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# Exploring Women Entrepreneurs in India and the Role of Ikigai in their Success and Well Being

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**ABSTRACT**

**Women entrepreneurs play a critical role in the Indian economy and society as a whole. Even so, they are still faced with one of the most formidable obstacles to gender equality: financial and disparate barriers and societal expectations derived from patriarchal paradigms. Existing research mainly focused on external barriers, whereas this study presents the psychological perspective of entrepreneurship using Ikigai. This Japanese principle ties together purpose, passion, and fulfilment. By studying the processes and experiences of women entrepreneurs in the Delhi NCR region, this research investigates how women entrepreneurs create sustainable, healthy, and profitable ventures through the dynamic interplay of personal passion, mission, skills, and financial viability. While government initiatives, improving digital connectivity, and shifting social contracts have been enablers of progress, some constraints around funding, work-life balance, and deeply ingrained biases persist. This study explores whether Ikigai is a framework for providing a resilience pathway for navigating the challenges women entrepreneurs face in sustaining their businesses based on quantitative and qualitative data; while attempting to offer empirical support on the impact intrinsic motivation has regarding the success of an entrepreneur.**

**Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Exploring Landscape, Ikigai, Success Rate, Women Entrepreneur**

## INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurs in India contribute significantly to economic development, yet they face multiple challenges such as financial constraints, social expectations, and limited access to resources. The rise of women entrepreneurs in India has been gradual but driven by a combination of policy support, digital accessibility, and social norms. Government schemes like the MUDRA Scheme, Stand-Up India, and Bharatiya Mahila Bank have given financial support and mentoring to women entrepreneurs, inspiring them to launch and maintain their businesses. Furthermore, the widespread availability of digital platforms and e-commerce solutions has allowed women to reach wider markets, diminishing dependence on physical storefronts and traditional business models. Social changes, particularly the more welcoming attitude towards women in leadership roles and economic life, have also lent women entrepreneurs a hand.

While these trends are encouraging, women entrepreneurs in India still have a long way to go. Mistrust towards women entrepreneurs also makes it difficult for women to secure funds and financial independence, which is often not guaranteed due to gender biases of lending institutions, lack of collateral, and financial literacy

Traditional research on women entrepreneurs has primarily focused on these external challenges—such as financial constraints, social norms, and access to markets—while largely overlooking the intrinsic factors that drive success and resilience as seen in the Japanese concept of Ikigai, which translates to "reason for being," that is often associated with personal fulfilment and success. This study aims to address this gap by exploring how personal motivation and fulfilment, particularly through the lens of Ikigai, influence entrepreneurial success.

This study seeks to explore the current landscape of women entrepreneurs of India present in Delhi NCR and analyse if they follow a certain mindset that is said to have allowed the success, wellbeing and fulfilment of individuals.

It also seeks to explore whether Ikigai plays a role in shaping the success and well-being of women entrepreneurs in India. By examining the relationship between Ikigai and entrepreneurship, this study aims to provide insights into how intrinsic motivation affects business sustainability and satisfaction.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was designed and conducted to examine the landscape of the women entrepreneurs and the role of the concept of Ikigaior at least a similar mind set affects the success rate of a women entrepreneur. It was conducted under the cooperation of the organization Symbiosphere Consultants

The data was collected through interview schedules that were created and employed using a mobile application, allowing for quick and accurate recording of the answers given by the subjects. The questions are developed to be a mix of qualitative and quantitative in nature and provide valuable insights into the business, lived experiences, perceptions, and personal alignment with Ikigai, allowing the study to capture the nuanced ways in which personal fulfilment shapes business strategies and decision-making.Documentary analysis is used to collect secondary data on the topic to get more in-depth knowledge and review knowledge that has been previously collected by predecessors.

The study focused on a targeted group of women entrepreneurs in Delhi NCR, using a controlled sampling method to prevent regional biases by limiting the sample in a specific cluster to an average of 20-25. This ensures consistency in variable factors, allowing for more accurate comparisons across participants. The total number of participants is 205, all residing in various different locations in the research area. The participants are limited to the age range of 18 to 55. The study areas are selected to cover most of Delhi NCR, dividing them into 8 clusters and with their own sub-clusters. The clusters included North Delhi, South Delhi, East Delhi, North East Delhi, North West Delhi, South West Delhi, Ghaziabad, and Gurugram.

Quantitative analysis is done through statistical tools to examine correlations between Ikigai alignment and indicators of business success, such as revenue growth, customer retention, and financial stability. In parallel, qualitative data thematic analysis is done to identify recurring patterns in motivations, challenges, and perceptions of success.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study shows that among 205 women entrepreneurs in Delhi NCR, shows that 60% of the women are aged 30 and above, 48.88% fall in the age group of 30-40, 20.79% in the age group of 41-50, and 3.93% in the age group of 51-55. 26.41% of the respondents belong to the 18-30 age group, indicating the trend of growing interest in entrepreneurship, which can be attributed to education and changing mindsets. However, barriers like family support and startup capital remain.87.79% of the subjects are married women, and 2.81%, 0.94%, and 4.69% are widowed, divorced, and never married women, respectively.

Financial concerns, particularly among widowed and divorced women, seem to propel entrepreneurship.Business monthly earnings varied considerably, with 29.76% earning ₹2001-5000, 24.39% earning ₹501-2000, and 21% earning ₹5001-10000. 1.95% of the consumers are loss-making businesses.57.07% adoption of digital payment suggests growing digital literacy and enabling family acceptance of electronic transaction setup. (Table 1)

The data indicates that more women are considering entrepreneurship as an option earlier in life, which can be attributed to greater awareness of the opportunity, increased access to education, and changing attitudes within society that encourage women in business. However, younger entrepreneurs are still scarcer, perhaps because of a lack of family support, inadequate startup capital, or no good business ideas (Table 1).

Moreover, the main drive of women getting into entrepreneurship seems to be economic necessity, especially the need to help the household earn an income. This trend is especially pronounced among divorced, widowed, or financially fragile women whose contributions to family income are more significant. (Table 1)

Moreover, the data also reflects the increasing empowerment of women, who are either becoming digitally literate or are getting family support to initiate digital payments. Table 1 is a graphical overview of this trend.

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic profiles of the women entrepreneurs in Delhi NCR**

| Category | Sub-Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 18-20: | 5 | 2.81% |
| | 21-30: | 42 | 23.60% |
| | 31-40: | 87 | 48.88% |
| | 41-50: | 37 | 20.79% |
| | 51-55: | 7 | 3.93% |
| Marital Status | Married/Cohabiting | 187 | 87.79% |
| | Single (Never Married) | 10 | 4.69% |
| | Widowed | 6 | 2.81% |
| | Divorced/Separated | 2 | 0.94% |
| Monthly Income of the Entrepreneur | 0-500 | 2 | 0.98% |
| | 501-2000 | 19 | 9.27% |
| | 2001-5000 | 59 | 28.78% |
| | 5001-10000 | 62 | 30.24% |
| | 10001-25000 | 52 | 25.37% |
| | 25001-50000 | 5 | 2.44% |
| | 50001-80000 | 3 | 1.46% |
| | 80001-100000 | 2 | 0.98% |
| | 100000+ | 1 | 0.49% |
| Digital Payment | Yes | 117 | 57.07% |
| | No | 88 | 42.93% |

According to the data collected, the most popular forms of businesses are tailoring, handicraft, salon, eatery, readymade garments, boutique, and cosmetic shops in the following order, with the business consisting of 26.86%, 16.94%, 12.40%, 7.02%, 7.02%, 6.20%, and 4.13%, respectively.

The gathered data implies that there is oversaturation of certain types of businesses, namely tailoring, handicrafts, and salons.

The reason for this can be attributed to the NGOs and self-help groups primarily teaching these methods of business, their easy-to-start nature, and the easy access through elders who most likely have worked similar professions before.Additionally, the varieties of businesses in just 205 people indicate the gradual expansion of the fields of entrepreneurship in India. The data is presented in table 2.

**Table 2: The Distribution of the Various Types of Business Done By The Women Entrepreneurs**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Eatery / Food store | 17 | 7.02% |
| Salon | 30 | 12.40% |
| Handicrafts | 41 | 16.94% |
| Tailoring | 65 | 26.86% |
| Achar making | 2 | 0.83% |
| Soap making | 4 | 1.65% |
| Readymade Garments | 17 | 7.02% |
| Boutique | 15 | 6.20% |
| General store and stationery | 9 | 3.72% |
| Cosmetics | 10 | 4.13% |
| Catering / Tiffin | 3 | 1.24% |
| Studio | 1 | 0.41% |
| Pillow making | 1 | 0.41% |
| Wedding dress | 1 | 0.41% |
| Tuition | 1 | 0.41% |
| Flower | 2 | 0.83% |
| Kirana | 9 | 3.72% |
| Ironing | 2 | 0.83% |
| Bindi making | 1 | 0.41% |
| Dance Training | 1 | 0.41% |
| Toys | 1 | 0.41% |
| Food Processing | 6 | 2.48% |
| Egg selling | 1 | 0.41% |
| Bakery | 1 | 0.41% |
| Tailoring training | 1 | 0.41% |

According to the longevity data of this study, 32.20% of businesses have operated for 1–2 years. That suggests a large number of businesses that are still in the early stages of trying to get to stability and growth. A smaller fraction, 31.22%, reported working for 3–5 years. It also indicates that most businesses manage to weather that initial storm and experience a better, more "settled" period, increasing their knowledge, sharpening their strategies, and growing their customer base. The largest category, comprising 36.59% of respondents, reported businesses that have sustained themselves for 6–8 years. This indicates a significant level of stability and resilience, implying that businesses that have attained this stage managed early-stage challenges and built sustainable practices.

Notably, none of the businesses were reported to operate for 9 or more years. This absence signals a lack of long-term success, or the sample of establishments surveyed smattered mainly of newer ventures. It could also mean that trends among entrepreneurs in this crowd are quite recent, and that fewer businesses have been able to hit long-term milestones. The frequency and percentage is visually presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Frequency and percentage of the longevity of the business of the women entrepreneur**

| Longevity of business | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0~1 | 0 | 0% |
| 1~2 | 66 | 32.20% |
| 3~5 | 64 | 31.22% |
| 6~8 | 75 | 36.59% |
| 9+ | 0 | 0% |

Based on such data, women entrepreneurs face some key challenges. The main problem for 23.3% of respondents is a lack of capital, holding back business development because of strict lending conditions and financial illiteracy. Another major hurdle is getting established with regular customers (22%), due to market saturation, weak demand, and ineffective marketing. Limited access to professional networks (17.3%) prevents access to mentorship, funding, and business opportunities. A further hindrance to business development is a lack of knowledge (14.7%) in finance, marketing, and strategic planning. Marketing and sales issues (9.1%) and inadequate digitalization (5.6%) are hindering growth, with digital ignorance and tech resistance being the main reasons. Women struggle to balance work and home life due to social constraints, such as lack of family support (4.7%). Limited access to supply chains (3.1%) presents logistical challenges, especially in rural regions. Only 0.2% cited COVID-19-related losses as a significant challenge, indicating resilience in adapting to a new market environment.(Table 4)

**Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of The Problems Faced By The Women Entrepreneurs**

| Issue | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of capital | 133 | 23.30% |
| Lack of networks | 99 | 17.30% |
| Lack of knowledge | 84 | 14.70% |
| Lack of family support | 27 | 4.70% |
| Lack of marketing and sales strategies | 52 | 9.10% |
| Lack of customers | 126 | 22.00% |
| Lack of digitisation | 32 | 5.60% |
| Unable to recover Covid-19 induced losses | 1 | 0.20% |
| Limited supply chain | 18 | 3.10% |

The data shows that while Indian women entrepreneurs are unaware of Ikigai, many still follow its principles to some extent. Financial and additional constraints oftentimes restrict their alignment with Ikigai. Economic stability, business longevity, employment generation, digital adoption, customer retention, and work-life balance are considered in assessing success. Of the 205 entrepreneurs, 139 (72.18%) are classified as moderate success, successfully conducting businesses but struggling to grow. 65 women (33.85%) are classified as high success with very stable ventures. From this data, only 1 entrepreneur (0.52%) is labeled Very High Success and shows exceptional results. Finally, there are no respondents in the Low Success bucket (0-6 points), signifying that participants have at least achieved moderate success. See Table 5 for details.

**Table 5: Evaluations of the success rate of the women entrepreneurs**

| Success Category | Number of Women Entrepreneurs | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Low Success (0-6) | 0 | 0.00% |
| Moderate Success (7-12) | 139 | 72.18% |
| High Success (13-18) | 65 | 33.85% |
| Very High Success (19-24) | 1 | 0.52% |

The level of alignment between passion and opportunity in business is industry-dependent and classified as high, medium, or low. Designing or developing small things that are treasured, such as handicrafts, studios, wedding gowns, and dance academies, carries the passion route closely with a high aspiration of creative works and cultural showcases that allow women to earn while spending time doing it. Examples of moderate passion businesses range from food services, salons, and tailoring to tuition, in which there is more involvement of skill or interest, but also financial motivators tend to be filled. Enterprises with low levels of passion alignment, such as pickle making, soap making, and retail in general, may not be inherently passion-oriented, but can still fulfillindividual needs and allow us to buy daily bread. The data for alignment of passion are visually represented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Passion Alignment of the Business done by the Women Entrepreneurs in Delhi NCR**

| Category | Passion Alignment |
|---|---|
| **Eatery / Food store** | Moderate |
| **Salon** | Moderate |
| **Handicrafts** | High |
| **Tailoring** | Moderate |
| **Achar making** | Low |
| **Soap making** | Low |
| **Readymade Garments** | Low |
| **Boutique** | Moderate |
| **General store and stationery** | Low |
| **Cosmetics** | Low |
| **Catering / Tiffin** | Moderate |
| **Studio** | High |
| **Pillow making** | Moderate |
| **Wedding dress** | High |
| **Tuition** | Moderate |
| **Flower** | Moderate |
| **Kirana** | Moderate |
| **Ironing** | Low |
| **Bindi making** | Moderate |
| **Dance Training** | High |

Skill alignment is the Level an entrepreneur's skills align with their business requirements. Formal education and hands-on experience align well and lead to skills that help the women and their businesses thrive longer, and keep customers satisfied and loyal. Moderate skill alignment relates to businesses where some expertise is required, but not years of extensive training — usually chosen because they are more feasible, rather than out of passion. This type of entrepreneur can perform better with additional training. These range from tailoring to beauty salons to catering to soap making. On the other hand,

"low skill alignment" businesses that need less expertise and are more compensated for externalities will flourish, e.g., convenience stores.

**Table 7: Skill Alignment or the level of skill needed by the women entrepreneurs in their businesses**

| Business Type | Skill Alignment |
|---|---|
| **Tailoring** | Moderate |
| **Handicrafts** | High |
| **Salon** | Moderate |
| **Achar making** | Moderate |
| **Eatery/Food Store** | Moderate |
| **Soap making** | Moderate |
| **Readymade Garments** | Low |
| **Boutique** | Moderate |
| **Kirana Store** | Low |
| **General store and stationery** | Low |
| **Catering / Tiffin** | Moderate |
| **Cosmetics** | Moderate |
| **Flower** | Low |
| **Bindi making** | Moderate |
| **Dance Training** | High |
| **Wedding dress** | High |
| **Studio** | High |
| **Ironing** | Low |
| **Tuition** | High |
| **Pillow making** | Moderate |

Mission alignment in business reflects how well a company's goals meet societal needs. Some businesses address fundamental issues like education, health, and jobs, while others focus on private luxuries. Well-aligned businesses drive community progress, whereas others cater to niche interests.

While all ventures sustain livelihoods, those tackling societal challenges—like food cooperatives enhancing nutrition—create deeper impact. Similarly, education-based businesses significantly advance financial mobility and long-term societal progress.

Bridal boutiques and wedding-related industries, though not solving urgent social issues, contribute economically and culturally. Table 8 visually represents mission alignment.

**Table 8: Mission Alignment of the businesses done by the Women Entrepreneurs**

| Business Type | Mission Alignment |
|---|---|
| **Tailoring** | Low |
| **Handicrafts** | Moderate |
| **Salon** | Moderate |
| **Achar making** | Low |
| **Eatery/Food Store** | Moderate |
| **Soap making** | Moderate |
| **Readymade Garments** | Moderate |
| **Boutique** | Moderate |
| **Kirana Store** | Moderate |
| **General store and stationery** | Moderate |
| **Catering / Tiffin** | Moderate |
| **Cosmetics** | Moderate |
| **Flower** | Low |
| **Bindi making** | Low |
| **Dance Training** | Moderate |
| **Wedding dress** | High |
| **Studio** | High |
| **Ironing** | Low |
| **Tuition** | High |
| **Pillow making** | Moderate |

The financial stability of individuals is largely influenced by their monthly income, which determines their ability to sustain themselves and grow their businesses. The data reveals that 39.02% of respondents fall into the low-income group (0-5000 INR), indicating financial vulnerability, where basic expenses and reinvestment opportunities are limited. A majority (58.05%) belong to the moderate-income group (5001-50000 INR), suggesting a relatively stable financial condition with the ability to meet expenses but with constraints on long-term financial growth. Only 2.93% fall into the high-income category (50001-100000+ INR), reflecting financial stability and greater economic independence. The dominance of the lower and moderate-income groups suggests that most women entrepreneurs face financial constraints that may hinder business expansion, innovation, and long-term wealth creation. To enhance financial stability, improved access to credit, financial literacy programs, and business development support could help entrepreneurs transition to higher income brackets and ensure sustainable growth. Table 9 is the financial stability representation in visual format.

**Table 9: Financial Stability of the Women Entrepreneur**

| Monthly Income | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **0-5000 (Low)** | 80 | **39.02%** |
| **5001-50000 (Moderate)** | 119 | **58.05%** |
| **50001-100000+ (High)** | 6 | **2.93%** |

After careful analysis of the data and the scales, it is found that the alignment of passion, mission, vocation, and profession can be a driving force behind entrepreneurship; it does not necessarily guarantee business success. This is evident in businesses like dance training, wedding dress studios, tuition, and handicrafts, where only the wedding dress business and handicrafts are able to produce high success, with the handicraft producing one very high success business. This indicates that while passion-driven businesses can thrive, success is highly dependent on external factors such as market demand, financial management, and business scalability.

On the other hand, a large group of businesses—tailoring, salons, achar (pickle) making, eateries/food stores, soap making, readymade garments, boutiques, kirana stores, general and stationery stores, catering/tiffin services, cosmetics, flower selling, bindi making, and pillow making only partially align with Ikigai. It is generally the businesses that have emerged out of necessity, tradition or market opportunities rather than a felt personal passion. Such firms ultimately tend to do moderately well, but a small number become highly profitable. This indicates that businesses can still win if they do not directly align with what the owner is passionate about, as long as there is a steady demand for the product and effective management behind the product.

One case that stands out is ironing — the only business not compliant with Ikigai at all. Yet, it has continued to operate as an exceptionally viable enterprise, underlining the fact that practicality such as economic viability, demand and operational efficiency in many instances dwarf passion, where it concerns the success of a business. This result refutes the widely held belief that Ikigai serves as a predictor of entrepreneurial success. It instead underlines the complicated dynamics of passion, pragmatism and market realities that define business success or failure.Ultimately, Ikigai is like a mantra that can have a powerful impact on women entrepreneurs; however, it is not the miracle recipe to achieve lucrative success. The businesses that can successfully combine their passion with healthy market demand and business savvy in general are those that will likely succeed in the long run.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicated that, as far as women entrepreneurs are concerned, most were aged 30-40 (48.88%), which corresponds to Kumar and Shobana (2016), who stated that primarily women entrepreneurs in India are in their 30s and 40s. In contrast to other studies that suggest motivation by independent financial contributions to family income, such as Kumar and Shobana's, 87.79% of respondents were married and thus primarily motivated by the need for supplementary income. An analysis of profit and loss showed that 29.76% of the businesses earned a profit of ₹2,001-5,000 (₹2,001-5,000) per month and indicated limitations with finances as a major hurdle; it signified the findings of other studies. There was a significant adoption of digital payments among women entrepreneurs, with 57.07% of them opting for the same, including other components of digitization. Business types largely consisted of tailoring, handicrafts, salons, etc., which matched traditional skills and seasonal market access. Lack of capital (23.30%) and having access to steady customers (22%) were the most identified barriers; these findings are in line with the research conducted by Kumar and Shobana.. (J. Suresh Kumar & Shobana, 2023)

Sahoo (2020) identified structural barriers such as lack of finance, scarcity of raw materials, stiff competition, and societal expectations as key impediments to women's entrepreneurial success. These findings align with this study's insights, which highlight how financial dependence and social constraints shape women's business choices. Financial difficulties are a major concern in both studies. Sahoo (2020) emphasizes limited access to credit due to collateral requirements and gender biases in banking, which restrict women's ability to scale their businesses. Similarly, this study notes that many women entrepreneurs start businesses out of necessity, often relying on personal savings or informal financial support. Furthermore, Sahoo (2020) discusses family obligations as a limiting factor, stating that women must balance business with domestic responsibilities, often requiring their husband's approval. This observation resonates with this study's findings, where many women cite family support or the lack thereof as a critical factor in their entrepreneurial journey. Educational barriers are another common theme. While Sahoo (2020) associates lack of education with low business knowledge and risk-bearing capacity.

In terms of digital adoption and business sustainability, this study goes beyond Sahoo's discussion by exploring correlations between digital tools, financial success, and long-term business viability. While Sahoo (2020) touches on infrastructure problems such as power shortages and high production costs, this study further investigates how digital technology might mitigate some of these barriers. Additionally, both studies recognize the role of government support in promoting women's entrepreneurship. Sahoo (2020) outlines various schemes, such as the IRDP, PMRY, and WDCs, while this study seeks to assess how effectively such policies translate into real-world empowerment for women entrepreneurs. (Sahoo, 2020).

The study by Colaco and Vedamani, based on the 6th Economic Census (2013-14), points out that proprietary establishments were the most prominent type among women-owned establishments and also illustrates the comparison of proprietary establishments between rural and urban aspects. Manipur has the maximum increase in female proprietors, followed by Bihar. In their t-test analysis of ownership, they find no significant difference in rural versus urban ownership.

Their research as well as this study highlights the prevalence of strong, sustainable businesses over the long haul among female entrepreneurs. Another finding shows that rural women are generally more involved in the agriculture sector, whereas urban women entrepreneurs are more prominent in the service sector. They found men to have a higher perception of opportunity and ability than women in entrepreneurship, a finding that is in line with this report. Both studies focus on similarities regarding barriers that hinder women entrepreneurs, including gender inequality, reduced access to markets, inadequate education, and limited technology, with this report also examining the role of social norms and policy-level impacts.(Colaco Vembly& Hans Vedamani, 2018).

The present study reveals that 87.79% of women entrepreneurs are married, 2.81% are widowed, 0.94% are divorced, and 4.69% are unmarried. It highlights the impact of being married on becoming an entrepreneur for financial stability and to supplement household income after marriage runs out. Dr. Rani's studies do not examine the marital status of women entrepreneurs, preferring to look at broader definitions and functions of women-owned enterprises. Among the potential sectors, it is seen that tailoring (26.86%), handicraft (16.94%), salons (12.40%), eateries (7.02%), readymade garments (7.02%), boutiques (6.20%), and cosmetic shops (4.13%) are considered top business ventures among women entrepreneurs. The existence of these businesses has been ascribed to training received from NGOs and self-help groups, ease of starting a venture, and traditional skills inherited through generations. Dr. Rani's study highlights the overall concept of women entrepreneurship and the role of micro, small, and medium enterprises yet does not provide information regarding the type of business women entrepreneurs are involved in. The two studies focus on challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. According to this project, 23.30% report having a lack of capital, 22% face difficulty in establishing a consistent customer base, and 17.30% report a lack of professional networks. Other challenges are lack of knowledge (14.70%), lack of marketing and sales strategies (9.10%), and lack of digitizing (5.60%). To take an example, Dr. Rani's study emphasizes the role of entrepreneurship in economic growth and the additional obstacles faced by women due to juggling multiple roles and societal restrictions. (Rani, 2020)

This study and Yadav's research focus on financial barriers, with 23.30% of respondents mentioning funding difficulties accompanied by prejudice and collateral. Networking is another issue commonly found in both studies; 17.30% don't have access, while Yadav points to mentorship programs as being important. Making a dent in digital adoption—digital payments users are 57.07%, but 5.60% are frustrated with more advanced tools, highlighting policy gaps. The socio-cultural obstacles also cramp out the life of entrepreneurship, with 4.70% of participants facing enveloping family support issues and business decisions affected by societal conditioning. Business survival varies—36.59% run between 6–8 years but none beyond nine, with Yadav attributing survival to policy and investor support. (Yadav, 2024) Almost 48% of women entrepreneurs fall between the age range of 30 and 40, and 26.41% are between 18 and 30, showing that more and more young women are choosing to become entrepreneurs early on. Suri and Verma also write that 58% of female entrepreneurs are 25–30 years old, adding to the realization that careers are now a cycle. Despite the seeming surprise of entrepreneurship intersecting with marital status, it's not very surprising at all; 87.79% of respondents are married, a number that is on par with the rest of the people around the world as women slowly shift back from being homemakers to participants in the economy. Ranking of the Most Available Ventures: Tailoring (26.86%), Handicraft (16.94%), Salon (12.40%); Evolution of the Home-based Business of the 1960s. Limited funding continues to remain a threat, with 23.30% citing capital constraints, confirming the findings by Suri and Verma concerning systemic barriers, such as limited education and access to financial capital. This study does not delve into policies in depth, but the need for these responses for financial and capacity-building support speaks to government initiatives such as the SHGs (Self-Healing Groups for Women's Economic Empowerment) and WEP (Women Entrepreneurship Platform). (Suri & Verma, 2021) 87.70% of married women entrepreneurs supporting their family income affirm that financial necessity motivates them to become entrepreneurs (Shabbir et al., 2022). Jaitly and Thangallapally describe the need for policies that protect their two roles: as entrepreneurs and caregivers, including an increase in financial support and flexible working conditions. The most frequent businesses — tailoring (26.86%), handicrafts (16.94%), and salons (12.40%)—appear to be oversaturated. Most are small, profitable businesses (29.76% earn ₹2,001–₹5,000 a month), and 23.30% say capital is a big challenge. Awareness and accessibility continue to be the issue despite 70 central and 433 state financial aid schemes. However, 57.07% of entrepreneurs are using digital payments, showing the growth in digital adoption. The NITI Aayog report explains that poor digital literacy and poor technological dependence on MSMEs are among the reasons that lead to the failure of these businesses. Longevity: 36.59% of businesses remain active for 6–8 years, but none of them cross 9 years. The report also underscores the need to mentor, network with, and maintain support for women entrepreneurs.(NITI Aayog, 2023)

The study finds that most women entrepreneurs are above 30, with 48.88% aged 30–40, indicating growing awareness and education. Younger women are entering entrepreneurship, supported by skill development for evolving markets (Gupta & Maheshwari). The data shows that 87.79% of entrepreneurs are married, suggesting financial necessity is a key driver. Preferred business types include tailoring (26.86%), handicrafts (16.94%), and salons (12.40%), likely influenced by NGO/self-help group training, leading to market saturation. Business longevity data reveals that 32.20% have operated for 1–2 years, with none lasting beyond nine years, highlighting sustainability challenges. Barriers include lack of capital (23.30% cited this), limited access to resources, and socio-cultural constraints (Gupta & Maheshwari). Unlike Gupta and Maheshwari's focus on profitability, this study evaluates success through financial stability, business longevity, employment, digital adoption, and work-life balance, categorizing all respondents within average to high success levels. (Gupta & Maheshwari, 2019)

Consistent with the results of Roushan Parween and Dr. Sudesh Kumar Sahu, this study reveals that the key drivers that lead women to explore entrepreneurship are economic need, personal development, and societal influence, respectively. According to the work of Parween and Sahu, skill, knowledge, and adaptability make up the backbone of many women running businesses, highlighting the fact that many entrepreneurs do so to secure a future for themselves and their families, enter a world of financial independence, and ultimately escape poverty. External pressures like corporate glass ceilings, financial struggles, and personal crises have also been a driving force, they found, motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship rather than traditional jobs. It highlights challenges like lack of funding prospects, gender prejudices, and limited access to business networks. Financial obstacles, socio-cultural constraints, and technological unawareness also emerge as major impediments, as per the findings of Parween and Sahu. Parween and Sahu look into how societal pressure pushes women into home-based enterprises, restricting their networking and growth potential. For example, while both works stress the impact of continually developing new skills, this project shows a stronger connection between beingtuned in tonew technologies and staying in business. (Parween & Sahu, 2024).

Both studies also point to a lack of access to business networks and markets as barriers. But this study shows a higher adoption of digital technology among entrepreneurs in Delhi NCR (57.07%), while Sinha's findings are low in the Northeast presumably for a lack of infrastructure. Business longevity varies between the two regions. This study observes that 36.59% of businesses are working in the 6–8 years range, but Sinha's study indicates that women-led businesses in the Northeast are often unable to sustain longer than 5 years due to factors such as market saturation with businesses of a similar nature, funding gaps, and lack of governmental support in the sustainability phase. (Sinha, 2003).

This research explores the interrelationships among passion, mission, vocation, and profession in women-owned businesses, giving insight into the fact that being passionate about a business idea does not equal being successful. Take businesses like dance training and studios, for example, where there is obvious high passion alignment, yet success can swing wildly based on external circumstances such as market and finance. Sartore proposes an integrated cognitive-motivational model of ikigai at work, defining ikigai as a 'reason for living' or purpose in life. Their model builds on self-determination theory, identifying the satisfaction of fundamental needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—as integral to the ikigai experience. They argue that engaging people in work that meets these requirements contributes to greater well-being and improved performance. Both studies recognize that doing what you love (ikigai) makes you more passionate and happier but does not necessarily mean your business will prosper. This goes to show that while doing what you love can be important, passion does not always guarantee success. As Zejekowski (2019) explain, market demand is one of the determining factors, along with management, that contribute to the success of passion-driven enterprises. The same goes for you; include that the benefits of Ikigai depend on both dispositional (e.g., personal orientation) and situational factors. (Sartore &Buisine 2023).

## CONCLUSION

This study explores how Ikigai influences the success and well-being of women entrepreneurs in India. While economic survival is a primary driver for starting businesses, passion and purpose can enhance longevity and fulfilment. Women face structural barriers like limited capital, social expectations, and work-life balance challenges, those whose businesses align with their values tend to be more resilient and sustainable. Passion alone does not dictate business decisions, but finding purpose fosters engagement and perseverance. Digital adoption and financial literacy are key growth enablers while mentoring and supportive communities enhance success. Industries like handicrafts, education, and wedding dressmaking align closely with the Ikigai framework. Entrepreneurial education, financial support, digital empowerment, and mentorship programs are crucial for fostering women-led businesses. Policy changes should address gender biases, flexible work policies, and work-life balance. Further research should explore long-term impacts and industry-specific trends to refine future interventions.

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