

A Drift In Women Micro-Entrepreneurship: A Bibliometric And Systematic Review Since 2018

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - The study aims for bibliometric as well as systematic review analysis by analyzing trends in various authors, documents, topics, conceptual structures, collaboration networks, and additional information in the field of women's micro-entrepreneurship.

Methodology- This work analyzed a total of 130 publications that were recovered from the WOS (Web of Science) record from 2018 to 2023 and conclusions were drawn using the 'bibliometric R-package' and 'VOS viewer'.

Findings- Observations have shown that after 2021, scholarly attention quickened. Trends related to women's micro-entrepreneurship during the selected period include women, entrepreneurship, perspective, perceptions, efficacy, and innovation. In developing nations such as India, women are often viewed as family supporters and their husbands often do not support them in starting their businesses. Various studies examine policies and agencies responsible for improving women's micro-entrepreneurship, focusing on policy implementation and microfinance factors like savings, network affiliation, training, and credit access. The state plays a vibrant role in developing the socioeconomic status and technological knowledge of female micro-entrepreneurs. Rather than just launching financial schemes, more intensive training for micro-entrepreneurship development is needed.

Practical implications- Practitioners, and researchers will find this bibliometric analysis and the mentioned dimensions useful which serves as a basis for upcoming research in this area.

Originality- The findings may give scholars and professionals information about the current situation and trending topics of female entrepreneurs. We put out a few research questions that may be addressed in the future for each of the primary study directions.

Keywords- Women micro-entrepreneurship, Systematic review, Bibliometric, Micro enterprises, Female micro-entrepreneurs.

1. INTRODUCTION

India's economy has expanded significantly throughout the previous twenty years, yet the nation still ranks poorly, averaging 130 on the HDI. Poverty alleviation has continued to be India's greatest challenge. The difference between men and women widens during times of poverty whereas it narrows during times of economic progress because of its gender-promotional initiatives. Encouragement of business especially among women is one of the efficient strategies to combat poverty, particularly in rural areas ([Chatterjee et al., 2018](#)). The new idea discusses how to include them in the socioeconomic development of the nation, instead of regarding those at the bottom of the pyramid as unnecessary. Giving those at the bottom of the pyramid access to entrepreneurship is essential for inclusive growth. Entrepreneurship in India will aid in this inclusive growth by creating jobs at the bottom of the pyramid. It will fill market gaps due to rising imperfections and risk-taking ([Rajaiah, 2021](#)). According to research, women are and will continue to be the key forces behind economic growth. When men and women are treated equally, economies expand more quickly, and poverty declines. It has been seen that a business's social performance is positively impacted by gender. Statistics reveal that the number of companies run or managed by females has increased by 114% over the past two decades, indicating an upward trend in the number of female-

driven businesses ([Kuada, 2023](#)). In the last ten years, they have been also diversifying themselves in innovative and developing industries. However, even after this diversification in the industry any woman who wants to start their entrepreneurial journey must be prepared to face a variety of issues and difficulties like gender disparities and inequality, financial limitations, work-family conflicts, absence of managerial training and education, personality-based boundaries, inadequate understanding of basic business management and entrepreneurial abilities, lack of technological expertise and conflicts between women's private and public lives etc ([Panda, 2018](#)), ([Balakumar and Triveni, 2018](#)), ([Ingenbleek, 2019](#)).

If we talk about micro-enterprises, they vary in definition across countries; what qualifies as "micro" in one nation may be sizable in another. In the UK, micro-enterprises are defined by turnover and investment thresholds. For instance, in India, they're characterized by turnover of up to five crores and limited investments. Despite often being unregistered, micro-enterprises contribute significantly to developing economies, comprising 35%-40% of GDP compared to less than 20% in developed nations. Some argue that informal businesses, including micro-enterprises, may not seek formalization due to perceived benefits like avoiding regulations. However, this perspective suggests that informal businesses' lower productivity prevents them from gaining an unfair advantage over formal counterparts ([Jayachandran, 2020](#)).

In architecture & high-tech industries, females dominate in the service sector, but they do work near homes, on streets, or in the vicinity of houses or shops ([Quagrainie et al, 2020](#)). Research on women's motivational factors and challenges is crucial for developing initiatives and policies to reduce disparity in gender by promoting female micro-entrepreneurship, notwithstanding the paucity of research on the driving forces of women ([Shastri et al., 2019](#)). Studies on women micro-entrepreneurs motivations and challenges highlight the importance of analyzing institutions as both incentives and constraints, yet institutional theory is under-explored in this field. The insights and experiences of female micro-business owners are disregarded in favour of the macro-level data and statistical evaluation in the framework-based analyses currently in practice. This paper intends to contribute to the scant literature previously available on the institutional foundations of women's micro-entrepreneurship. Micro-entrepreneurs have faced a lot of constraints in running their businesses like financial, technological, economic, social, personal, etc ([Majumdar et al, 2023](#)), ([Crittenden et al, 2019](#)), ([Ufot et al, 2021](#)),. Some problems of women micro-entrepreneurs can be solved with the aid of technological advances also ([Mustafa et al., 2019](#)). Information technology has been seen by researchers as a new instrument for promoting women small business owners, particularly in nations with limited resources ([Crittenden et al, 2019](#)). Numerous pieces of research highlighted some typical obstacles faced by women micro-entrepreneurs while running their firms as well as some motivating factors that work for them. As per the literature, blockchain technology can emerge as a new tool that can be used to solve the difficulties of female microentrepreneurs. Our country can find a way to economic progress through fostering women's micro-entrepreneurship.

The current study suggests that there is a shortage of comprehensive bibliometric studies on women' micro-entrepreneurship. This study is an innovative attempt to investigate the state of the research on women's micro-entrepreneurship by combining a thorough bibliometric analysis with a structured literature evaluation. Even though women's micro-entrepreneurship has received attention in the past, the findings of prior studies are important for expanding the theoretical framework. This systematic review opens the way for academic exposition by offering a comprehensive perspective on women's micro-entrepreneurship. Through the use of WOS-indexed papers, majorly three distinct research streams were identified. The first cluster of this study focuses on the challenges female micro-entrepreneurs face; the second stream discusses their motivations and the third stream concludes with a discussion of how micro-entrepreneurship activities are for women. Utilizing a systematic review methodology, the contributions made by past researchers about women' micro-entrepreneurship have been scrutinized.

This study includes a systematic review, a discussion of several important contributions made by distinguished researchers, and an identification of new research fields that provide ideas and paths for further investigation. This study looks at the most frequently referenced nations, keywords, authors, and writings across time (2018-2023). The time frame was picked because, as the methodology section shows, there were enough publications (3285) available after specifying keywords associated with women micro-entrepreneurs. Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers will find this bibliometric analysis and the mentioned dimensions useful which will be the base for future studies related to this area. These research questions are the focus of this paper:

RQ1. Which nations, papers, and publications about women' micro-entrepreneurship are among the most productive between 2018 and 2023?

RQ2. Who are the most productive authors who have contributed the most articles, most cited papers, and most frequently used keywords concerning women' micro-entrepreneurship?

RQ3. What are the relevant developing themes based on thematic map analysis under the conceptual structure section related to women micro-entrepreneurs?

RQ4. What are the obstacles and driving forces facing female microentrepreneurs?

RQ5. What are the activities that affect micro-entrepreneurial development?

2. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to assess the current literature on women' micro-entrepreneurship that has been published in WOS-indexed journals. The emphasis on journal articles is justifiable since they are often subjected to a greater level of peer review scrutiny than other sources including books, chapters, and proceedings of conferences. The usage of this database is strategic because the journals included have satisfied severe requirements for indexation and the bibliometric data and the full text of articles may be accessible through WOS.

One uses Scopus and WOS databases for bibliometrics or systematic review analysis ([Pranckute, 2021](#)). Information used in this research has been extracted from the WOS record. After applying the below-mentioned keywords based on a topic only, the database produced a total of 3285 articles. Search results were restricted to articles with keywords of female owners of micro-enterprises. Articles only are chosen in the type of document category, then we are left with only 1677 articles. We applied the PRISMA method to these 1677 articles and then lastly after excluding all the irrelevant articles, The examination was continued with only 130 articles. These 130 articles are analyzed through biblioshiny and VOSviewer software. [Table 1](#) shows the search pattern that has been followed for our respective research. [Figure 1](#) depicts the process flow for conducting SLR (systematic literature review) following PRISMA method recommendations. This illustrates the steps we reduce the number of articles from 1677 to just 130. Data was downloaded on March 18, 2024, based on the following keyword pattern-

['Women entrepreneurs' (topic only) OR 'Women Entrepreneurship' (topic only) OR 'Female Entrepreneurs' (topic only) OR 'Female Entrepreneurship' (topic only) AND 'Micro Enterprises' (topic only) OR 'Women Micro Entrepreneurship' (topic only), OR 'Women Micro-Entrepreneurs' (topic only), (REFINED TO- '2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023), (REFINED TO- "Articles only"), (REFINED TO – "NOT Proceeding Papers, Book Chapter"), (REFINED TO- "English")].

Table 1. Systematic Review of Search Process

| Particulars | Filters | No. of articles remains after applying filters | Data Analysis (with the help of VOSviewer and Biblioshiny) |
|-------------------|--|--|---|
| Keywords | ['Women entrepreneurs' (topic only) OR 'Women Entrepreneurship' (topic only) OR 'Female Entrepreneurs' (topic only) OR 'Female Entrepreneurship' (topic only) AND 'Micro Enterprises' (topic only) OR 'Women Micro Entrepreneurship' (topic only), OR 'Women Micro-Entrepreneurs'] | n =3285 | Main information Annual Scientific production Highly Relevant Sources Highly Impactful Local Sources Sources evaluation using Bradford Law |
| Time frame | 2018,2019,2020,2021,2022,2023 | n =1918 | Most Relevant Authors Top cited documents |
| Type of document | Articles only | n =1699 | Authors' productivity using Lotka law |
| Not document type | Proceeding papers, Book chapter | n=1694 | Network visualization maps of co-cited authors and keyword |
| Language | English | n =1677 | Trending topics Most cited countries Conceptual structure analysis |

4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Results of bibliometric analysis

This section includes a brief description of the whole data that is selected for study purposes and annual scientific publications (see Table 2). It demonstrates that the information was obtained from 2018 and 2023. 130 documents were taken into account for this research which concludes 74 sources, such as books, journals, etc., total authors are 396, single-authored documents are 9. The total number of references is 8573, the authors' keywords are 453, and 417 total keyword pluses (words that appear repeatedly or more than once in the titles of referenced publications). Figure 2 represents the annual scientific production of articles starting from 2018 to 2023. As we can see in the figure, 15 articles have been published in 2018, 16 articles in 2019, 17 articles in 2020, 16 articles in 2021, 26 articles in 2022, and 32 in 2023. The figure shows an increasing trend in publications from 2021. Results concluded that a maximum number of publications were published in 2023 ($n = 32$) and the lowest number of publications were recorded in 2018 ($n = 15$) (see Table 3).

Table 2. Descriptive overview data on Women Micro- entrepreneurs

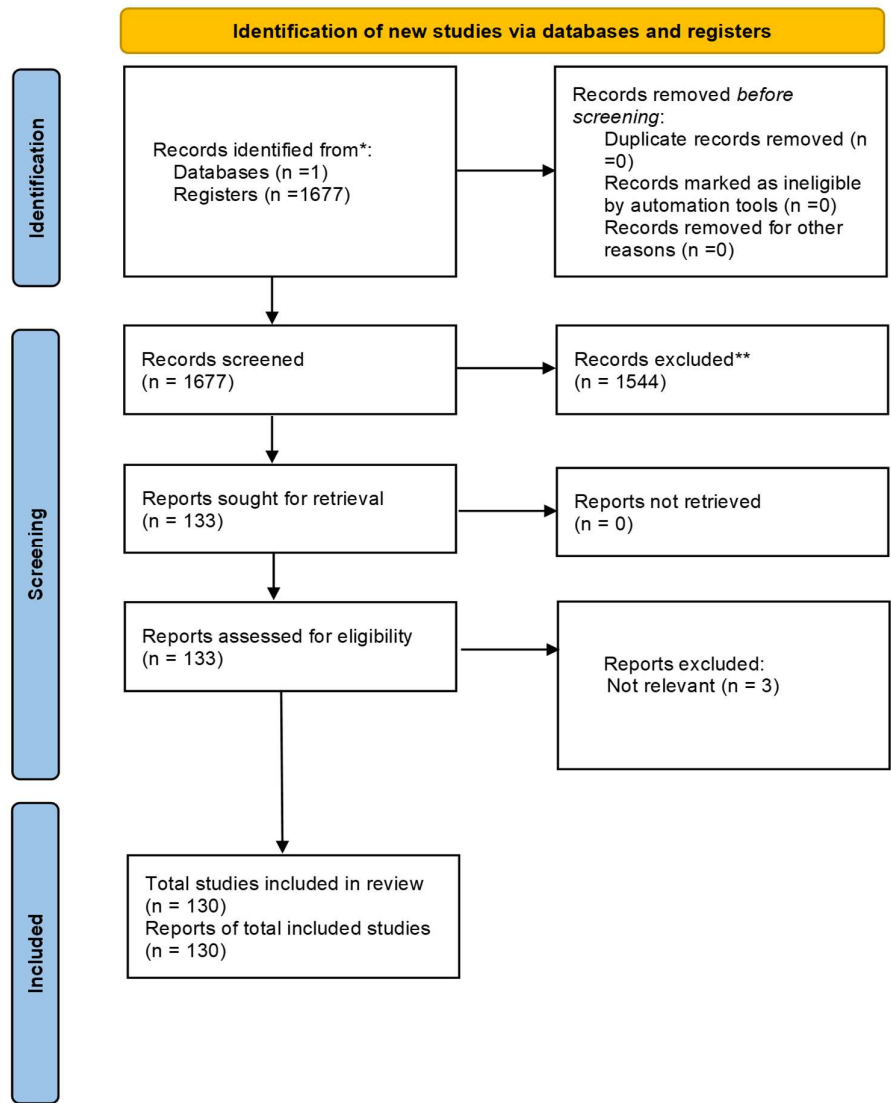
| Description | Criteria | Results |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Primary data-related information | Period | 2018-2023 |
| | Sources | 74 |
| | Documents | 130 |
| | References | 8573 |
| | Average citation per document | 12.51 |
| Document Type | | |
| Document Content | Articles only | 130 |
| | Keyword plus (ID) | 417 |
| Authors | Authors Keywords | 453 |
| | Authors | 396 |
| Author Collaboration | Author of single-authored documents | 9 |
| | Co-author per document | |
| | Single-authored documents | 3.18 |
| | International co-authorships % | 9 |
| | | 50.77 |

(Source- Author's elaboration using Biblioshiny software)

4.1.1 Sources evaluation

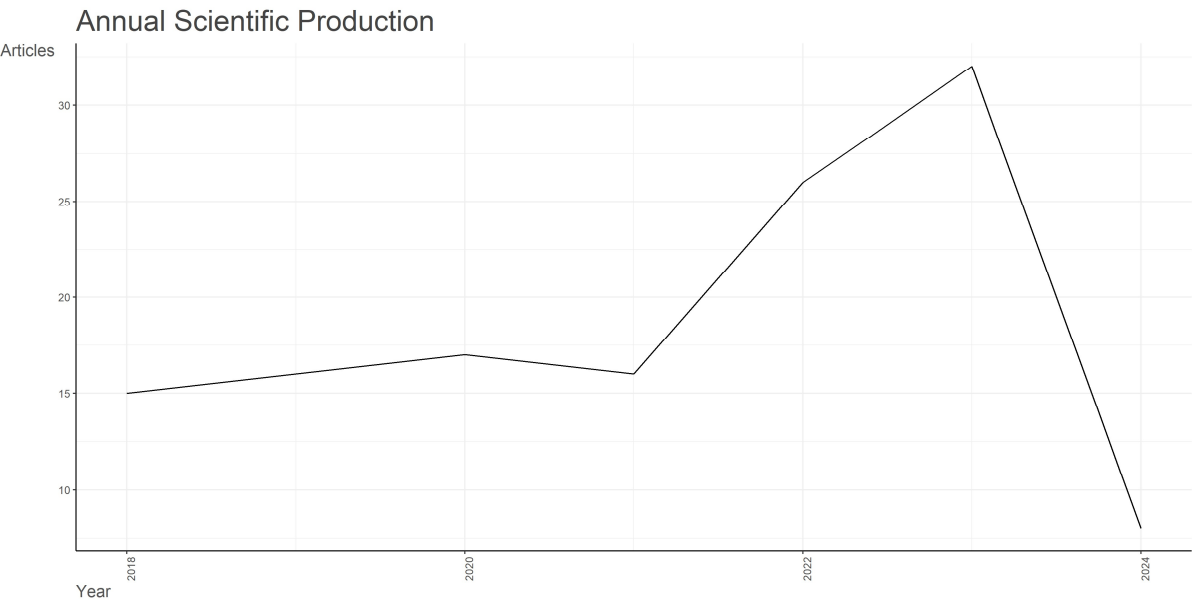
This section contains details about the most relevant sources and also the relevant sources according to Bradford's Law. Table 4 shows information regarding the top ten relevant sources based on selected data. As we can see Sustainability has published 11 articles, followed by International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour ($n = 9$), Small Business Economics ($n = 7$), Entrepreneurship and Regional Development ($n = 4$) and the list goes on. The sustainability journal ranked as the source that has published the highest no. of articles on women' micro-entrepreneurship and the Journal of Business Ethics ranked as lowest ($n = 3$) among the list of top ten Journals. Metrics are summarised in Table 5- h-index, total citations, number of articles and start year for publishing. To rank the top ten sources, employ the H-index. The h-index can be used to assess journal performance in addition to being designed to quantify the findings of individual researchers (Ding et al., 2020). Table 5 represents the list of the most impactful local sources. It demonstrates that "International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research" comes in first place having an h-index of 7, then "Sustainability", with h-indexes of 5. "Gender In Management" journal has the lowest h-index (2). The situation is rather different when looking at total citations, with "Journal of Small Business Management" in the lead, followed by "International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research". Both of these journals received the highest citations. "Sustainability" has the most publications on women in micro-entrepreneurship—eleven—followed by the three open-access publications mentioned (International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research, Small Business Economics, Entrepreneurship and Regional Development).

Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart for Systematic Evaluation



(Source- Haddaway et al., 2021)

Figure 2. Annual Scientific publications



(Source- Biblioshiny software)

Table 3. Analysis of Annual Scientific Production

| Year | Articles Published |
|------|--------------------|
| 2018 | 15 |
| 2019 | 16 |
| 2020 | 17 |
| 2021 | 16 |
| 2022 | 26 |
| 2023 | 32 |

Table 4. Most Relevant Sources

(Source- Biblioshiny software)

| Most Relevant Sources | Articles |
|--|----------|
| 'Sustainability' | 11 |
| 'International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour' | 9 |
| 'Small Business Economics' | 7 |
| 'Entrepreneurship and Regional development' | 4 |
| 'Heliyon' | 4 |
| 'Journal of Business Research' | 4 |
| 'Asian Women' | 3 |
| 'Development Southern Africa' | 3 |
| 'International Journal of Emerging Markets' | 3 |
| 'Journal of Business Ethics' | 3 |

Table 5. Most Impactful Local Sources

| Sources | H-Index | Total Citations | NP | PY Start |
|---|---------|-----------------|----|----------|
| International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research | 7 | 134 | 9 | 2018 |
| Sustainability | 5 | 108 | 11 | 2019 |
| Journal of Business Ethics | 3 | 73 | 3 | 2019 |
| Journal of Small Business Management | 3 | 255 | 3 | 2019 |
| Small Business Economics | 3 | 27 | 7 | 2018 |
| Asian Women | 2 | 12 | 3 | 2020 |
| Development of Southern Africa | 2 | 10 | 3 | 2020 |
| Entrepreneurship and Regional Development | 2 | 19 | 4 | 2019 |
| Entrepreneurship Research Journal | 2 | 11 | 2 | 2022 |
| Gender in Management | 2 | 13 | 2 | 2020 |

(Source – Biblioshiny software)

Figure 3 shows source evaluation using Bradford's law. Under Bradford's law total number of articles is divided into 3 groups, each consists one-third of all articles. This figure shows that journals like *Sustainability*, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, *Small Business Economics*, *Asian Women*, and *Heliyon* fall under Zone 1 Journals (i.e. core journals), Journals like '*Journal of Business Ethics*', '*International Journal of Emerging Markets*', '*Gender In Management*', '*Management Decision*' fall under Zone 2 and Journals like '*Economic Journal*', '*Economic Modelling*', '*Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*', '*Business History and Review*' fall under Zone 3 journals (i.e., Secondary Journals). Table 6 briefly presents different Journals that fall under different zones.

Figure 3. Sources evaluation using Bradford's Law

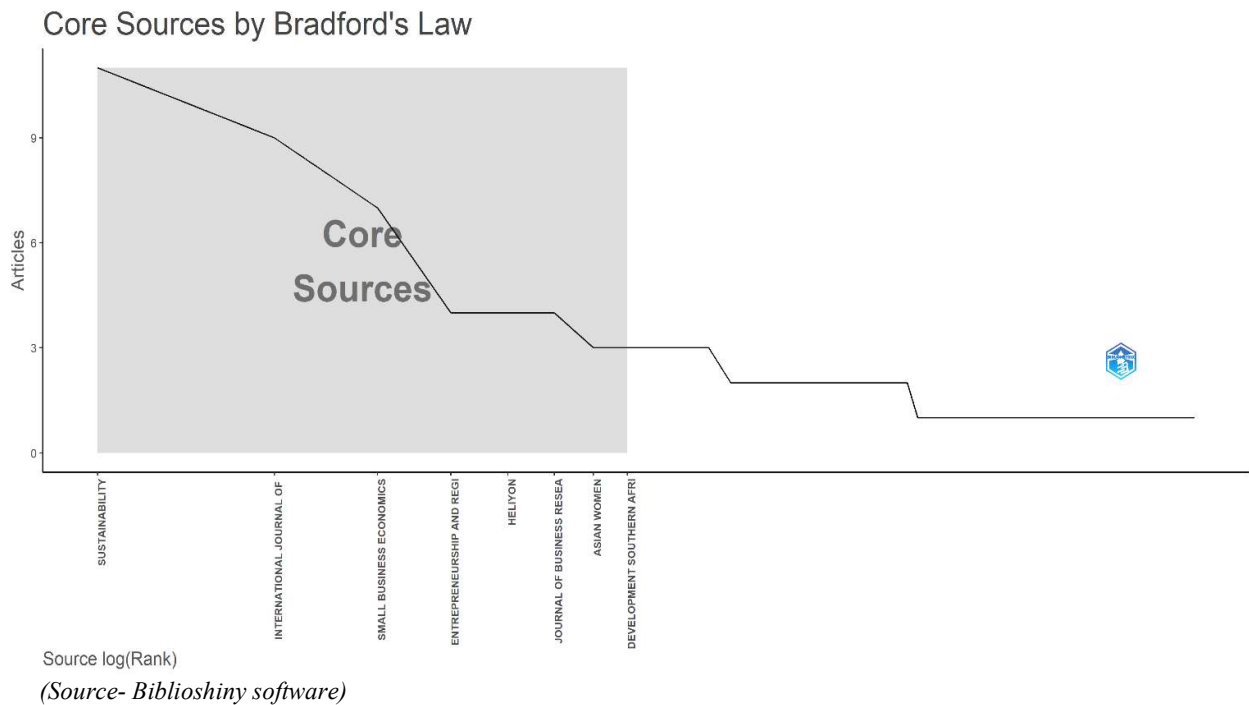


Table 6. Source evaluation using Bradford Law

| Source | Zones |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Small Business Economics</i> | Zone 1 |
| <i>Sustainability</i> | Zone 1 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| <i>International Journal of Emerging Markets</i> | Zone 2 |
| <i>Gender In Management</i> | Zone 2 |
| <i>Economic Journal</i> | Zone 3 |
| <i>Economic Modelling</i> | Zone 3 |

(Source- Biblioshiny software)

4.1.2 Authors' information

This section includes information about the authors who published articles on women micro-entrepreneurs. [Table 7](#) shows the list of the top ten relevant authors. As the table reveals Chatterjee S. has published the highest number of articles (n=2), followed by Clemente-Almendros JA who also published 2 articles, then Gonzalez-Gonzalez I (n=2), Gupta SD (n=2), and so on. [Table 8](#) shows the top ten globally cited documents of our study. [Pergelova's](#) document titled '*Democratizing Entrepreneurship? Digital Technologies and the Internationalization of Female-Led SMEs*' received the highest number of citations (n=113), then, Gupta VK's article named '*Gender Characterizations in Entrepreneurship: A Multi-Level Investigation of Sex-Role Stereotypes about High-Growth, Commercial, and Social Entrepreneurs*' received second highest citations (n89). Pham T's article '*Discrimination, Social Capital, and Financial Constraints: The Case of Viet Nam*' has 75 citations, whereas Wellalage NH article titled '*Corruption, Gender, and Credit Constraints: Evidence from South Asian SMEs*' has been placed on the tenth position as it received 51 citations only. [Figure 4](#) shows the author's productivity through Lotka's Law. According to Lotka law analysis, 379 authors wrote 1 document only and 17 authors wrote 2 documents.

Table 7. Most Relevant Authors

| Authors | Articles | Article Fractionalized |
|-----------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Chatterjee S | 2 | 0.67 |
| Clemente-Almendros Ja | 2 | 0.50 |
| González-González I | 2 | 0.50 |
| Gupta Sd | 2 | 0.67 |
| Han L | 2 | 0.48 |
| Jiménez-Zarco Ai | 2 | 0.50 |
| Kaciak E | 2 | 0.50 |
| Kalnins A | 2 | 0.83 |
| Laguía A | 2 | 0.50 |
| Moriano Ja | 2 | 0.50 |

(Source- biblioshiny software)

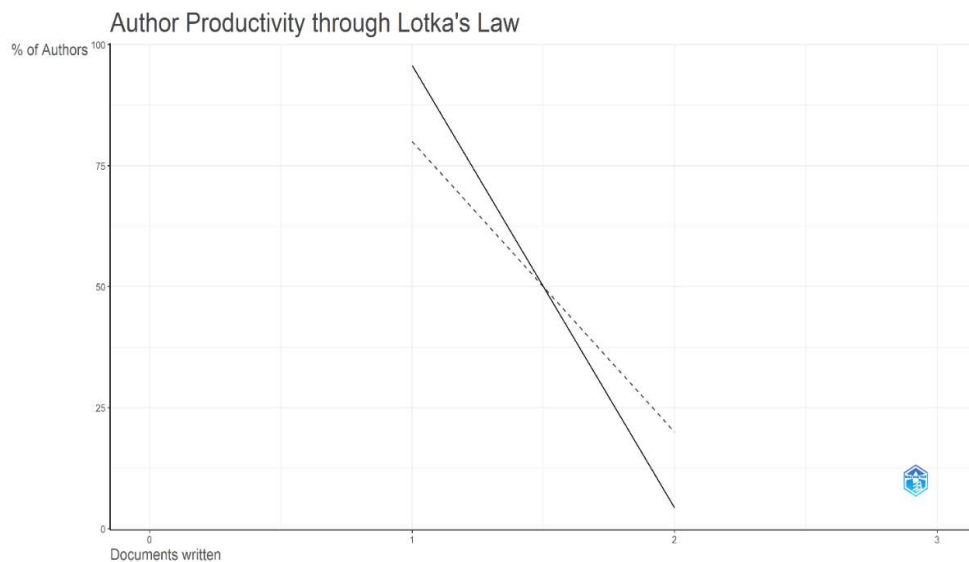
Table 8. Top Ten Global Cited Documents

| Author | Year | Title | Sources | Total Citations |
|----------------------------------|------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Albena Pergelova | 2019 | 'Democratizing Entrepreneurship? Digital Technologies and the Internationalization of Female-Led SMEs' | Journal of Small Business Management | 113 |
| Gupta VK | 2019 | 'Gender Characterizations in Entrepreneurship: A Multi-Level Investigation of Sex-Role Stereotypes about High-Growth, Commercial, and Social Entrepreneurs' | Journal of Small Business Management | 89 |
| Pham T | 2018 | 'Discrimination, Social Capital, and Financial Constraints: The Case of Viet Nam' | World Development | 75 |

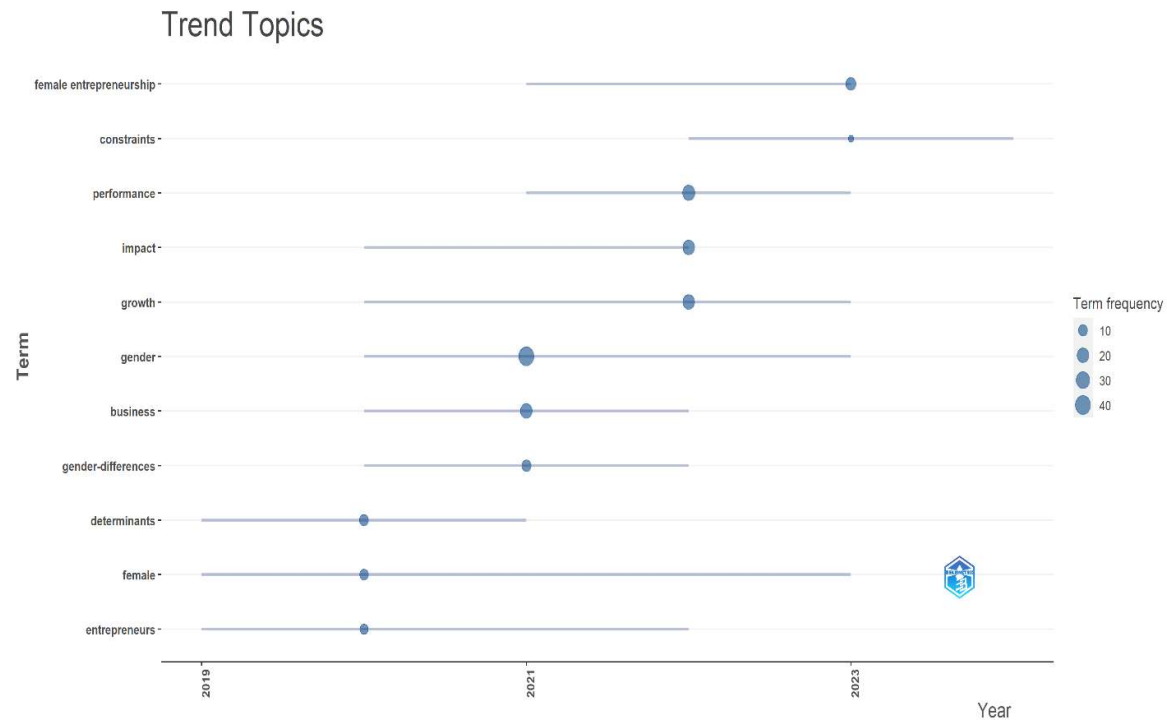
| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------|---|--|----|
| Welsh DHB | 2018 | 'Determinants of women entrepreneurs' firm performance in a hostile environment' | Journal of Business Research | 65 |
| Crittenden VL | 2019 | 'Empowering women micro-entrepreneurs in emerging economies: The role of information communications technology' | Journal of Business Research | 60 |
| Ozkazanc-Pan B | 2018 | 'Networking towards (in)equality: Women entrepreneurs in technology' | Gender, Work, and Organization | 53 |
| Ngoasong MZ | 2019 | 'Why Hurry? The Slow Process of High Growth in Women-Owned Businesses in a Resource-Scarce Context' | Journal of Small Business Management | 53 |
| Yang TT | 2019 | 'Set Up to Fail: Explaining When Women-Led Businesses Are More Likely to Fail' | Southern Management Association | 52 |
| Gupta N | 2018 | 'Investigating entrepreneurial success factors of women-owned SMEs in UAE' | Management Decision | 51 |
| Wellalage NH | 2019 | 'Corruption, Gender and Credit Constraints: Evidence from South Asian SMEs' | Journal Of Business Ethics | 51 |

(Source- Author's elaboration using Biblioshiny software)

Figure 4. Author's Productivity using Lotka's Law



[Figure 5](#) revealed various clusters formed with the help of VOSviewer based on co-citations of cited authors. Total of 6 clusters have been created by the software which is differentiated by different colours. Cluster 1 includes authors like Acs ZJ, Aidis R, Banerjee A, Block J etc and cluster 2 has total of 62 items some of them includes



(Source- Biblioshiny software)

Table 9. Most Cited Countries of the Study

| Countries | Total Citations | AAC |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| United States of America | 417 | 20.90 |
| UK | 249 | 17.80 |
| Canada | 121 | 40.30 |
| India | 93 | 11.60 |
| China | 81 | 8.10 |
| Lebanon | 59 | 29.50 |
| Spain | 53 | 7.60 |
| New Zealand | 51 | 51.00 |
| United Arab Emirates | 51 | 51.00 |
| Australia | 44 | 8.80 |

AAC-Average Article Citations

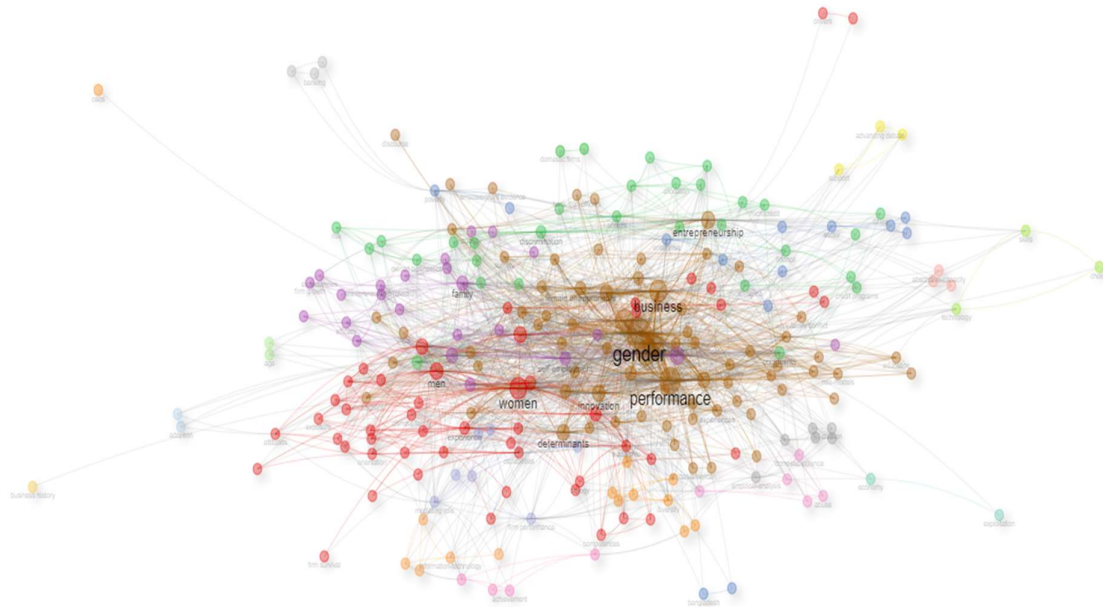
(Source- Biblioshiny software)

4.1.3 Conceptual Structure

This section includes the Thematic map analysis network, Factorial analysis, and topic dendrogram prepared with the help of biblioshiny (R-package). [Figure 8](#) shows a thematic map network of various clusters which has been created based on the development degree and relevance degree and author's keywords of the selected data. Words like Women, intentions, perspective, perceptions, experiences fall under Cluster 1. Cluster 2 includes poverty, enterprise, creation, culture, sector, entrepreneurs so forth. Analysis based on the keywords plus, Gender, performance, growth, female entrepreneurship, family, work, efficacy, entrepreneurship research etc. are among the relevant issues that have a potential to develop soon as these have low development and high relevance degree. Using MCA (multiple correspondence analysis) based on keywords plus, [figure 9](#) shows how the keywords were grouped into three clusters. Cluster 1 (red) consists of self-efficacy, perceptions, men, females, discrimination, and challenges. Cluster 2 (blue) includes microfinance, access, and credit. Cluster 3 (green) deals with barriers, motivations, and developing countries. [Figure 10](#) demonstrates the topic dendrogram generated with

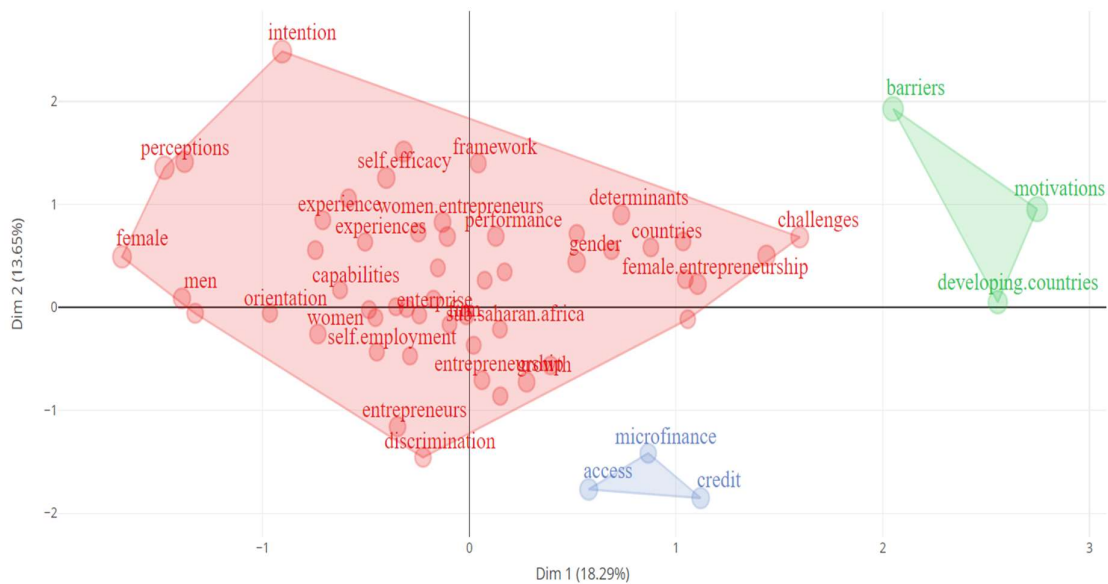
the help of bibliometrics software of fifty terms based on the titles of relevant literature in the field. The analysis uses multiple correspondence analysis techniques to reveal hierarchical relationships and order of concepts. Three groups are selected from the clusters: women in micro-entrepreneurship blue strand includes three words with 1.57 inertia, the green strand includes 3 words with 1.22 inertia and the purple strand includes 52 words with 2.15 inertia.

Figure 8. Thematic Map Network



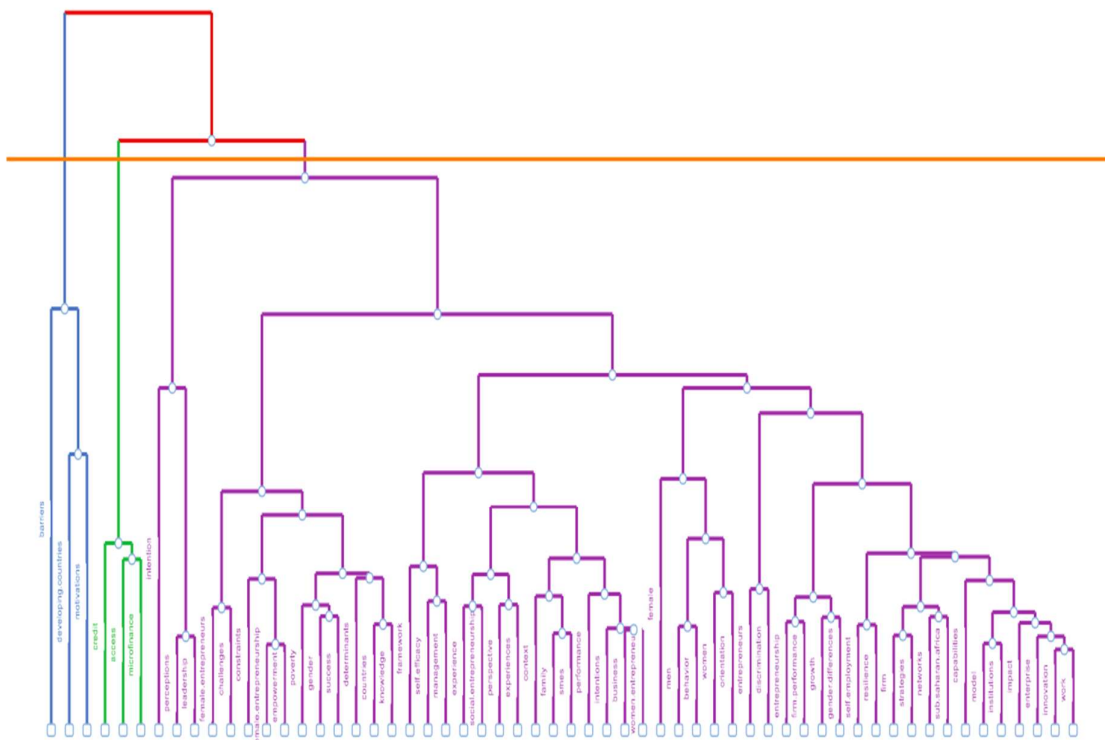
(Source- Biblioshiny software)

19775



(Source- Biblioshiny software)

Figure 10. Topic Dendrogram

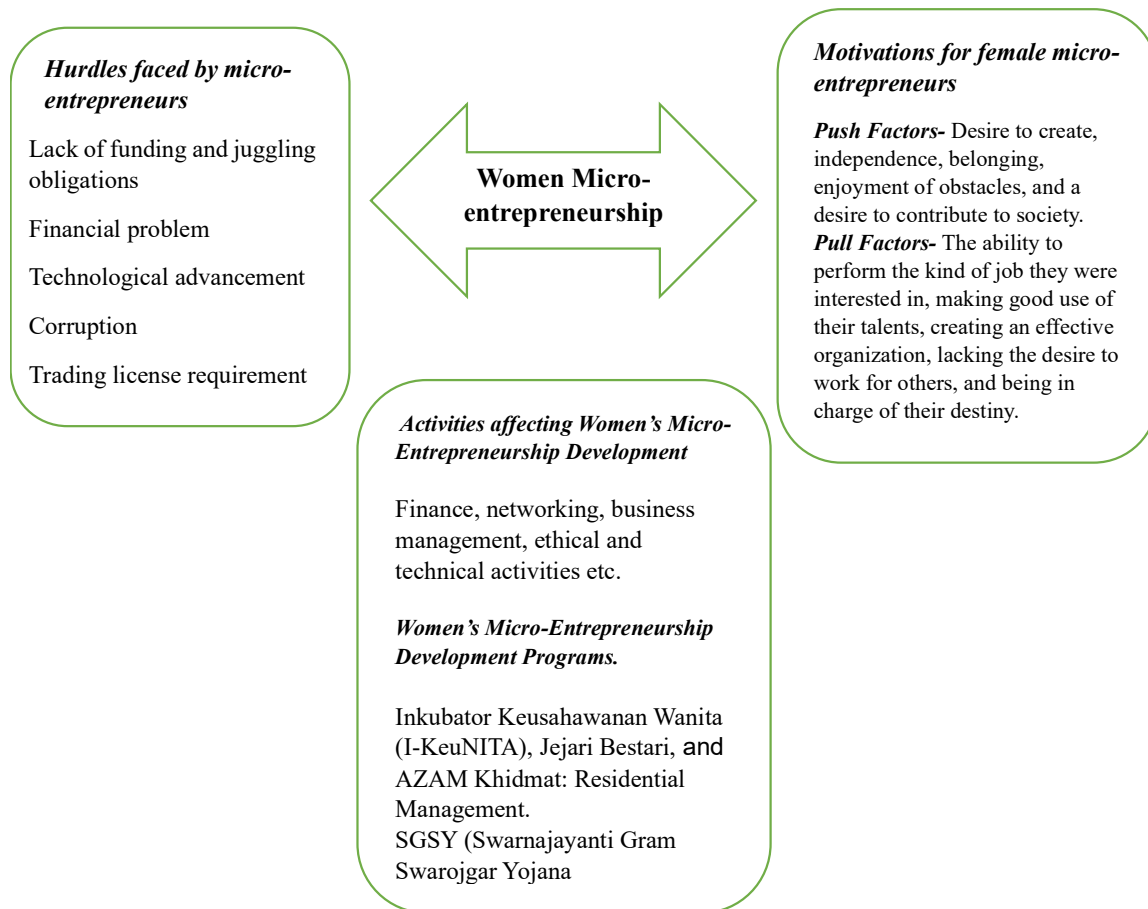


(Source- Biblioshiny software)

4.2 Results of the literature study

The research from the WoS archive reveals that women are somewhat empowered through business development, improving their independence, decision-making capacity, and social status. However, obstacles remain, such as a lack of basic amenities, financial support, technical assistance, and government policies. The government should provide equal opportunities for men and women, stimulate their entrepreneurial spirit, and encourage participation in regional and municipal trade shows. The government should also establish formal women's business organizations and networks to better represent female entrepreneurs, share resources, and introduce them to mentors and investors. [Figure 11](#) below represents a brief overview of all dimensions identified from the selected literature.

Figure 11. Dimensions of women micro-entrepreneurship



4.2.1 Hurdles confronted by Female micro-entrepreneurs

Obstacles that female micro-entrepreneurs must overcome are identified by the studies. To ascertain the primary barriers preventing their growth, the obstacles presented by the external environment and the shortcomings in their areas of expertise are evaluated. Findings indicate that these micro-entrepreneurs (MEs) face challenges like *lack of funding and juggling obligations*. The former is most significant for microentrepreneurs working in the manufacturing sector, while the latter presents the greatest difficulty for those working in the services sector ([Majumdar et al., 2023](#)). *The financial problem* refers to the amount of capital that is needed to start any business. Leveraging the money they've saved, they begin their own business, borrow funds from pals or family or inherited money. ([Ferdousi et al, 2019](#)), ([Baral et al, 2023](#)). Common obstacles include juggling job and family obligations, low self-esteem, a lack of related business knowledge, shyness along with hesitation in workplaces, a lack of formal funding because of inadequate collateral, marketing concerns, and a shortage of suitable locations for businesses ([Cesaroni et al., 2018](#)). In developing nations like India, women are still viewed as family supporters in terms of taking care of children and other family relatives. Even their husband does not support them in starting their own business. They always have to beg constantly for insignificant things specifically in rural locations.

Here, true equality doesn't exist. They consistently disregard the decisions they've made. It is assumed that men will only become entrepreneurs because they are the only ones who make decisions. Male business owners thus become obstacles to female business owners' success. In this era of technological change, rural women micro-entrepreneurs which has low literacy levels can't be able to employ *new technologies*. Despite receiving training and development opportunities, they are sometimes lacking the awareness of how to apply them. When market competitiveness is too high, these females do not use advanced technologies when compared to male business owners. In the course of their employment, micro-entrepreneurs encounter numerous obstacles. Among the most significant difficulties encountered by women-owned firms is the scarcity of venture and running capital. Acquiring appropriate pricing access to markets is another problem. *Corruption* is also an obstacle in the way of these entrepreneurs. It refers to the bribe that is demanded for basic services by officials ([Lladós-Masllorens and Ruiz-Dotras, 2021](#)). Other obstacles include imposing *the trading license requirement* after loan approval and saving entrepreneurs whose applications are rejected the trade license costs. There is a dire need for government intervention in the form of low-interest loans and the regulatory bodies should ensure to make such kind of policies which demand minimal collateral in exchange for funds. In India, shortage of startup assistance or guidance, problems with infrastructure, inaction of government assistance initiatives, and societal conditioning that does not encourage female entrepreneurial personalities all seriously impede the growth of female micro-entrepreneurs. Women micro-entrepreneurs have little chance to *network* with people outside of the family, particularly with men, therefore their prospects to connect with other enterprises can be restricted to women-owned businesses ([Monnickendam-Givon et al., 2018](#)). The development of a modern, *adequate infrastructure* is beneficial to the expansion of the micro-sector. However, it is hindered by the fact that a sizable portion of this industry in India is headquartered in Tier 2 and smaller cities, which lack essential infrastructure amenities like good roads, power, and water supplies ([Mannar, 2019](#)). Self-help groups have emerged as a helping hand to these entrepreneurs that not only support in generating income but also improve the decision-making capabilities of these entrepreneurs. These groups also help in improving the standard of living and social appreciation in families as well as in society ([Chakraborty et al., 2019](#)). It turned out that the accomplishments of female entrepreneurs within microscale businesses were significantly influenced by *economic issues*. Deposits, spending, creating jobs, managing credit, taking part in business decision-making, and so on are some of these aspects ([Senapati and Ojha, 2019](#)). Certain research demonstrated that there are differences between male and women business owners but some don't agree with this statement. Also, industries have been recognized from the literature that is promoted by women micro-entrepreneurs which includes handicrafts, embroidery, beauty parlors, cooking services, etc.

4.2.2 Motivations for female micro-entrepreneurs

Some motivations identified that drive women micro-entrepreneurs. It demonstrates that the expectations women have regarding themselves or their families—such as financial security, self-reliance, flexibility, and a societal life—are the main reasons why they pick micro-business. The study suggests that "necessity" and "choice" are co-present in the motives to enter micro-entrepreneurship. Income generation, autonomy, flexibility, and spatial boundaries are important outcomes, impacting women's social and spatial mobility. Entrepreneurship is often seen as an innate trait while others view it as an acquired ability influenced by personal motivations. That being said, not much is known about what motivates people to start their businesses. Sociologists suggest that understanding motivations is crucial for understanding how entrepreneurial behaviour is formed ([Khosravipour et al., 2021](#)).

Various studies revealed majorly two types of factors that motivate women micro-entrepreneurs i.e., push factors (factors that cause women to wish to get away from a specific circumstance) and pull factors (factors that attract women towards entrepreneurship). The only means of support, having a source of income of their own, not depending on their spouse's salary, desire to enhance their income, being unable to obtain paid employment, etc are instances of push factors. The ability to perform the kind of job they were interested in, making good use of their talents, creating an effective organization, lacking the desire to work for others, being in charge of their destiny, etc are some instances of pull factors ([Isaga, 2018](#)). The main driving pull factor behind entrepreneurship is dissatisfaction with employment, which is viewed as coming from different leaders and rigid work schedules. When their ideas are rejected, many people become quite frustrated and end up quitting their careers. This problem is additionally exacerbated by gender-consciousness and rigid time constraints. Throughout the growth of their firm, entrepreneurs are propelled by a variety of variables, with job discontent serving as the main driver ([Nguyen et al., 2020](#)).

According to the studies, push factors and financial incentives are not the main reasons why women establish their enterprises instead, intrinsic elements such as the desire to create, independence, belonging, enjoyment of obstacles, and a desire to contribute to society are what drive female entrepreneurs. Prior studies have validated that there are no driving forces and that there is no enthusiasm for financial rewards. The patriarchal society in which women are not required to go to work and can elect not to and non-materialistic life goals are the root reasons for this phenomenon. As a result, entrepreneurial motivations transcend egocentric or materialistic goals.

Many women who own micro or small businesses are categorized as more likely to be 'pushed' than 'pulled' to make extra money or augment their family incomes ([Tambunan, 2019](#)). The study reveals that reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship are impacted by factors like urban background, education level, and patriarchal cultural values. Women view careers as individual choices and formal and informal institutions do not significantly shape their motivations. Instead, women lack awareness about policy support and financial incentives.

4.2.3 Women Micro-entrepreneurship Development

The study identified many entrepreneurial activities that affect micro-entrepreneurial development. It includes finance, networking, business management, and ethical and technical activities. Indicators of technical activities include communication, use of computers, costing of products, and ethical activities include self-confidence, honesty, accountability, and respect for others ([Quagraine et al., 2018](#)). SHGs mostly generate female microentrepreneurs. Female entrepreneurs are viewed as growth-oriented forces. By lowering unemployment, particularly for women, producing income for the government, and improving human capital skills, female entrepreneurship helps the economy flourish. Not only India in fact, but various nations also focus on empowering women micro-entrepreneurs to contribute to the socio-economy. Throughout the nations, strategies relating to eliminating discriminatory policies, and boosting women's involvement in employment along with entrepreneurship and leadership roles have been adopted. Development programs like Inkubator Keusahawanan Wanita (I-KeuNITA), Jejari Bestari, and AZAM Khidmat: Residential Management have also been launched ([Ariffin et al., 2020](#)). The SGSY (Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana) in India was also introduced as an integrated initiative in 1999 to give rural impoverished people work opportunities. Through governmental assistance and training, it helps to organize them into Self-Help Groups.

5. CONCLUSION

This study reviewed literature on women's micro-entrepreneurship spanning from 2018 to 2023, encompassing 130 documents, 74 sources, and 396 authors. It observed a rising trend in research activity, particularly notable since 2021. Key journals in this domain include Sustainability, International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Small Business Economics, and Entrepreneurship and Regional Development. Notably, Chatterjee S. and Almendros JA. emerged as prolific contributors in this field. Despite significant citation numbers, there's a lack of quantitative publications and global collaborations, particularly involving India. Future research could address this gap by incorporating new databases and search criteria. Additionally, thematic mapping highlighted crucial topics such as gender, entrepreneurship, efficacy, and performance, suggesting avenues for further exploration.

Challenges faced by women micro-entrepreneurs include financial difficulties, social capital issues, corruption, and balancing work-family balance. Female entrepreneurs often suffer from low self-esteem, lack of commercial knowledge, shyness, and unwillingness to engage in business contacts. They also face challenges in accessing markets at reasonable prices and overcoming infrastructure bottlenecks. In developing nations like India, women are often viewed as family supporters and their husbands often do not support them in starting their businesses. Male business owners often act as obstacles to female entrepreneurs' success, highlighting the need for more support and resources for women in the entrepreneurial sector. Various studies examine policies and agencies responsible for improving women's micro-entrepreneurship, focusing on policy implementation and microfinance factors like savings, network affiliation, training, and credit access. The state plays a vibrant role in developing the socioeconomic situation and technological knowledge of female micro-entrepreneurs. More intensive training for micro-entrepreneurship development is needed, instead of just financial schemes.

As we can see, female micro-entrepreneurship has been the subject of extensive studies in the past, but there remains a need for more research in the future. This bibliometrics analysis demonstrates the wide range of possibilities to research female micro-entrepreneurship. This will cover areas related to Gender, Entrepreneurship, Women, performance, efficacy, innovation, perceptions etc. as shown by the thematic map analysis. Apart from these bibliometric results [table 10](#) shows future research directions from the literature studied.

Like every study, this particular one has some flaws. To start, while thorough, this evaluation has not been completed. The WOS dataset is used in the study. We suggest using Scopus along with other datasets for comparison and in-depth analysis for upcoming studies. Secondly, dissertations, book chapters, and books were not included in our study—only materials that had been published in scholarly publications were taken into consideration. Years for the respective study have been majorly limited to 2018-2023 only. To get more material, you may also consider other reliable sources. At last, these results can serve as a guide for subsequent investigation into the issue of female micro-entrepreneurs.

Table- 10. Potential research directions or questions based on SLR

| Themes | Future research questions and directions | References |
|--|---|--|
| Elements that Inspire Women Microbusiness Owners | In what ways can networking among women entrepreneurs lead to collaborative opportunities, goal alignment, and improved access to mentors and investors? How do the motives of women entrepreneurs in other regions of Tanzania compare to those identified in this study? | Shastri et al. (2019 a) Isaga (2018) |
| Factors affecting women micro-entrepreneurship | What other studies examine the cultural facets of micro-level female entrepreneurs in the United Arab Emirates as well as India? How do education as well as incubating support affect female entrepreneurs' motivations and lessen the difficulties they face? What are the various aspects of entrepreneurial finance including MSME financing challenges based on location, asset structure, and age, along with a focus on financing constraints and practices among MSME owners? Does the impact of business characteristics like age, asset composition, and location affect MSME financing issues in addition to exploring the financial practices & financing limitations of MSME holders? | Rao et al (2023) Shastri et al (2021 b) Mahato et al (2022) Mittal et al (2021) |
| Women micro-entrepreneurship development | How does the inclusion of participants from additional tribes in the study affect the knowledge of indigenous women' participation in the handloom business and are there significant variations in their experiences? How may a more thorough qualitative studies approach be used in the future to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between female empowerment & entrepreneurship? | Hazarika and Goswami (2018) Chatterjee et al. (2018) |

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Declaration of conflicting interests

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