Members
4. Are you involved in taking following decisions?

Decisions	Yes	No	If No Then Who is Responsible
Hiring Employees			
Management of income acquired from business			
Purchasing raw material			
Price fixation			
Promotion/Advertisement			

5. How many hours do you work in your business in a day?  
2-4 hours  4-8 hours  8 and above
6. Are you Satisfied being an Entrepreneur ?  
Positive  Mixed  Negative
7. Have you acquired any Vocational Training?  
Yes  No
8. Do you face Work-Life Conflict ?  
Always  Sometimes  Never
9. Are you a member of any Social Club or Business / Trade Association ?  
Yes  No
10. What are your future Plans:  
Definite Plans  Some Plans   
No Plans