



Demographics, education and entrepreneurial strategy: A study of women business owners in Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

This study investigates the complex interplay among demographic characteristics, educational attainment, and entrepreneurial strategies employed by women entrepreneurs in Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. Utilizing structured survey data collected from over 75 women business owners, the research reveals that the majority of these entrepreneurs are younger individuals, aged 25 to 35 years, primarily operating within the retail and service sectors. Despite a pronounced reliance on familial support structures, significant impediments to business growth persist, including constrained access to capital, insufficient business education, and limited market reach. Furthermore, while many participants leverage digital technologies for business operations, observable deficiencies in digital literacy and confidence are evident. The findings underscore the critical necessity for targeted policy interventions focused on skill development, financial inclusion, and mentorship programs to cultivate sustainable women-led entrepreneurship within the region.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurship, Arunachal Pradesh, digital literacy, financial inclusion, Pasighat

Introduction

Women entrepreneurship has gained increasing attention as a key driver of inclusive economic development, particularly in emerging economies like India. In the context of Pasighat, a growing town in Arunachal Pradesh, women are stepping into entrepreneurship in diverse sectors such as retail, services, and manufacturing. Their participation, however, is shaped by a combination of demographic factors, educational background, and the strategies they adopt to succeed in business.

The demographic profile—including age, experience, and marital status—often influences how women engage in entrepreneurial activities. Most women entrepreneurs in Pasighat are young, between the ages of 25–35, indicating a generational shift toward self-employment as a viable livelihood. These women balance family responsibilities with business ownership, drawing on community support and informal networks.

Education plays a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial capabilities. However, many women in Pasighat lack access to formal business education or entrepreneurship training. This gap affects their financial planning, marketing skills, and ability to leverage digital tools for growth. Despite these limitations, women entrepreneurs exhibit strong resilience and adapt through practical strategies such as family support, product quality, and social media engagement.

This study aims to explore the interplay between demographics, education, and entrepreneurial strategies among women business owners in Pasighat. By analyzing their profiles, success strategies, and challenges, the research provides insights into how local women navigate the entrepreneurial landscape and what support systems can further empower them.

Statement of the Problem

Women entrepreneurs in Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh are increasingly contributing to local economic development,

particularly in retail and service sectors. However, their growth is limited by several factors, including lack of formal business education, minimal access to training, and poor financial support. Most rely on informal strategies like family support, while confidence in using digital tools remains low. With limited institutional assistance and access to credit, their businesses face challenges in sustainability and expansion. This study investigates how demographic factors, educational background, and entrepreneurial strategies influence the success of women entrepreneurs in Pasighat, aiming to identify barriers and recommend targeted support.

Research Methodology

This study follows a descriptive and exploratory research design to examine the demographics, education, and entrepreneurial strategies of women business owners in Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. A purposive sample of 75 women entrepreneurs was selected from various sectors, including retail, services, manufacturing, and wholesale. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire covering personal details, business experience, training, challenges, and digital usage. The responses were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Ethical considerations were followed, including informed consent and confidentiality. While the study provides useful insights, its findings are specific to Pasighat and may not be generalizable to the entire region.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on understanding the demographics, educational background, and entrepreneurial strategies of women business owners in Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. It covers women engaged in various business sectors such as retail, services, manufacturing, and wholesale. The research is limited to women who are currently managing or operating their own businesses within this geographic area.

The study explores key factors such as age, education, years of experience, sources of funding, training received, use of digital tools, and challenges faced. It does not extend to women entrepreneurs outside Pasighat or those engaged in informal, home-based work that is not identified as a business enterprise.

The findings aim to provide insight into the unique entrepreneurial landscape in a tribal and rural context and to help inform policies and support systems tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs in similar regions.

Review of Literature

Mitra (2019) ^[11] in her research paper “Women Entrepreneurship in India: An Overview” analyses the growing trend of women entrepreneurship in India, driven by education, economic empowerment, and government support. Women entrepreneurs face unique challenges like limited access to finance, social norms, and balancing work and family responsibilities. Education and training empower women entrepreneurs, while government initiatives and policies can provide crucial support.

Singh & Kumar (2020) ^[17] in their paper titled “Women Entrepreneurs in North-East India: Challenges and Opportunities” studied the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in North-East India, including limited access to finance and societal norms. Despite these challenges, women entrepreneurs exhibit resilience and adaptability, leveraging opportunities in sectors like handicrafts and textiles. The study emphasizes the need for targeted support systems to empower women entrepreneurs in the region.

Devi (2018) ^[7] in her paper titled “Demographic Factors Influencing Women Entrepreneurship in North-East India”. The demographic factors like age, education level, and family background significantly impact women's entrepreneurial decisions and success in Arunachal Pradesh. These factors can either facilitate or hinder women's participation in entrepreneurship, highlighting the need for targeted support systems.

Khan and Devi (2022) ^[9] in their paper titled “Radio as a Tool for Women Empowerment in Villages: A study of Arunachal Pradesh” study finds that radio can empower women in rural Arunachal Pradesh by providing access to information, education, and entertainment. The Adi tribe perceives radio as a vital medium for disseminating information and promoting cultural heritage. Radio empowers women by equipping them with knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions.

Sharma (2019) ^[14] in her paper titled “Entrepreneurial Strategies of Women-Owned Businesses in India” the Entrepreneurial strategies of women-owned businesses in India, including innovativeness, networking, and risk-taking. Women entrepreneurs face challenges like limited access to education, societal stereotypes, and financial constraints. A supportive ecosystem and policy initiatives can help women entrepreneurs succeed.

Deka and Priyanka (2020) ^[6] in their paper titled “Women Entrepreneurship and Digital Marketing: A Study of North-East India” the role of digital marketing in women entrepreneurship in North-East India. Women entrepreneurs in the region face challenges like societal stereotypes, limited access to education, and financial constraints. Digital marketing can increase visibility, improve brand

awareness, and enhance customer engagement, helping women entrepreneurs succeed.

Ahl (2018) ^[1] in this paper titled “Theorising Women Entrepreneurship: A Feminist Perspective” the importance of social construction and context in shaping entrepreneurial experiences. Her study challenges traditional entrepreneurship theories, arguing that they often reflect masculine norms and biases. Ahl's work encourages researchers to rethink traditional theories and consider the diverse experiences of women entrepreneurs.

Deb (2012) ^[5] in her paper titled “Rural Entrepreneurship, a Perspective with Special Reference to Arunachal Pradesh: An Empirical Study”, Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth and development, with entrepreneurs playing a crucial role in fostering innovation, employment generation, and national income (Cantillon, 1755). In the context of North East India, rural entrepreneurship has the potential to address economic challenges and promote sustainable development. However, research highlights the need for innovative approaches and fresh perspectives to address the rural-urban dichotomy and promote economic growth in rural areas (Gopinath Pradhan's study). Effective implementation of policies and strategies is crucial to harness the potential of entrepreneurship and promote sustainable development in the region.

Singh and Singh (2018) ^[18] in their paper titled “Women Entrepreneurship in India: Challenges and Opportunities” Women's entrepreneurship in India faces challenges like gender bias, limited access to resources, and societal expectations. However, it also offers opportunities for economic growth, social empowerment, and innovation. A supportive ecosystem, skill development, and policy support are crucial for women's entrepreneurial success. Further research is needed to explore the impact of microfinance and the role of culture in shaping women's entrepreneurship in India.

Brush and Edelman (2018) ^[2] in their paper titled “Women's Entrepreneurship: A Review and Future Directions” Women's entrepreneurship is a growing field that drives economic growth and social development, with research highlighting the importance of addressing gender disparities in entrepreneurship ecosystems and promoting innovation. Studies show that women entrepreneurs face unique challenges, including limited access to resources and networks, and that supportive ecosystems and policies are crucial for their success.

Pruthi and Rexhepi (2019) ^[13] in their paper titled “The Role of Social Capital in Women's Entrepreneurship” Social capital is crucial for women's entrepreneurship, enabling access to resources and opportunities. Pruthi and Rexhepi (2019) ^[13] found that social capital significantly impacts women's entrepreneurial success, but societal and institutional barriers often limit their ability to build and leverage it.

Sinha and Sahney (2020) ^[19] in their paper titled “Women's Entrepreneurial intentions; A Systematic Review and Future Research Direction”. Women's entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by various factors, including attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Research highlights the importance of understanding the cognitive and motivational factors driving women's entrepreneurial intentions. A systematic review of existing literature reveals gaps in knowledge, particularly regarding

the role of culture, education, and social support in shaping women's entrepreneurial intentions. Future research should explore these areas to inform policy and practice.

Carter and William (2018) ^[3] in their paper titled “The Impact of Gender on Entrepreneurial Success” the impact of gender on entrepreneurial success, revealing challenges women entrepreneurs face, such as limited access to resources and networks, and emphasizing the importance of understanding these dynamics to support women's entrepreneurship.

Dheer (2018) ^[8] in this paper titled “Entrepreneurship by Immigrants: A Review of Existing Literature and Directions for Future Research” the challenges and opportunities faced by immigrant entrepreneurs, providing insights into entrepreneurial strategies and motivations. Although focused on immigrant entrepreneurship, the study's findings can inform research on women entrepreneurs in India, shedding light on the unique challenges and opportunities they encounter.

Kumar and Singh (2019) ^[10] in their paper titled “Demographic Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Intentions Among Women in India” the study reveals demographic factors like age and education significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions among women in India. Their research highlights the importance of understanding these factors to support women's entrepreneurship.

Singh and Belwal (2017) ^[16] in their paper titled “Women Entrepreneurship in India: Challenges and Opportunities” the dual landscape of women entrepreneurship in India, where women face significant challenges such as socio-cultural barriers and limited access to finance. However, it also underscores the potential for empowerment and growth, as entrepreneurship can enhance economic independence and social status for women. This nuanced understanding provides valuable insights for promoting women's entrepreneurship in India.

Shukla and Trivedi (2017) ^[15] in their paper titled “Women Entrepreneurship in North-East India: Challenges and Entrepreneurship and Management” the complexities of women entrepreneurship in North-East India, where women face significant challenges such as limited access to finance and socio-cultural barriers. However, the study also highlights the potential for growth and empowerment, particularly in sectors like handicrafts and tourism. By understanding the unique regional context and cultural nuances, policymakers and stakeholders can better support women entrepreneurs in the region, including those in Arunachal Pradesh.

Research Gap

Despite growing research on women entrepreneurship in India, limited studies focus on the specific interplay of demographics, education, and entrepreneurial strategies in tribal regions like Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. Existing literature often generalises challenges women entrepreneurs face, overlooking local issues such as a lack of formal business training, low digital literacy, and region-specific socio-cultural constraints. This study addresses the need for micro-level, context-specific insights to inform targeted support for women entrepreneurs in underrepresented areas.

Analysis and Interpretation

1. Analyse the demographic profile of women entrepreneurs in pasighat

The women entrepreneurs of Pasighat are primarily in the 25 to 35-year age group, indicating that entrepreneurship is

gaining momentum among young adult women. This reflects a positive shift, as more women are entering the business world during their most productive years, often balancing both work and family responsibilities.

Most of these women are engaged in retail and service-based businesses, which are easier to start and manage with limited capital and resources. Fewer women are involved in wholesale or manufacturing, possibly due to barriers like lack of funding, technical skills, and infrastructure.

Table 1: Age Distribution Data of Women Entrepreneurship

Age Group	Code	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Below 25 years	1	4	5.19%
25-35 years	2	51	66.23%
Above 35 years	3	22	28.57%
Total		77	100%

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2025

The data shows that 66.23% of women entrepreneurs in Pasighat are between the ages of 25 and 35. This indicates that early to mid-career women are the most active in starting and running businesses. At this age, many women have completed their education and are looking for ways to become financially independent or support their families. They are also more likely to take risks, adapt to change, and use new technologies in their business.

This trend suggests that entrepreneurship is becoming a popular career option for young women in Pasighat, especially in a region where job opportunities may be limited. It also reflects a shift in mindset, where more women are choosing to work for themselves rather than rely on traditional employment. Therefore, this age group represents the future of women-led businesses in the area and should be supported through training, mentorship, and access to financial resources.

1.1 Observation During the Field Study

During the field study, I observed that the majority of women entrepreneurs in Pasighat belong to the 25–35 age group, indicating that young women are increasingly taking up business ventures. Most of these women are engaged in retail and service-based businesses, such as small shops, beauty services, tailoring, and local product sales, which require less capital and are easier to manage.

It was also noticed that many women have 1 to 5 years of business experience, showing that entrepreneurship is a relatively new path for them. Despite their enthusiasm, most women lacked formal training in business management, and many admitted that this affected their confidence and growth.

2. Women entrepreneurship engaged in various businesses

Women in Pasighat are actively engaged in various businesses, mostly in retail, such as grocery, clothing, and cosmetics. Others are involved in services like tailoring, food stalls, and tuition. A few women also work in wholesale and small-scale manufacturing.

Most entrepreneurs are aged 25–35 and have 1–5 years of experience. Their main success factors include family support, community help, marketing skills, and quality products. Some also use digital tools like UPI, Facebook, and WhatsApp, though confidence in using technology varies.

Table 2: Various Types of Business Found in Pasighat

Business Type	Code	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Retail	1	49	63.64%
Services	2	21	27.27%
Wholesale	3	2	2.60%
Manufacturing	4	5	6.49%
Total		77	100%

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2025

Retail is the most common form of business among women in Pasighat, largely due to its low entry barriers and ease of operation. These businesses, such as grocery shops, clothing stalls, and cosmetics outlets, require minimal capital and can often be run from home or small rented spaces. This makes retail more accessible for women who rely primarily on personal savings or family support for funding, as the data suggests.

Retail also allows flexibility, which helps women balance business with family responsibilities. Since most of the women lack formal business training, the simplicity of retail operations makes it a more viable choice compared to complex sectors like manufacturing. Additionally, retail caters to local consumer needs, making it a practical and sustainable option in the Pasighat context.

2.1 Observation During the Field Study

The survey shows that most women in Pasighat run retail businesses due to low startup costs and flexibility. They are mainly aged 25–35 and rely on personal savings or family support, as access to formal finance is limited. Few have formal business training, but many are eager to learn skills like marketing and digital tools. Family support, product quality, and marketing are key to their success. While digital payments and platforms are used, confidence in technology varies. Common challenges include a lack of credit, market access, and time due to family duties. Most women believe better training and financial access would help their businesses grow.

3. Duration of Women's Involvement in Entrepreneurship in Pasighat

Based on the survey data from women entrepreneurs in Pasighat, the duration of their involvement in entrepreneurship varies notably. A significant portion, approximately 45.45%, have been running their businesses for 1 to 5 years, indicating that many women are relatively new to the entrepreneurial field and possibly benefiting from recent support systems or growing opportunities. Another 38.96% of the respondents have been in business for more than 6 years, showing a strong presence of experienced entrepreneurs who have likely built stable ventures over time. Meanwhile, around 15.58% of the women reported having less than one year of business experience, reflecting a fresh wave of entrants into the entrepreneurial landscape. This distribution suggests a healthy mix of both emerging and seasoned women entrepreneurs in Pasighat, pointing to steady growth and sustained participation of women in the region's business ecosystem.

Table 3: Years of Business Experience

Experience Range	code	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 1 year	1	12	15.58%
1-5 years	2	35	45.45%
More than 6 years	3	30	38.96%
Total		77	100%

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2025

A large number of women in Pasighat, about 45.45%, have been doing business for 1 to 5 years. This means that almost half of the women are still quite new to the world of business. They are not beginners, but they are also not very experienced yet. This shows that many women have started their businesses in the last few years. It means that women's entrepreneurship is growing in Pasighat. More women are now interested in starting and running their businesses. Since most of them are still in the early years of their business journey, the business environment is still developing and growing. This is why we can say Pasighat has a young entrepreneurial ecosystem many women have just started and are building their businesses step by step.

3.1 Observation During Field Study

Most of young women (25-35 years) are the dominant entrepreneurial demographic. Retail businesses dominate, due to ease of starting and lower capital requirements, and a majority are relatively new businesses (less than 5years), showing increasing interest in entrepreneurship among women recently.

4. Educational Background and Business Training of Women Entrepreneurs

The data indicates that most women entrepreneurs in Pasighat lack formal business education and structured entrepreneurial training, with only a few having received mentorship or professional guidance. Their self-assessed knowledge in key areas such as financial management, marketing, business planning, and customer service remains largely moderate, reflecting limited exposure to advanced business skills. A significant majority acknowledge that this lack of training has affected their success and believe further education, particularly in marketing, financial literacy, digital skills, and leadership, would enhance their business growth. This highlights a critical need for targeted capacity-building programs to strengthen entrepreneurial competencies and ensure long-term sustainability.

5. Business Awareness Training for Women Entrepreneurship

The level of business awareness among women entrepreneurs in Pasighat is moderate, with notable gaps in formal training and structured knowledge. The majority of respondents reported that they had never received any formal entrepreneurship training or mentorship before starting their ventures. As a result, much of their operational knowledge has been acquired through personal experience, family support, and trial-and-error learning.

Awareness in key business areas such as marketing strategies, financial management, business planning, and customer service varies widely. While some entrepreneurs demonstrate a strong grasp of basic business functions, many indicated a need for a deeper understanding, particularly in managing finances and developing competitive market strategies. This is further reflected in the responses, showing that a significant proportion believe the lack of structured training has affected their business growth and sustainability.

In terms of technology-related awareness, the use of digital tools, such as social media platforms, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems, is on the rise. However, the confidence to fully leverage these tools for business expansion, brand promotion, and customer engagement

remains limited. Many entrepreneurs are aware of the existence of these platforms but lack the advanced knowledge to use them effectively for scaling operations and increasing profitability. Overall, the findings highlight that while there is a foundation of practical awareness, it is insufficient to meet the demands of an increasingly competitive and digitally-driven market. Targeted business awareness programs focusing on marketing, financial literacy, leadership, and digital skills could significantly enhance the capabilities of women entrepreneurs in Pasighat. Strengthening awareness in these areas would not only improve operational efficiency but also contribute to long-term business sustainability and competitiveness.

Table 4: Perceived Impact of Lack of Training

Response	Number of Women	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	4.4%
Agree	38	42.2%
Neutral	36	40.0%
Disagree	5	5.6%
Strongly Disagree	7	7.8%

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2025

The survey findings indicate that 47% of women entrepreneurs in Pasighat acknowledge that the lack of business training has negatively impacted their entrepreneurial success. Most respondents have never received formal business education or mentorship, resulting in only moderate levels of proficiency in key areas such as marketing, financial management, business planning, and customer service. This skills gap limits their ability to make strategic decisions, expand market reach, and enhance profitability. The data further reveals a strong demand for capacity-building programs, particularly in marketing, financial literacy, digital skills, and leadership. These results highlight the urgent need for targeted training initiatives that can strengthen business awareness, improve operational efficiency, and ensure the long-term sustainability of women-led enterprises in the region.

5.1 Observation During Field Study

During the field survey, a significant observation was that a large proportion of women entrepreneurs perceived a lack of training as a major factor affecting their business success. Many respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that insufficient business training had limited their ability to expand, innovate, and effectively manage operations. This was reflected in their expressed need for further education in areas such as marketing, financial literacy, digital skills, and leadership. Additionally, those without prior formal training often reported greater challenges in strategic decision-making, accessing markets, and coping with competition. The data indicated that enhanced, targeted training programs could directly improve entrepreneurial outcomes in Pasighat.

6. Business Education for Women Entrepreneurship

Business education is essential for empowering women entrepreneurs and enhancing their business performance. In Pasighat, survey findings show that a majority of women entrepreneurs have not received formal business education or training, limiting their skills in areas like financial

management, marketing, and business planning. Many acknowledged that this lack of training has directly affected their business success. Those with some training displayed better problem-solving abilities, market adaptability, and confidence in decision-making. The study also reveals a strong interest among women in acquiring skills, particularly in marketing, financial literacy, and digital tools. Addressing this gap through targeted workshops, mentorship programs, and government-supported initiatives can strengthen women’s entrepreneurial capabilities, improve competitiveness, and boost local economic growth.

Table 5: Need for Business Education

Response	Number of Women	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	17.8%
Agree	44	48.9%
Neutral	24	26.7%
Disagree	3	3.3%
Strongly Disagree	3	3.3%

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2025

The data indicates that 66.7% of respondents strongly believe that additional business education would significantly enhance their business performance. This finding underscores a substantial demand for accessible and practical learning opportunities among women entrepreneurs in Pasighat. The expressed need reflects both a recognition of existing skill gaps and an eagerness to adopt new strategies that could improve business operations, competitiveness, and sustainability. Such a high percentage also suggests that women entrepreneurs are aware of the benefits that structured training in areas like financial literacy, marketing, digital skills, and business planning can bring. By prioritising the design and delivery of targeted, context-specific educational programs, preferably flexible in format and affordable, stakeholders such as government agencies, NGOs, and educational institutions can empower women entrepreneurs to expand market access, strengthen business management, and contribute more effectively to local economic development.

6.1 Observation During Field Study

The field survey shows that most women entrepreneurs in Pasighat feel they need more business education to grow and improve their work. About 66.7% said extra training would help them run their businesses better. Many shared that without proper training, it is harder to manage money, market products, and face business challenges. This shows a clear need for simple and useful training programs in areas like finance, marketing, digital skills, and business planning to help women strengthen and sustain their businesses.

7. Understanding of Key Business Areas

Survey results show that while most women entrepreneurs in Pasighat rate themselves at a moderate level across key business skills such as financial management, marketing, business planning, and customer service, none of these areas reach a high competence level (average score above 3.5). This suggests that even in areas where women feel relatively confident, there is still considerable scope for improvement.

Table 6: Understanding of key Business Areas

Business Area	Average Rating
Financial Management	3.00
Marketing & sales	3.02
Business Planning	3.08
Customer Service	3.12

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2025

The absence of strong competence across all measured skills highlights the need for targeted capacity-building initiatives. Structured training programs, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on workshops can help bridge these gaps, enabling women entrepreneurs to operate more efficiently, compete effectively in the market, and adapt to evolving business challenges. Strengthening these skills would not only improve individual business performance but also contribute to the broader economic growth of the region.

7.1 Observation During Field Study

Many women entrepreneurs in Pasighat don't have formal business training. Over 95% have never had structured lessons. Still, they're confident in some business areas and eager to learn. Most believe more education would help their businesses grow. There's a gap between what they know and what they do, but they're adaptable and use digital tools well. They need accessible training programs to help them succeed.

Conclusion

The study shows that women entrepreneurs in Pasighat are predominantly in the 25–35 age group, indicating that the region's entrepreneurial landscape is driven by young and energetic business owners. Most are engaged in retail and service-based ventures, sectors that typically have lower entry barriers but also face intense competition. Their business experience is often limited to just a few years, reflecting a relatively young entrepreneurial ecosystem. Family support and community networks emerge as vital enablers, helping women overcome initial challenges and sustain their businesses. However, the absence of formal business education or structured training remains a major barrier, impacting their ability to manage finances effectively, market their products, and adopt modern business practices. Limited access to finance further restricts expansion opportunities, while digital adoption, though growing, is still underutilised due to gaps in digital literacy. Despite these challenges, the study highlights strong potential for growth. Many women expressed a clear interest in developing skills in marketing, financial literacy, and digital tools. Their willingness to embrace technology, coupled with targeted training and improved financial access, could significantly enhance their competitiveness. By addressing these gaps through tailored education, mentorship, and accessible funding, women entrepreneurs in Pasighat can not only achieve greater business success but also play a pivotal role in driving local economic development.

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