

Women Entrepreneurship in Achieving Sustainable Developmental Goals

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the contribution of women entrepreneurship to advancing gender equality and fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). Employing a mixed-method research methodology, the study investigates variations in attitudes among women entrepreneurs contingent upon marital status, educational attainment, and geographic location. A standardised self-created 20-item Likert scale, confirmed by experts, was given to 100 women entrepreneurs in Malda. The results show that married and unmarried women had quite different views, although there were no big disparities depending on education or whether the women lived in a city or a rural area. The research underscores the capacity of entrepreneurship as a mechanism for economic and social empowerment, offering actionable suggestions for policymakers to promote inclusive development. It also stresses the need of specific training programs, mentoring opportunities, and financial support mechanisms to help more women start their own businesses. The findings add to the expanding conversation around gender equality and women-led development via sustainable business practices.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Gender Equality, SDG 5, Perception, Empowerment, Mixed-Method Study

INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship is when women start, run, and manage a company with the goal of being financially independent, coming up with new ideas, and gaining power. It is not just about managing a company; it also involves reshaping societal structures by advocating for equality, leadership, and the involvement of women in economic activities (D'Allura & Floris, 2025; Arora & Mangi, 2025; Goncalves & Ahumada, 2025; Thomas, 2024; Raman et al., 2022).

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) aspires to provide all women and girls equal rights and opportunities. It stresses getting rid of prejudice, making sure everyone has a say in decisions, and giving women the same access to resources and chances (Hales & Birdthistle, 2023; Bilal et al., 2023; Veckalne & Tambovceva, 2023; Roy & Xiaoling, 2022; Jubril et al., 2022). Women entrepreneurship is a strong way to achieve SDG 5 since it helps women become financially independent, boosts their confidence, and closes the gap between men and women in terms of income and jobs (Isa et al., 2022; Denoncourt, 2022; Eden & Wagstaff, 2020; Debnath et al., 2019; Devi, 2025).

Arora and Mangi (2025), Thomas (2024), and Bilal et al. (2023) all agree that women may become powerful social change agents, family breadwinners, and challengers of established gender norms via business. It has been shown that empowering women entrepreneurs via education, access to capital, and supportive policies may lead to long-term economic success (D'Allura & Floris, 2025; Roy & Xiaoling, 2022; Jubril et al., 2022; Isa et al., 2022).

Rationale of the Study

This research aims to investigate the essential role of women entrepreneurship in attaining Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality). Women entrepreneurs play a crucial role in economic development but encounter several obstacles associated with societal conventions, education, and geographical differences. The research seeks to detect disparities in empowerment and involvement by comparing attitudes according to marital status, educational attainment, and urban-rural origin. Comprehending these disparities will assist in formulating effective strategies and policy suggestions to mitigate obstacles encountered by women entrepreneurs and to advance gender equality via inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial growth.

Objectives

1. To investigate the role of women entrepreneurship in advancing gender equality in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5).
2. To examine the attitudes of married and unmarried women entrepreneurs on female entrepreneurship and the attainment of gender equality.
3. To examine the attitudes of women entrepreneurs with varying educational backgrounds (undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate) about women entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development Goal 5.
4. To compare the perception of urban and rural women entrepreneurs regarding women entrepreneurship and their role in achieving gender equality.
5. To identify the key challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in promoting gender equality and empowerment.
6. To suggest recommendations and policy measures for strengthening women entrepreneurship as a tool for achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between married and unmarried women entrepreneur in their perception towards women entrepreneurs and achieving gender equality (SDG 5).
2. There is no significant difference between below graduate & graduate and above graduate women entrepreneur in their perception towards women entrepreneurs and achieving gender equality (SDG 5).
3. There is no significant difference between urban and rural women entrepreneur in their perception towards women entrepreneurs and achieving gender equality (SDG 5).

Research Gap

Even though women starting their own businesses is widely seen as a major factor in economic growth and gender equality, most research only looks at either the economic benefits or the social benefits of entrepreneurship, without fully connecting it to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). Most research concentrate on urban or educated women entrepreneurs, resulting in a constrained comprehension of how attitudes differ based on marital status, educational attainment, and urban-rural settings. There isn't much real-world information on how married and unmarried women see things differently, or how education level and where a person lives affect their ability to see entrepreneurship as a way to achieve gender equality. Moreover, little research amalgamates qualitative and quantitative methodologies to comprehensively elucidate the intricate problems, possibilities, and societal ramifications of women's entrepreneurship. This research fills these gaps by looking at how different groups of women entrepreneurs see things differently and tying them directly to SDG 5. This adds to both theoretical understanding and practical policy suggestions for advancing gender equality via entrepreneurship.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Devi, D. S. (2025). Fostering Entrepreneurship and Skill Development for Sustainable Socioeconomic

Growth: Analyzing the Present Landscape and Future Prospects for Telangana State.

This research looks at how entrepreneurship and skill development may help Telangana State expand in a way that is good for the environment and the economy. It looks at present trends, government programs, and future possibilities. It also talks about how to empower local communities via entrepreneurship, generate jobs, and make the regional economy more resilient while still meeting larger development goals.

D'Allura, G. M., & Floris, M. (2025). Breaking barriers: Assessing Agenda 2030's impact on women entrepreneurship studies. In *Feminist Perspectives in Business Studies*

The chapter examines the influence of Agenda 2030 on studies concerning women's entrepreneurship. It talks about obstacles, regulatory changes, and success stories, with an emphasis on how tactics that concentrate on gender might help more people become entrepreneurs. The authors look at problems with sharing information and getting help from institutions. They call for inclusive frameworks to achieve gender equality and long-term economic development throughout the world.

Arora, P., & Mangi, S. (2025). Evaluation of the project on catalyzing women's entrepreneurship: creating a gender-responsive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

This review looks at a project that wants to get more women to start their own businesses by creating entrepreneurial ecosystems that work for both men and women. It finds problems, how to best use resources, and how well programs work to develop more business possibilities for women. To get more people involved in entrepreneurial groups, recommendations focus on changing policies, getting mentors, and making it easier for people to get money.

Goncalves, M., & Ahumada, E. D. L. V. (2025). A Bibliometric Analysis of Women Entrepreneurship: Current Trends and Challenges.

This bibliometric study looks at the latest trends and problems in research on women entrepreneurs. It finds prolific writers, important journals, and new themes while looking for holes in the literature. The findings underscore the need for multidisciplinary studies, policy evaluations, and worldwide comparative study to augment the comprehension of women entrepreneurs' significance in economic growth.

Thomas, A. (2024). The role of women's entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs): A comprehensive review. *Journal of Biotechnology & Bioinformatics Research*

Thomas examines women's entrepreneurship within the framework of sustainable development objectives (SDGs). The article combines research from throughout the world on gender equality, economic empowerment, and social inclusion. It talks about the important role that women entrepreneurs have in reaching the SDGs by looking at impediments, regulatory changes, and ways to encourage fair participation in business activities throughout the globe.

Raman, R., Subramaniam, N., Nair, V. K., Shivdas, A., Achuthan, K., & Nedungadi, P. (2022). Women entrepreneurship and sustainable development: bibliometric analysis and emerging research trends.

This bibliometric study examines new research trends in women's entrepreneurship and sustainable development. It looks at the patterns of publishing, the main subjects, and the worldwide points of view. The results show that more and more people are interested in gender equality, financial inclusion, and policies that help women-led businesses. Suggestions stress the need for further study on innovation, empowerment, and long-term economic growth.

Hales, R., & Birdthistle, N. (2023). The Sustainable Development Goals–SDG# 5 Gender Equality. In *Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Gender Equality*

The study is on SDG 5, which is about gender equality and how important it is across the world. It talks about ways to give women more influence in politics, the economy, and society. It shows how important institutional support, education, and inclusive entrepreneurship are for reaching the objectives for 2030, promoting fair development, and making society more resilient by looking at policy initiatives and case studies.

Bilal, A. R., Rosato, P., Campo, R., & Leopizzi, R. (2023). Women empowerment and entrepreneurial intention: A pathway to achieve sustainable development goal (SDG-5). *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*

This research examines the correlation among women's empowerment, entrepreneurial intention, and the attainment of SDG 5. It stresses how women's self-efficacy, education, and access to resources affect their ability to start a business. The results show that entrepreneurship may help bring about gender equality. They call for legislation, mentoring, and institutional changes that will help create long-lasting social and economic benefits.

Veckalne, R., & Tambovceva, T. (2023). The importance of gender equality in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation.

The article looks at how gender equality might help entrepreneurship and innovation. It says that giving women more authority makes the market more competitive, creative, and diverse. The authors demonstrate that inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems promote innovation, enhance economic performance, and advance social sustainability, therefore helping gender equality and wider developmental objectives.

Roy, C. K., & Xiaoling, H. (2022). Achieving SDG 5, gender equality and empower all women and girls, in developing countries: how aid for trade can help?

This research examines the potential of trade assistance to promote SDG 5 in developing nations. It looks at ways to help women become more financially independent via business and changes to government policy. The results show that trade facilitation, capacity-building, and gender-focused financial inclusion may all help women become more involved in business, which will help the economy expand in a fair and sustainable way.

Jubril, B., Olubiyi, T. O., Sojinu, O. S., & Ngari, R. (2022). Strengthening gender equality in small business and achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs): Comparative analysis of Kenya and Nigeria.

This comparative research investigates gender equality in small enterprises in Kenya and Nigeria. It looks at women's involvement in business, government assistance, and long-term development results. The results show differences, obstacles, and best practices that promote empowerment. They also show how important institutional support, education, and focused interventions are to reach SDG 5 and economic resilience.

Isa, S. M., Ismail, H. N., & Fuza, Z. I. M. (2022). Integrating Women Entrepreneurs into SMEs Programmes and National Development Plan to Achieve Gender Equality. The report stresses the need of include women entrepreneurs in strategies for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and national growth. It looks at legislation that help with gender equality, getting money, and learning how to start a business. The findings indicate that organised programs and institutional support may increase women's business engagement, foster economic development, and further Sustainable Development Goal 5, therefore establishing sustainable growth and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Denoncourt, J. A. (2022). Supporting sustainable development goal 5 gender equality and entrepreneurship in the Tanzanite mine-to-market.

This study examines SDG 5 gender equality in the Tanzanite mine-to-market industry. It talks about ways to help women company owners, fight injustice, and make businesses more sustainable. The results show that policies that include everyone, training programs, and financial help are all important for making sure everyone can participate fairly, boosting local economies, and helping to achieve larger goals for social and

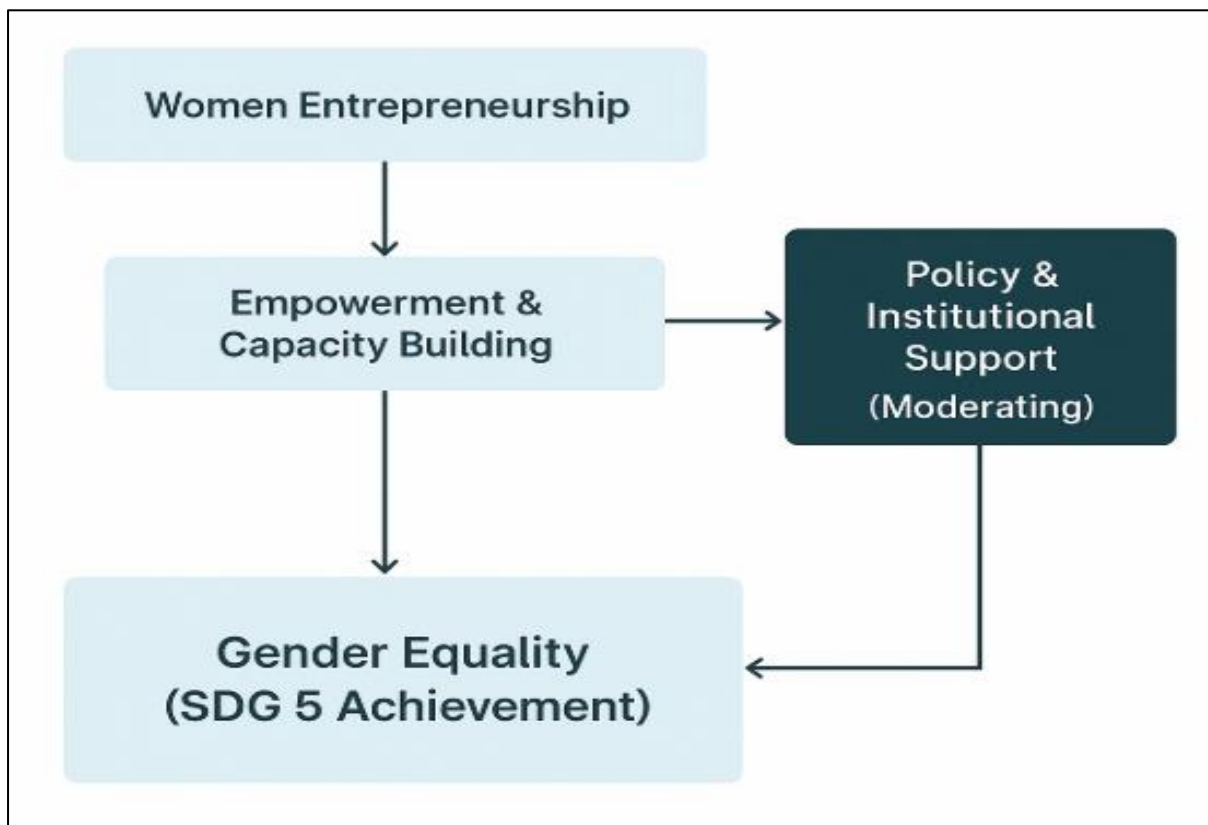
sustainable development.

Eden, L., & Wagstaff, M. F. (2020). Evidence-based policymaking and the wicked problem of SDG 5 Gender Equality.

The article talks about how evidence-based policies might help reach SDG 5. It looks at the obstacles that make it hard to promote gender equality and women's entrepreneurship, focussing on "wicked problems" that need coordinated tactics to solve. The authors contend that comprehensive policy frameworks, institutional cooperation, and data-informed decision-making are essential to mitigate structural hurdles and promote inclusive, sustainable growth.

Debnath, G. C., Chowdhury, S., Khan, S., Farahdina, T., & Chowdhury, T. S. (2019). Role of women entrepreneurship on achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh.

This research examines the significance of women's entrepreneurship in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh. It looks at impediments to participation, policy changes, and effects on society and the economy. The results show how important education, access to money, and assistance from institutions are for empowering women, building enterprises that last, and helping social and economic growth that is in line with gender equality and global sustainability objectives.



Conceptual Framework Diagram

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a mixed research strategy that included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative aspect focused on examining the perspectives, obstacles, and experiences of women entrepreneurs, whilst the quantitative aspect allowed statistical analysis of variations related to marital status, educational credentials, and geographic location.

Population

The research population consisted of all women entrepreneurs in Malda, West Bengal, involved in several economic areas.

Sample

The sample for this research consisted of 100 women entrepreneurs of Malda, West Bengal.

Sampling Technique

To make sure that all important groups were represented, a stratified random sample method was used. These groups included marital status, educational level, and place of residence.

Sample Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs (N = 100)

Category	Sub-category	Number of Respondents
Marital Status	Married	55
	Unmarried	45
Educational Qualification	Below Graduate & Graduate	60
	Above Graduate	40
Area of Residence	Urban	50
	Rural	50

Tool Used

A **self-developed scale** was employed to assess perceptions of women entrepreneurs regarding women entrepreneurship and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The scale was **standardized with the guidance of experts** and comprised **20 statements** measured on a **5-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Reliability and Validity of the Scale

The scale's **reliability** was assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha**, ensuring internal consistency. **Content validity** was established through expert review to ensure the items accurately represented the construct of women entrepreneurship and gender equality perceptions.

Procedure of Data Collection

Data were collected by **direct interaction with women entrepreneurs** in Malda. Respondents were explained the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and requested to complete the structured questionnaire. Follow-up visits and reminders were made to ensure **maximum participation**.

Procedure of Analysis of Data:

Collected data were coded and entered into **statistical software** for analysis. **Descriptive statistics** (mean, frequency) were used to summarize responses, while **inferential statistics** (t-test) were employed to test hypotheses regarding differences based on **marital status, educational qualification, and area of residence**. The analysis aimed to identify significant patterns and correlations between women entrepreneurship and perceptions related to SDG 5.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Analysis of Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between married and unmarried women entrepreneurin their perception towards women entrepreneurs and achieving gender equality (SDG 5).

Table 1: Comparison of Perception Scores between Married and Unmarried Women Entrepreneurs

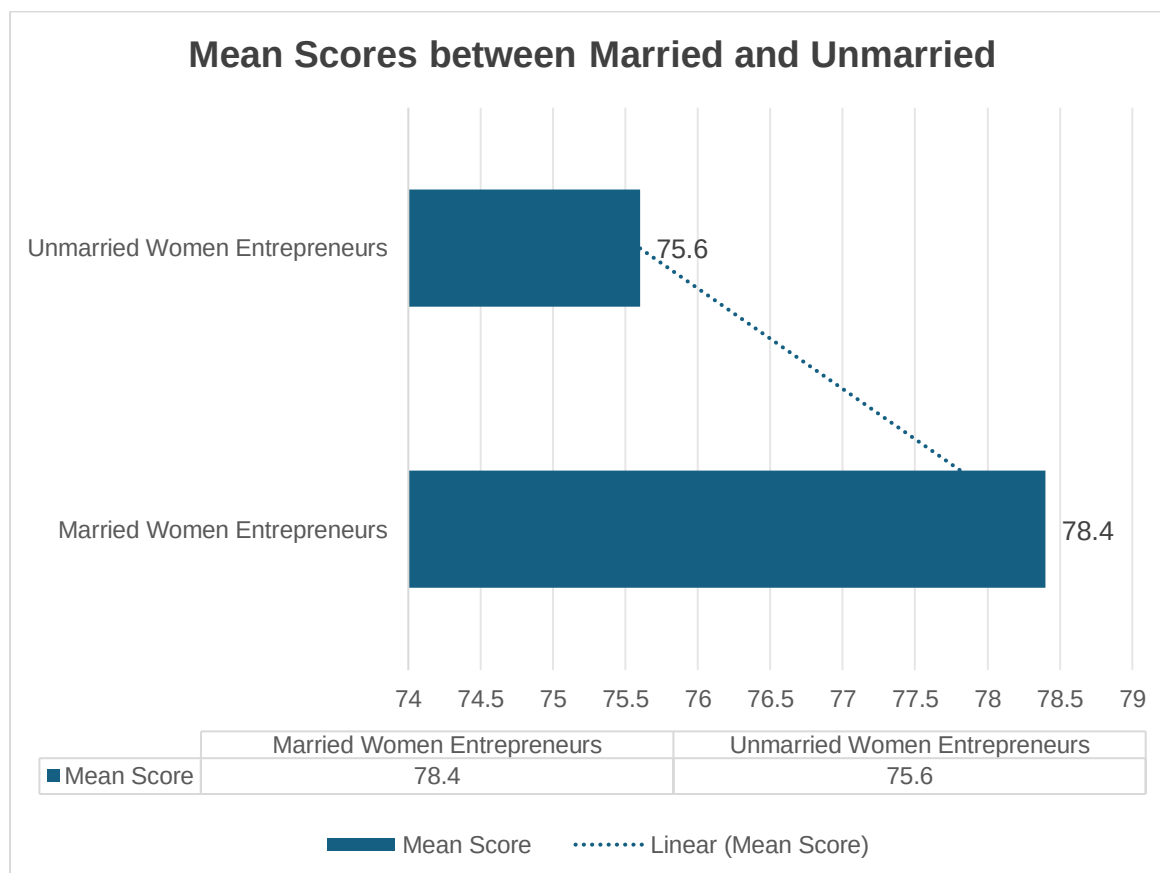
Variables	Sample Size (N)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value
Married Women Entrepreneurs	55	78.4	6.5	0.88	2.31	0.024
Unmarried Women Entrepreneurs	45	75.6	7.2	1.07		

For **Hypothesis 1**, the **p-value is 0.024**, which is **less than 0.05**.

Decision: The null hypothesis is **rejected**.

Interpretation:There is a **significant difference** between married and unmarried women entrepreneurs in their perception towards women entrepreneurship and achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Married women entrepreneurs show slightly higher perception scores compared to unmarried women.

Fig.1: Comparison of Perception Scores between Married and Unmarried Women Entrepreneurs



Analysis of Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between below graduate&graduate and above graduate women entrepreneurin their perception towards women entrepreneurs and achieving gender equality (SDG 5).

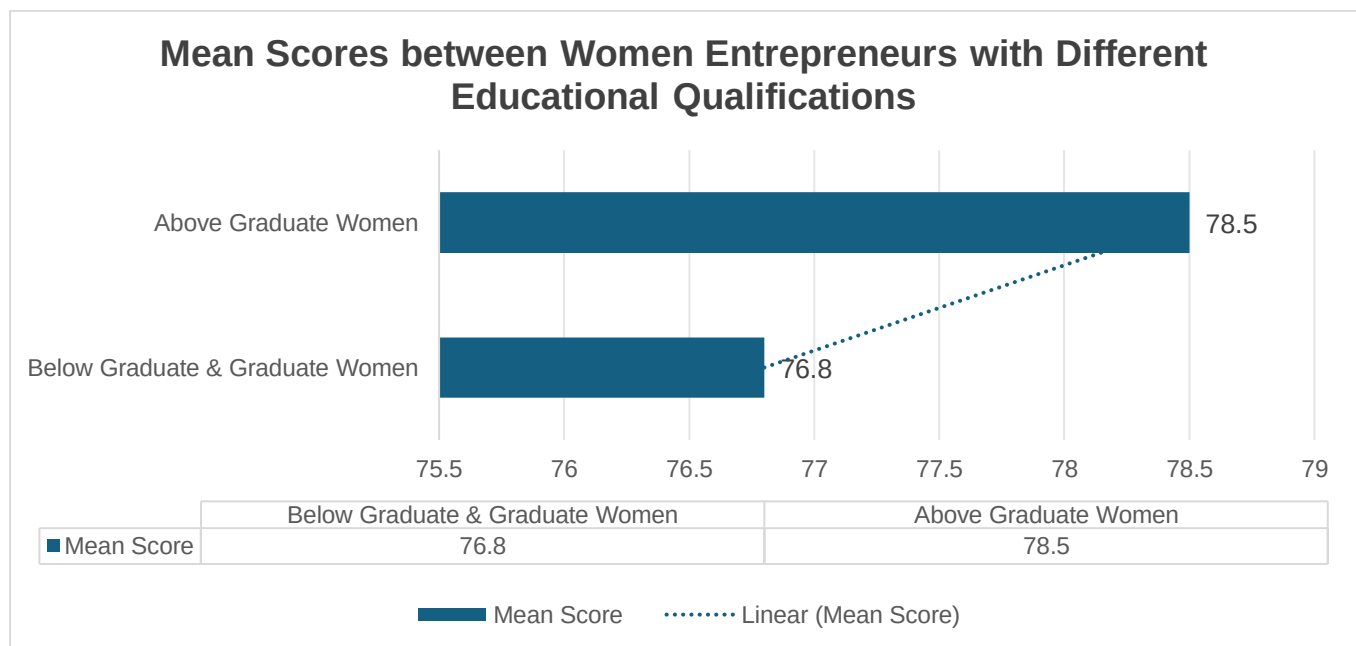
Table 2: Comparison of Perception Scores between Women Entrepreneurs with Different Educational Qualifications

Variables	Sample Size (N)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value
Below Graduate & Graduate Women	60	76.8	6.9	0.89	1.72	0.089
Above Graduate Women	40	78.5	7.1	1.12		

Decision: The **p-value is 0.089**, which is **greater than 0.05**.

Interpretation: The null hypothesis is **accepted**. There is **no significant difference** between women entrepreneurs with below graduate & graduate education and those with above graduate education in their perception towards women entrepreneurship and achieving SDG 5.

Fig.2: Comparison of Perception Scores between Women Entrepreneurs with Different Educational Qualifications



Analysis of Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between urban and rural women entrepreneur in their perception towards women entrepreneurs and achieving gender equality (SDG 5).

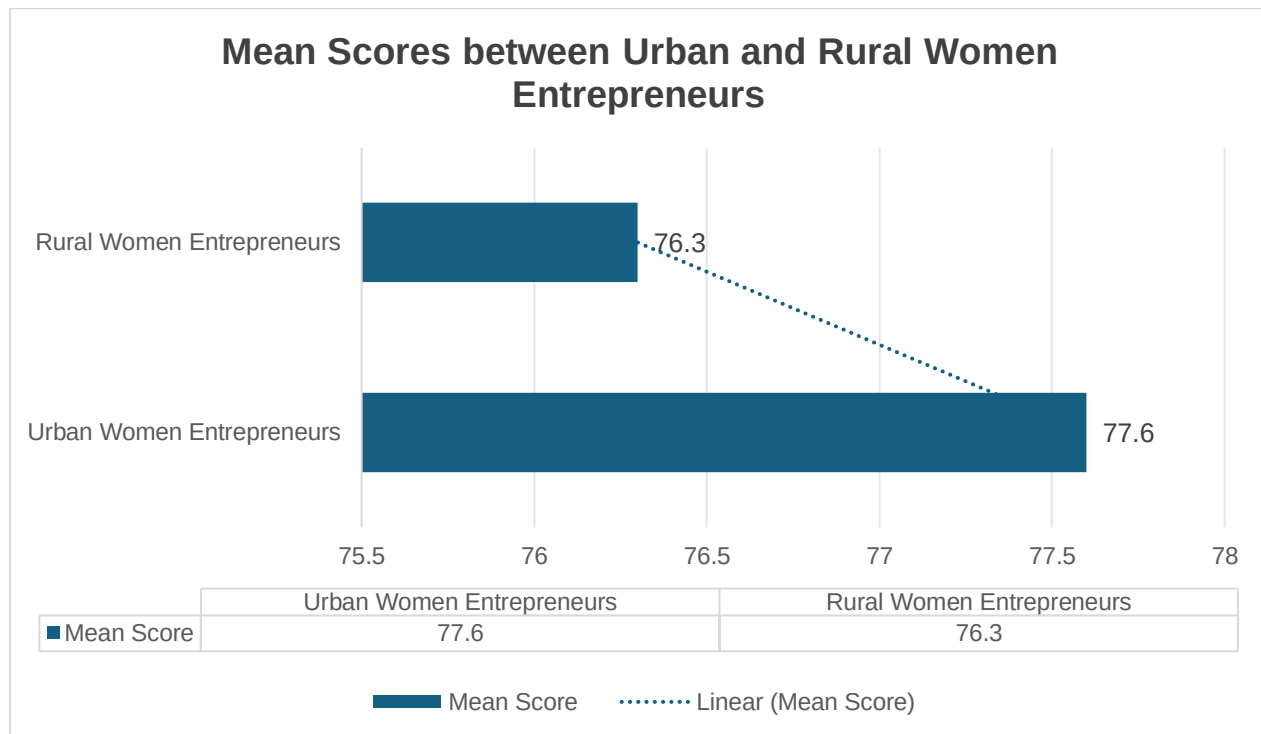
Table 3: Comparison of Perception Scores between Urban and Rural Women Entrepreneurs

Variables	Sample Size (N)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value
Urban Women Entrepreneurs	50	77.6	6.8	0.96	1.09	0.278
Rural Women Entrepreneurs	50	76.3	7	0.99		

Decision: The **p-value is 0.278**, which is **greater than 0.05**.

Interpretation: The null hypothesis is **accepted**. There is **no significant difference** between urban and rural women entrepreneurs in their perception towards women entrepreneurship and achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Fig.3: Comparison of Perception Scores between Urban and Rural Women Entrepreneurs



DISCUSSION

The study's results provide significant insights into the perspectives of women entrepreneurs about female entrepreneurship and the attainment of SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Married women entrepreneurs had elevated perception ratings relative to their unmarried counterparts, suggesting that life experience, responsibilities in home decision-making, and increased social exposure may enhance awareness of the economic and social advantages of entrepreneurship. Conversely, attitudes exhibited no variation based on educational credentials or residential locations, indicating that the recognition of women's entrepreneurship in advancing gender equality surpasses formal education and geographical boundaries. This might be a sign that media, government programs, and social networks that help women share information and feel empowered are becoming more popular.

The research provides a substantial theoretical addition by experimentally connecting women's entrepreneurship to SDG 5, so affirming the concept that entrepreneurship functions as both an economic and social tool. It backs up ideas like social empowerment, gender-inclusive development, and sustainable growth by showing that women who are entrepreneurs are more financially independent, better leaders, and more involved in their communities. These results underscore that women's entrepreneurship may catalyse societal change and mitigate structural disparities, in accordance with global sustainable development goals.

The report offers practical insights for politicians, development agencies, and organisations that help businesses. Customised training, mentoring initiatives, and awareness campaigns might enhance entrepreneurial confidence, especially among unmarried women who may possess somewhat lower perception ratings. Policies that promote financial access, supporting regulatory frameworks, and gender-sensitive business ecosystems may help more women become entrepreneurs. Programs that close the disparities in education and between urban and rural areas may also make sure that everyone has equal access to business opportunities, which will lead to inclusive growth and long-term development.

CONCLUSION

The report emphasises the crucial function of women entrepreneurship in advancing gender equality and attaining Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). Results show that married women entrepreneurs had somewhat better perception ratings than unmarried women. This shows how life experience and social interaction may help people understand how important entrepreneurship is. However, educational qualifications and residential areas did not exhibit substantial disparities, indicating that knowledge and acceptance of women entrepreneurship as a means of empowerment are prevalent across many backgrounds.

The study's theoretical implications highlight that entrepreneurship functions not just as an economic endeavour but also as a catalyst for social change, fostering financial independence, leadership, and decision-making skills among women. The report offers practical suggestions for politicians, development agencies, and business support organisations to create targeted training programs, mentoring efforts, and inclusive legislation that promote women's active engagement in entrepreneurial endeavours.

In conclusion, women entrepreneurship is an important way to give women more power, close the gender gap, and promote long-term economic development. Encouraging supportive frameworks, fair access to resources, and regulations that take gender into account will help women entrepreneurs become more successful. This will help achieve SDG 5 and the larger aim of gender equality and development that includes everyone.

LIMITATIONS

The research focused only on women entrepreneurs in Malda, perhaps limiting the applicability of the results to other locations or states. The sample size of 100 participants offers preliminary insights but may not fully represent the range of experiences and perspectives among women entrepreneurs. Also, using a self-reported Likert scale may lead to response bias, social desirability, or an overestimation of favourable judgements. The research largely concentrated on demographic characteristics, including marital status, educational attainment, and residential location, while neglecting further contributing factors such as income level, company sector, or years of entrepreneurial experience.

Future Scope

Subsequent research may broaden the investigation to include a broader and more varied sample across many states or nations to improve generalisability. Longitudinal studies may investigate temporal changes in perceptions and evaluate the effects of policy measures or training programs. Investigating other variables, including firm size, industry, technological availability, and social support, may provide more profound insights into the determinants affecting women's entrepreneurship and empowerment. Comparative analyses across various nations or areas help elucidate the cultural, socioeconomic, and policy disparities influencing women entrepreneurs. Finally, using qualitative methods like interviews or case studies may help us understand the problems, motivations, and success strategies of women entrepreneurs in more depth.

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APPENDIX

Women Entrepreneurship and SDG 5 Perception Scale

Section	Item No.	Statement	Score (1–5)
Economic Empowerment	1	Women entrepreneurship helps women achieve financial independence.	1 2 3 4 5
	2	Running a business improves women's decision-making in household matters.	1 2 3 4 5
	3	Women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to national economic growth.	1 2 3 4 5
	4	Entrepreneurship provides women opportunities to create jobs for others.	1 2 3 4 5
	5	Access to financial resources is essential for women entrepreneurship success.	1 2 3 4 5
Social Empowerment & Gender Equality	6	Women entrepreneurship challenges traditional gender roles in society.	1 2 3 4 5
	7	Entrepreneurship enhances women's confidence and self-esteem.	1 2 3 4 5
	8	Women entrepreneurs are role models for younger women in the community.	1 2 3 4 5
	9	Society supports women equally in pursuing	1 2 3 4 5

		entrepreneurial activities.	
	10	Entrepreneurship reduces social discrimination against women.	1 2 3 4 5
Education & Skill Development	11	Education and training are critical for successful women entrepreneurship.	1 2 3 4 5
	12	Skill development programs strengthen women's entrepreneurial capabilities.	1 2 3 4 5
	13	Women entrepreneurs need mentorship and networking support.	1 2 3 4 5
	14	Women entrepreneurship encourages lifelong learning and innovation.	1 2 3 4 5
	15	Awareness of gender equality policies improves women's business participation.	1 2 3 4 5
Policy, Sustainability & Challenges	16	Government policies adequately support women entrepreneurs.	1 2 3 4 5
	17	Urban women have better access to entrepreneurial opportunities than rural women.	1 2 3 4 5
	18	Balancing family responsibilities and business is a major challenge for women entrepreneurs.	1 2 3 4 5
	19	Technology adoption helps women entrepreneurs expand their businesses.	1 2 3 4 5
	20	Women entrepreneurship significantly contributes to achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality).	1 2 3 4 5