

# A Qualitative Study Of Successful Women Entrepreneurs Of First Generation In Education Sector

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## **Abstract**

Women's entrepreneurship is capturing attention and significance in the glare of shreds of evidence concerning the contribution of females in business creation and economic development. It is evident that second-generation women entrepreneurs have to push ahead with legacy, contrary to those first-generation women entrepreneurs have to confront numerous challenges at various stages of the business. Therefore, this study aims at exploring the driving forces that influence the choice of these women to commence and manage their ventures successfully in the education sector. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with eight first-generation women entrepreneurs from north India. The qualitative study was conducted with the application of content analysis. The findings of the study revealed eight major themes, which contain: motivation, support network, selection of particular business, overcoming hindrances, managerial skills, mentors, customer loyalty, and success accountable for the achievement of first-generation women entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** Women entrepreneurship, success, education sector, qualitative study

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is one of the potent remedies for contemporary economic problems owing to its multi-dimensional effects in the form of increased production, employment, wealth, innovation, and overall development of the nation. Apart from eradicating economic problems, entrepreneurship is assumed to remove social problems also, by empowering different sections of society, especially women. Many stakeholders have acknowledged women as the crucial untapped source for economic growth and development (Minniti & Naude, 2010). Women display more influence of

optimism on their entrepreneurial success compared to men. (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). In the words of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam “Empowering women is a prerequisite for developing a good nation; when women are empowered, the society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is crucial as their value system leads to the development of a good family, society and ultimately a good nation.” The economic development of today’s women is essential for the economic development of any country as women constitute the almost half population of the nation. The economic system built upon the service sector has been creating various entrepreneurial

opportunities for females that can raise their economic and social development.

Traditionally, in developing nations like India, women's activities were confined to the home. The traits of obedience, submissiveness, self-denial, modesty and adaptability are deep-rooted in the girl since childhood and ultimately to gain acceptability in the society, she ends up sacrificing her self-image. These deep-rooted sociocultural norms dominate their career decision and often restrict their entry into business ventures. It is noteworthy that the status of women is changing rapidly due to education, urbanization, globalization, and industrialization, especially after liberalization in India. Presently more and more Indian women are coming forward to start their ventures, some out of necessity, some to fulfill their desire, some to gain personal satisfaction, recognition, and status and explore newer vistas.

However, most new businesses are fragile and often fail due to some reason. Globally around three-fourth of new startups are wiped out within the first five years (Artinger & Powell, 2015; Cader & Leatherman, 2011). It has been noticed that practically one generation used to hand over the business to another generation which is known as 'Second Generation Entrepreneurs'. As they have received a mature business, it is easy even for women to continue these ventures. Their objective, challenges, and problems are quite different from first-generation entrepreneurs. The Second-generation women entrepreneurs with experience and establishment have to carry forward a legacy but the first-generation women entrepreneurs have to face various challenges about raising capital, business operations, searching and developing markets, and balancing work life. These

women require endless support and encouragement to take entrepreneurship as a career. The purpose of this study is to explore what factors influence the choice of women to start and manage their venture successfully in the education sector.

Worldwide, considerable studies have been conducted on women entrepreneurs regarding various aspects like challenges, opportunities, and barriers to their accomplishment. But insufficient research has been done on successful first-generation women entrepreneurs, and particularly in the education sector. This gap gave an impetus for the present study, which looks at the qualitative aspect of the successful first-generation women entrepreneurs in the education sector of north India with an emphasis on sole proprietary women entrepreneurs.

### **Literature Review**

Many researchers have attempted to depict that there is indeed a gender gap in the entrepreneurial intentions of various individuals (Hisrich & Peters, 2002; Haus et al., 2013; Santos, Roomi, & Liñan, 2016). Haus et al. (2013) reinforced the gender gap in entrepreneurial intentions through the exploration and critical analysis of different articles based on the planned behavior theory and the role congruity theory.

Thebaud (2015) investigated the different stereotypes about male and female entrepreneurial skills and abilities. He found that gender status beliefs are generally favorable for male entrepreneurs but unfavorable for female entrepreneurs. The mindset of the society of stereotypical women leads to gender biases that relate to the challenges that women face. (Dixit & Moid, 2015; Gundry et al., 2013). Several

other scholars have provided evidence that female entrepreneurs experience gender-based biases regarding accessing funds from investors as compared to their male counterparts. (Jayawarna, Woodhams, & Jones, 2012; Alsos & Ljunggren, 2016; Welsh, Kaciak, & Minialai, 2015).

Leyla Sarfaraz, Nezameddin Faghih, and Armaghan Asadi Majd (2014) identified numerous factors, which include gender composition, quality, and type of entrepreneurial activity that affect the economy. Women's entrepreneurship and gender equality are key factors in economic development. They studied the relationship between gender-related economic development and women's entrepreneurial activity. They highlighted the relationship between gender-related development indices (by the United Nations) and various stages of women's entrepreneurial activity (by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) and argued that female entrepreneurial activity is not notably correlated with gender equality.

Dawson and Henley (2015) argued that male entrepreneurs are more likely to choose high-risk and high-return ventures, as compared to female entrepreneurs due to the uncertain nature of entrepreneurship. This ability makes male neophyte entrepreneurs the actual entrepreneurs who enjoy success.

Noemi Oggero, Maria Cristina Rossi & Elisa Ughetto (2020) studied the attitudes towards the entrepreneurship of Italian households, using the bank of Italy SHIW dataset, focusing on financial literacy and digital skills as relevant factors fostering entrepreneurship. They discovered a positive and significant correlation between financial literacy, digital skills, and the likelihood of being an entrepreneur in men only.

Alsos and Ljunggren (2016) analyzed the decisions of funding for a venture capital fund by applying signaling theory for both genders. They found that gender plays an important role in the signals that are communicated in the investor-entrepreneur relationship before funding, which may influence the investment decision.

In a new study in five different districts of Assam, Hazarika & Goswami, (2018) conducted a study on tribal women to examine the factors that influence their decision to start a handloom micro-enterprise. They found that access to borrowing, risk-taking behavior, age, and history of the family business; have a positive impact on a woman's decision to become an entrepreneur.

The study by Kashyap & Bordoloi (2020) focused on the impact of socioeconomic elements on the empowerment of women entrepreneurs. They found that income generated from the enterprises is the most significant factor that encourages women to start their enterprises and contributes to economic empowerment for women.

Eddleston, Kellermanns, Floyd, Crittenden, and Crittenden (2013) propounded that strategic planning and succession planning are most conducive to the growth of first-generation firms and entrepreneurs who developed and adhered to that, consequently experienced fewer failures.

Regarding leadership style, Vincent-Haper, Muser, and Janneck (2012) found a significant variation among males and females. They put forward that females are more likely to promote and implement

transformational leadership as compared to their counterparts. They reinforced that gender differences exist in transformational leadership, which has a direct effect on the success of the company. Fahed-Sreih and Morin-Delerm (2012) pointed out those small business owners who lack leadership skills cannot motivate and develop loyal employees, which leads to the failure of the organizations.

In another research conducted in educational institutions in South Africa, Lumby and Azaola (2014) asserted that members of the educational institute discern women principals as mother figures. This trait was considered an asset in discharging their responsibilities as a leader and positively shaped their development as leaders.

Despite the prevalence of different studies regarding the lagging of women in terms of skills and competency as leaders Cheung and Halpern (2010) asserted that females are outperforming males at different levels in various industries, including male-dominated sectors, such as finance, manufacturing, and construction. They described the traits of successful women leaders which include: teamwork and consensus building, the effective work-family interface, and relationship-oriented leadership.

Recently Rastogi et al. (2021) highlighted in their study that successful women entrepreneurs focus on innovation, service, generation of wealth & employment and more importantly they are opportunity-driven. The support of family, mainly from the father/husband is a significant motivating factor that helps them to pursue their passion and ultimately become a successful leader.

## Methodology

The researcher has used an exploratory qualitative approach for the study. When the topics are in a specific context, like the role and behaviors of individuals, qualitative study methods provide the best results (Lodico et al., 2010). A qualitative methodology facilitates obtaining a new attitude related to the familiar condition, visualizing and explaining unstudied variables, and simplifying the relations among those areas that had no evident relations before (Burns et al. 2009). The qualitative research method is suitable mostly for research where the variables are unknown and the main objective is to explore (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative method allows the researcher to focus on the implications and significances that are difficult to recognize with the quantitative method. (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 2009). For this research, a qualitative study was valuable in examining the variables and details of how various factors affects women's choices to become successful entrepreneur.

Successful first-generation women entrepreneurs are not easily found but they often have contact with each other. Considering this fact snowball sampling technique was used to recognize them, so the strategy was made to find out the participants with the help of the first one. The researcher reached out to a women entrepreneur he knew, who fit the criteria then she was requested to introduce other participants, which garnered more participants through the network of these women. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews approximately 50-60 minutes in duration. To get accurate information and provide comfort to the participants, the researcher informed them before the start of the interview that

they were free to end the interview at any time, without any consequences, if they are offended. In-depth interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs at their places and available time to ensure that they could respond freely. The researcher followed the semi-structured approach to unveil the feelings of the entrepreneurs, wherein the questions were raised without a particular sequence and additional questions were added to seek clarification and deeper insights (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Ramadan, 2017). This technique allowed participants to determine their answers to open-ended questions and facilitated establishing a depth of understanding. The interviews were recorded to maintain the accuracy of the data and the outcome of the words. The data was collected from ten women entrepreneurs, out of those two cases were rejected due to incomplete information and eight were analyzed to identify the themes.

The researcher employed the content analysis approach for the assessment of data. Each participant was provided a unique code to protect her identity. The researcher performed the data analysis, using the Nvivo software to improve the proper organization and accurate handling of data. The process commenced with word-by-word transcribing of collected data and in-depth readings and analysis of the interviews to extract the meaning units. The excess data was reduced and condensed meaning units were extracted by abbreviating the text. Afterward, the condensed text was abstracted, raised to a

**Table 1:** Demographic analysis

S.No	Entrepreneur	Age	Education	Place	Years in Business
1.	Respondent 1	50	MBA	Delhi	10
2.	Respondent 2	38	MSC, B Ed	Delhi	7

higher logical level, and codes were allocated. To ensure that none of the code was missed the procedure was reviewed and codes were rechecked to find homogenous and supplementary codes. Subsequently, the codes with identical content were sorted out into sub-themes, and eventually, these sub-themes were systematically placed into eight dominant themes, depicting a clear picture of the hidden content.

## Results and Discussion

This study covered only those educational institutions which had been working for at least five years. Table 1 reveals the demographic analysis of the participants. The data was collected from eight female entrepreneurs in the education sector who have not only successfully survived in their ventures but also continued their growth. They were from north India, two each from Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. All of them were educated and successful entrepreneurs. The average age of the participants was 44 years; the youngest participant was 34 years old whereas the oldest was 52 years old. Out of the total participants, 5 were postgraduates and 3 were graduates. All the institutions were run on a sole proprietorship basis. Out of that 3 were primary schools, 2 higher secondary schools, and 3 coaching centers. The women entrepreneurs self-financed 5 institutions whereas, 3 were financed through a bank loan.

3.	Respondent 4	36	BA	Haryana	9
4.	Respondent 3	52	MSC, B Ed	Haryana	16
5.	Respondent 5	45	B COM	Punjab	11
6.	Respondent 6	51	MA, M Ed	Punjab	15
7.	Respondent 7	47	M COM	UP	8
8.	Respondent 8	34	BA, B Ed	UP	5

Source: The author

Table 2 reveals the analysis of the collected data in the form of themes that have been generated based on sub-themes. Eight major themes emerged after the content analysis,

which are: motivation, support network, selection of particular business, overcoming hindrances, managerial skills, mentors, customer loyalty, and success.

**Table 2:** The extracted themes and sub-themes

Source: The author

S.No	Themes	Sub themes
1.	Motivation	Money, freedom, social service
2.	Support network	Family and friends, government, society
3.	Selection of particular business	Knowledge and skills, suitable for women, interest
4.	Overcoming hindrances	Finance, family obligations, tough competition
5.	Managerial skills	Passion, effective coordination, courage
6.	Mentor	During education, during profession
7.	Customer loyalty	Customer feedback, interpersonal relations
8.	Success	God's wish, hard work, gender

### Theme I- Motivation

The first major theme that emerged after the examination of data is motivation. It is an internal process that drives people to behave in certain ways to achieve their objectives. The driver of their actions may be money, position, success, fame, etc. This theme is comprised of three sub-themes: money, freedom, and social service.

#### i. Money

Money is the fundamental thing that motivates most people at different stages. The majority of the women entrepreneurs claimed that money was the primary motivating factor to become an entrepreneur. The women entrepreneurs said: "Besides my job, I was searching to make some additional income. I thought, if I start tuition, I can bring in some additional income, so I started that. The response was quite good; it motivated me to start my coaching center. So I decided to quit my job

and start the coaching center” (Respondent 1).

“I was exhausted of working for someone else, adhering to useless orders, and just receiving a limited amount of salary. That was not my cup of tea because I love being my boss and earning handsome amounts of money” (Respondent 7).

“It was tough to raise three children after the death of my husband. I tried my hand in different jobs but couldn’t get enough money. Ultimately I decided to start my school” (Respondent 5).

#### ii. Freedom

Some of the participants professed that freedom in this profession prompted them towards business. They replied:

“For me, family is the priority; I just needed more freedom to fix my schedule around my family. I wanted to be with my children when they start going to school. I felt kind of liberated with the idea, I was more proud of myself because I wasn't just staying in something that was so structured, and I had to do things for myself as per my schedule” (Respondent 2).

“Apart from income, it was this sense of freedom that attracted me towards entrepreneurship. As I evolved I think the liberation and the flexibility, that one has to be an entrepreneur continued to appeal to me and that is why I decided to pursue it” (Respondent 6).

#### iii. Social service

For some respondents, it was not just money, which brought them into business but the hidden desire for social service. They uttered: “Since childhood, I wanted to help the poor section of society. Educating poor people fulfills my dream apart from earning. I consider myself blessed enough that God has allowed me to contribute to the improvement of society through this profession” (Respondent 4).

“Social entrepreneurship has always stimulated me as a way of serving and earning. I always wanted to serve society, which drove me towards entrepreneurship... Now I can serve the downtrodden people by offering them free education at my institution which was not feasible while doing the job at other institution” (Respondent 6).

## Theme 2- Support network

The research reveals that support network encourages and guides women to become determined and successful entrepreneurs. Society in developing countries is not so advanced that it motivates women to work; women have to struggle and need a support network to become entrepreneurs. All the participants said they had received positive support from someone in their decision to be an entrepreneur. However, no participants felt unsupported. This theme constitutes of three sub-themes.

#### i. Family and friends

The support of family and friends especially the father and the husband is the biggest support for the women, which is confirmed by most of the participants in the probe. The participants told:

“Both my family and friends were supportive emotionally, not only because they also had their own businesses, but also because I was raised with the mindset of gender equality. I have always had words of encouragement as a woman, as they have always said to me, "Being a woman growing up was never a barrier in big cities” (Respondent 8).

“My family really supported me through that. They noticed that I was not happy in the corporate world, particularly because my father suggested me start a business, which suits my outgoing personality and convinced me of future success. His support was... If I didn’t have his support, I would have

probably not accomplished my objectives” (Respondent 1).

“My husband has always been very supportive and assisted me to set up my business, physically, mentally; he stayed right next to me the whole time... One day he asked me, “How can you go into a business even thinking about failure, it is the part of the business not the end of life, just do your best.” That prompted me to move further” (Respondent 3).

#### ii. Government

The government support system is imperative for the development of entrepreneurship, particularly in developing countries. The government provides monetary and non-monetary support at subsidized rates to women entrepreneurs. The women entrepreneurs also got the advantage of an existing support system. The interviewees told:

“I was worried about the land for the school building which is very costly but the government not only provided me the subsidized land but supported me with consultancy services. It reduced my half of the burden and proved a milestone in achieving my objectives” (Respondent 4).

“It is not easy to get finance, especially for women entrepreneurs. Considering this fact the government has started some schemes basically for women entrepreneurs. I also got the loan under such scheme” (Respondent 2).

#### iii. Society

Society is the cornerstone of everything. The type of society we live in determines many aspects of our lives and all aspects of society are interconnected. Entrepreneurs also need the support of society to get success. One respondent said:

“When I was starting my school, I got resistance from a builder and the police but the residential society came to my rescue. All the problems were solved by the society

itself, taking note of the social cause of the project” (Respondent 6).

### **Theme 3- Selection of particular business**

The entrepreneurs put forward numerous reasons to opt for the education sector. Three main reasons which affected their decision are as follows:

#### i. Knowledge and skills

To achieve success in any field both theoretical and practical skills are required. Knowledge is the accumulation of information and facts, which is concerned with the awareness gained by experience while skill is the ability to apply knowledge to specific situations, which is more practical. The women entrepreneurs explained their views about the knowledge and skills as follows:

“I have been one of the best teachers while doing the job. Not only I had a good command of my subject but also I used to organize the task of different committees skillfully. So, I decided to continue this arena for better prospects” (Respondent 8).

“When I first started, I had absolutely no business strength... I simply had an area of expertise which worked as an asset for me” (Respondent 5).

“Actually I wanted to try my hand in the financial sector, which has been a center of attraction for me... my father suggested me to enter that business in which I had knowledge and experience, then I started this coaching center” (Respondent 1).

#### ii. Suitable for women

Since time immemorial some jobs are considered suitable for females, particularly in developing countries. The mindset of the people has become that they want to see women in traditional areas only which includes teaching also. The respondents replied:



“This profession is best for women as a part of her gender. I didn't think about doing any of the other hard business, I just thought about providing a service which is very traditional for women” (Respondent 4).

“I think women are naturally drawn to tension-free, less time-consuming and helping professions as they have to devote time to the family...it was a natural progression for me to enter in this field” (Respondent 3).

#### iii. Interest

The entrepreneurs acknowledged that the choice of the business arena was based on their interests. One of them stated:

“My mother was a teacher, teaching is in my blood. I feel like I have started a business that is wrapped around my personality. I always desired to look at the big picture and come up with outside-of-the-box ideas in the education sector. No other field can be more satisfactory to me than this one (Respondent 7).

### **Theme 4- Overcoming hindrances**

The fourth major theme is the hindrances faced and controlled by women entrepreneurs to get success in their ventures. It is comprised of three sub-themes stated by the respondents.

#### i. Finance

The interviewee admitted to facing the problem of finance, which is one of the most potent factors contributing to the success or failure of the project. The continuous flow of funds, basically, liquidity for meeting day-to-day expenses is inevitable for the survival of educational institutions. They stated:

“It's really difficult to get the finance; being a woman...It was declined though I asked for a small amount for a short period only...finally they asked for a co-signer. So I had to provide the cosigner to get the loan” (Respondent 7).

“Expectations and predictions of success are based on gender in society, with the man receiving the benefit of the doubt and the woman always needing to prove herself. Banks are also involved in this discrimination... I had a bad experience and faced a huge obstacle in getting financing for my project but ultimately I succeeded” (Respondent 2).

#### ii. Family obligations

Howsoever busy the woman is, she cannot get rid of family obligations. It gets tougher with her encounter with a business. Every day she has to devote time to the family. The participants reported:

“I have always enjoyed the responsibility of family but it needs time. If you devote more time to the business you have to cut short your time with family. You have to develop these skills tactfully otherwise be ready for the consequences on either side” (Respondent 5).

“Though I was not actively involved in the household chores due to the presence of maid...Still, the responsibility of three children took away a lot of time. It was really difficult to balance between the two sides with increasing business” (Respondent 8).

#### iii. Tough competition

Globalization and liberalization have not only increased the size of the market but also given stiff competition to local entrepreneurs. Even the education sector is not spared from that. In today's ferocious competition, one has to be better than the competitors in order to run a successful and profitable business. The interviewee said:

“Increasing unemployment level among the educated youths has led to stiff competition among the coaching centers. During the last few years coaching centers have emerged in bunches offering different packages, and discounts to attract students have diluted the

business. You have to be very stiff to survive and compete to get success” (Respondent 1). “Sustenance of quality education is inevitable for the budding school in order to survive the cutthroat competition and continue a growing position. Once the quality of education deteriorates the students leave the school in abundance, moreover there are numerous schools in the market offering many services at the same price” (Respondent 6).

### **Theme 5- Managerial skills**

The next theme that appeared after analysis is managerial skills, which enable the managers to relate with other fellow workers and manage them effectively for better accomplishments. It facilitates them to make more effective employment of human potential in the institution. This theme is composed of three sub-themes.

#### **i. Passion**

The investigation disclosed that passion is a potent factor in achieving success in entrepreneurial endeavors. Passion not only enhances performance at the individual level but also at the organizational level, which may have amazing results. “Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” – Aristotle. Passion triggers passion and encourages others; it develops a better work atmosphere and increases creativity and innovation. If passion is combined with work, performance will be bettered with work pleasure like never before. The interviewees stated:

“My never-ending willpower kept me charged even in the bad times...continued analysis and modifying the things as per the situation proved fruitful ultimately” (Respondent 1).

“At one time the faculty was less energetic and less dedicated towards the job. Being a principal I continued to sort out the problem and introduced the perks based on

performance, which generated the spark and energized the team” (Respondent 6).

“As a leader, I led the staff by example; my dedication triggered the enthusiasm among the staff, which paved the way to accomplish our goals” (Respondent 7).

“My passion to serve society always prompted me to work hard. Now I can say confidently that hard work pays off...”(Respondent 4).

#### **ii. Effective coordination**

It was also registered by some respondents that the proper coordination facilitated them to get better results. They said:

“When it was observed that some resources were under-utilized, then the plan was adapted to employ the resources effectively and efficiently. Changes of the classroom as per the strengths, Fixation of computers in a bigger room, modification of schedules etcetera changed the entire picture” (Respondent 2).

“Once, the performance of the institution was not impressive even after having excess staff. Then it was realized the excess human resource was itself the root cause. After laying off the excess staff, proper coordination was done, which solved the problem. Problems and experience taught me to coordinate things effectively” (Respondent 5).

#### **iii. Courage**

The research revealed that courage is another factor of successful entrepreneurship. These leaders can push through uncomfortable situations, do not give up in tough situations, make difficult decisions, and provide confidence to staff to do the task to the best of their abilities. Some entrepreneurs mentioned:

“To maintain a big staff during the pandemic was a tough decision but it paid back in the form of improved performance and loyal employees” (Respondent 5).

“I am a very strong person and very assertive, I think being an entrepreneur, and owning my own institute has made me a tougher boss because it does come out of my pocket. I can’t allow anyone to take away money so easily even at boom period” (Respondent 8).

### **Theme 6- Mentors**

The majority of women entrepreneurs reported that they had a mentor somewhere, which inspired them to pursue their dreams. A mentor is someone who can inspire and facilitate the mentee to achieve the predetermined goals. By choosing the right mentor, one can save a lot of time, learning the ropes instead of a trial-and-error approach. These mentors are divided into two phases: Mentors during the education period and the professional period.

#### **i. During the education period:**

Mentors in this period, which is basically a learning and development period leave a great impact on the whole life. The respondents conceded that they had mentors at the school or college level, some of them quoted:

“My teacher at the high school was the epitome of knowledge and labor. She was not only doing the job but running the coaching center beside her household responsibilities. She developed discipline and empathy among us and used to make us work hard for better prospects. I remember how other teachers used to talk about her tight schedules, politeness, and success. I think she has been a source of inspiration for innumerable persons” (Respondent 3).

“The professor who guided us in the project infused us with a positive mindset, entrepreneurial skills, and much more... At that time many of us decided to become an entrepreneur in the future” (Respondent 1).

#### **ii. During the professional period**

The respondents explained how their mentor facilitated them during the initial period of their ventures.

“One of my relatives who is in the same business helped me to start the school from scratch which may be the registration of the school, purchasing and organizing the things, hiring etcetera. I was fortunate enough to get such a big support and guidance” (Respondent 6).

“My father has been my mentor since childhood. Even at the time of inception of my entrepreneurial venture he stood by me, providing all the possible support that made things easy for me” (Respondent 5).

“My colleague got me introduced to an education counselor, who helped me get a good knowledge base to where I could do something entrepreneurial” (Respondent 7).

### **Theme 7- Customer loyalty**

It is another theme cropped up during the analysis which is about the likelihood of customers’ recurrence. In today’s competitive environment education sector consistently needs high student satisfaction to secure regular admissions. Customer loyalty helps in effective planning by recognizing committed customers who can be trusted upon. This theme is progressed based on two sub-themes.

#### **i. Customer feedback**

Customer feedback is a powerful guide that furnishes entrepreneurs with insights that can empower positive changes in the business. If the institution seeks students’ perspectives, they often come up with candid responses that allow the institution to understand how students rate the services compared to the alternatives in the market and what improvement they want. Some entrepreneurs told:

“It is really important to hear what you are getting right and wrong as an educational

institution in the eyes of your students to make things better as demanded by them. They will take your institution to the higher level if the priority is given to their preferences” (Respondent 6).

“The coaching centers should seek out feedback on regular basis. Students often give candid responses, which managers may not know about their initiative and bring genuine changes in the performance and growth of the institution. The weekend classes on the demand of students increased the strength of the class” (Respondent 2).

#### ii. Interpersonal relations

The participants acknowledged that maintaining interpersonal relations with the students provided new students on regular basis. The personal interaction between the institution and the students is of utmost importance to develop trust and commitment, along with satisfactory services. The women entrepreneurs stated:

“It is important to talk and hear the students to develop relationships and loyalty. In this business of coaching centers, students join and exit in groups which can make or devastate the business more than the other business... The bond of the relationship increases the recurrence of students” (Respondent 1).

“This task of building interpersonal relations encompasses the parents as well, who are the decision makers for their wards. So we invited the parents regularly to get the feedback and improvements, which developed better relations and strengthened our business” (Respondent 2).

### **Theme 8- Success**

The women entrepreneurs cited several reasons for their success. For some of them, success was not only monetary but encompassed peace of mind, recognition,

social development, and student ‘satisfaction. It is developed based on three sub-themes.

#### i. God’s wish

Some respondents gave credit for their achievement only to God. They uttered:

“Actually success was in my destiny. No doubt I have got support and worked hard but I have seen people working harder than me and failing. I believe that my success was already written by God and my efforts just contributed to that” (Respondent 4).

“I have a firm belief that if you help others God will help you. I always wanted to serve society particularly poor people. God provided me with an opportunity to fulfill my dream with the help of my school. Today I have peace, fame, money, satisfaction...the best life I ever have imagined by the grace of God” (Respondent 5).

#### ii. Hard work

“I never dreamed about success. I worked for it.” Estee Lauder. This quote highlights the importance of hard work for success. The same thing is confirmed by the entrepreneurs in their responses which are as follows:

“Often people ask me the secret of my success. My answer is self-belief and hard work. You just have to believe in yourself. The first step is you have to believe you can do it then you have to work hard. You really have to work hard” (Respondent 3).

“I believe the biggest thing is that I never gave up and kept on pushing myself, looking ahead with more effort. The famous words of Imran Khan, ‘never give up’ have been the inspirational source for me” (Respondent 8).

#### iii. Gender

This has been an interesting discovery in the investigation. The respondents stated the reason for their success was gender, which is just contrary to normal belief.

“I see my success as being a woman. I think that women in general are more inclined to listen and be disciplined than men. I feel

being a woman you listen to customers all the time. You listen, listen...bring improvements. I want not only financial success but also satisfied students to give me regular business” (Respondent 2).

“I believe that being a woman and due to a noble profession I received unwavering support from society, institutions, parents, and students which paved the way for success. The residential society helped me in the construction of the school building; the parents and students regarded me as a motherly figure, and shared their problems and suggestions comfortably... I think I have received much more than my efforts” (Respondent 6).

### **Conclusion**

The women entrepreneurs, besides earning and upgrading the lifestyle of their families also create employment opportunities, thereby contributing to the economic growth and development of the nation. The advent of new policies, support systems, and changes in society has empowered women to commence their ventures with confidence. The qualitative analysis has revealed the factors that affect the choice of women to start and manage their ventures successfully in the education sector. Eight main themes emerged at the end of the process which includes- motivation, support network, selection of particular business, overcoming hindrances, managerial skills, mentors, customer loyalty, and success. The probe disclosed that women got unwavering support from family and friends, courageously faced and controlled problems, developed good relations with customers, got support from some government schemes, led the staff from the front, and got motivated by various aspects to accomplish their goals. The research will contribute to the existing body of academic literature by advancing

knowledge in the field. Businesswomen themselves might get benefit from the research by becoming familiar with various factors, particularly the social factors that affect their career decisions and thus take sophisticated decisions in the future. The inadequate research on this subject in north India prompts further research with large samples to gain deep insight into developing a better environment fostering women's entrepreneurship.

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