

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A PATH TO FINANCIAL STABILITY IN SINGLE-CAREER FAMILIES

Prof. Dipak B. Wakchaure

Assistant Professor, Amrutvahini Institute of Management & Business Administration, Sangamner. Maharashtra, India

Dr. Sachin S. Gunjal

Assistant Professor, Amrutvahini Sheti and Shikshan Vikas Sanstha's Amrutvahini Engineering College, Sangamner. Maharashtra, India

Abstract

*This research paper explores the transformative role of women entrepreneurs in fostering financial stability within single-income households, focusing on three women from Ahilyanagar and Nashik district, Maharashtra. The study aims to highlight how small-scale entrepreneurial ventures can empower women, enhance household income, and promote economic independence. The case study methodology was employed, involving in-depth interviews and field observations to understand the personal journeys, business strategies, challenges, and successes of the participants. The cases include **Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul**, who runs a home-based sewing machine business in Nandur Shingote village of Nashik District, **Meera Govind Shelke**, owner of a small cloth store in Samsherpur village of Ahilyanagar District and **Meena Shivaji Avhad**, who operates a beauty salon in Sinner, Nashik District. Key findings reveal that despite limited resources and societal constraints, these women have demonstrated remarkable resilience, adaptability, and entrepreneurial spirit. Their businesses not only supplement their family incomes but also contribute to their personal growth, self-confidence, and community recognition. The study underscores the significant potential of women's entrepreneurship as a tool for financial empowerment, suggesting that targeted support programs and access to resources can further enhance their impact on household stability and broader economic development.*

Introduction

Background of the Study

In many parts of India, particularly in rural and semi-urban regions, a single-income household remains the norm, with the man often being the sole breadwinner. In such households, financial constraints can limit the family's ability to achieve long-term economic stability and growth. However, recent shifts in the economic and social landscape have seen a gradual rise in women's participation in small-scale entrepreneurial ventures. Women, especially in rural areas like Ahilyanagar and Nashik district in Maharashtra, are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as a means to support their families financially and foster a sense of independence.

The study aims to shed light on how women in single-income families use entrepreneurship as a tool to combat financial instability. By examining the stories of three women from these regions—**Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul** (sewing business), **Meera Govind Shelke** (cloth store), and **Meena Shivaji Avhad** (beauty salon)—the paper highlights the significance of women-led small businesses in improving the financial well-being of single-income households.

• Importance of Dual Income in Families

The importance of dual income in households cannot be overstated. In today's world, relying on a single income, particularly in a single-income household, often falls short of meeting the rising costs of living, education, healthcare, and other

essential services. Dual-income families have been found to have greater financial resilience and the ability to save for future expenses, such as property, children's education, or emergency situations. In rural and semi-urban settings, where salaries may be low and job opportunities scarce, having an additional source of income can significantly impact the quality of life and overall financial security of a household.

• Problems Faced by Single-Income Households

Single-income households face several challenges, most notably financial instability. The primary earner is often under significant pressure to meet the needs of the family, which may include providing for children, managing household expenses, and ensuring basic needs are met. In many cases, unexpected health issues, emergencies, or educational expenses can push these families into debt. With only one person contributing financially, there is little room for savings or long-term planning, leading to a cycle of stress and insecurity.

For women in single-income households, these challenges are compounded by societal expectations and limited access to resources or opportunities. Women often face significant barriers, including limited mobility, restricted access to credit, and a lack of technical skills or education that would allow them to enter the workforce or expand their entrepreneurial activities.

• **Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Supporting Family Income**

Women entrepreneurs, particularly those in rural and semi-urban areas, play an increasingly vital role in supporting their families' financial well-being. By launching small businesses, women are able to contribute to household income while maintaining flexible schedules that accommodate family responsibilities. The businesses undertaken by women entrepreneurs, such as tailoring, beauty services, or small retail ventures, often require minimal investment and can be operated from home or in the local community.

These ventures not only provide additional income but also help build confidence, leadership skills, and economic independence for women. Moreover, women's entrepreneurship has the potential to disrupt traditional gender roles, offering a pathway to empowerment and social mobility. Women entrepreneurs not only benefit their immediate families but also contribute to local economies by creating employment opportunities and stimulating demand for products and services.

• **Objectives of the Research Paper**

The primary objectives of this research paper are as follows:

1. To examine the financial challenges faced by single-income families.
2. To understand the role of housewives in contributing to family income through small businesses.
3. To identify the types of small business activities undertaken by housewives.
4. To explore the socio-economic impact of such entrepreneurial efforts on family well-being.
5. To present case studies highlighting the journey of a housewife's who successfully supported their family through a small business initiative.
6. To provide recommendations for supporting women entrepreneurship in single-career couple families.

• **Methodology**

This research employs a **case study methodology** to explore the impact of small-scale entrepreneurial activities led by women in single-income households. The case study approach is particularly suitable for this research as it allows for an in-depth examination of real-life experiences, challenges, and successes of women entrepreneurs in the context of their local environment in Ahilyanagar and Nashik district, Maharashtra. This method provides rich qualitative insights into the entrepreneurial journeys of the selected participants, offering a comprehensive

understanding of how their businesses contribute to household financial stability.

• **Data Collection Techniques**

The research utilizes both **primary** and **secondary data** collection methods to ensure a robust and well-rounded analysis.

• **Primary Data**

Primary data were collected directly from the participants through various techniques to capture both qualitative and quantitative aspects of their entrepreneurial activities.

1. **Interviews with the Housewives (In-depth or Structured):**

- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with **Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul, Meera Govind Shelke, and Meena Shivaji Avhad** to gain detailed insights into their entrepreneurial experiences.
- The interviews focused on key areas such as business motivation, challenges faced, strategies used to overcome obstacles, and the impact of their businesses on family finances.
- Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used to allow for detailed narratives while capturing specific data points.

2. **Observation of Business Operations:**

- Direct observation of the daily operations of the participants' businesses was carried out to understand the practical aspects of running their ventures.
- This involved noting business processes, customer interactions, inventory management, and the work environment.
- Observations helped supplement interview data, providing context to the women's entrepreneurial activities.

3. **Financial Data (Before and After Business Income):**

- Financial records, including income statements, expense logs, and savings patterns, were reviewed to assess the financial impact of their businesses.
- Comparative analysis was performed to evaluate changes in household income before and after starting their entrepreneurial activities, highlighting the role of their businesses in improving financial stability.

• Secondary Data

Secondary data provided a contextual backdrop for the research, enabling the comparison of the case study findings with broader trends and statistics.

1. Articles, Government Reports, and Previous Research:

- A review of academic articles, policy reports, and studies on women entrepreneurship in India, particularly focusing on rural and semi-urban areas, was conducted.
- Government publications on women empowerment, small-scale industries, and rural development programs provided additional insights into the socio-economic factors affecting women entrepreneurs.

2. Statistics on Women Entrepreneurship and Home-Based Businesses:

- National and state-level statistics on women's participation in entrepreneurship were analysed to understand the prevalence and growth of home-based businesses.
- Data from sources such as the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, National Statistics Office (NSO), and other relevant agencies helped contextualize the case study findings within broader economic trends.

This mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and observations with quantitative financial data and secondary research, ensures a comprehensive understanding of the role of women entrepreneurs in supporting family income in single-income households.

Profile of the Family

Demographic Data			
Parameter	Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul	Meera Govind Shelke	Meena Shivaji Avhad
Age	30 years	28 years	29 years
Education	10 th Grade	12 th Grade	Diploma
Family Size	4 members (Couple + 2 children)	4 members (Couple + 2 daughters)	3 members (Couple + 1 child)
Location	Nandur Shingote, Nashik, Maharashtra	Samsherpur, Ahilyanagar Maharashtra	Sinner, Nashik, Maharashtra
Socio-Economic Background	Husband is Painter, Low & Irregular-Income Family.	Husband is MIDC Worker, Steady & moderate-income Family	Husband is Construction worker, Low & Irregular-Income family,

2. Nature of the Business

a) Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul - Sewing Machine Business

- **Type of Business:** Custom tailoring and embroidery services
- **Reason for Choosing:** Ashwini's mother had prior sewing experience and noticed a local demand for custom clothes.
- **Initial Investment:** INR 15,000 (for a sewing machine, threads, fabrics, and other accessories)
- **Funding Source:** RS.10000 Loan from Women's Self-Help Group & RS.5000 Self Capital

b) Meera Govind Shelke - Small Cloth Store

- **Type of Business:** Retail store selling ready-made clothes and fabrics
- **Reason for Choosing:** Her family was struggling a lot financially. Her husband was the only bread winner for the family and they are not able manage the family expenses in single salary.
- **Initial Investment:** INR 30,000 (for inventory, shop rental, and basic setup)

- **Funding Source:** RS.15000 Loan from Women's Self-Help Group & RS.10000 Support from Relatives & RS.5000 Self Capital.

c) Meena Shivaji Avhad - Beauty Salon

- **Type of Business:** Beauty salon offering services like haircuts, facials, waxing, and makeup
- **Reason for Choosing:** Her husband was paralysed and lost the job. He was the only bread earner for the family. the family was struggling a lot for medical treatment and family expenses.
- **Initial Investment:** INR 25,000 (for salon equipment, products, and rent)
- **Funding Source:** RS.15000 Loan from Women's Self-Help Group & RS.15000 Self Capital.

3. Business Setup Journey

a) Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul

- **Challenges:** Limited access to capital, lack of advanced sewing techniques, and societal scepticism about women working outside the home.

- **Support Received:** Encouragement from her family and financial help from local women's self-help groups & guidance from her mother who had experience in tailoring
- **Marketing:** Word-of-mouth referrals & local women community networks.
- **b) Meera Govind Shelke**
- **Challenges:** Difficulty in sourcing quality material at reasonable prices and competition from larger stores.
- **Support Received:** Financial assistance from local self-help group, relatives and family.
- **Marketing:** Social media promotion, and customer referrals.

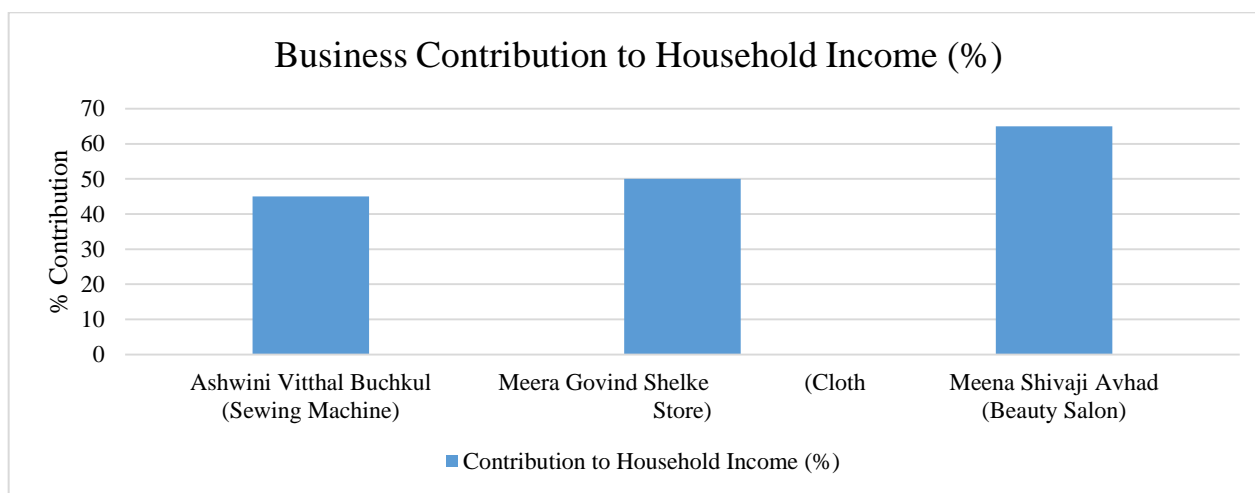
c) Meena Shivaji Avhad

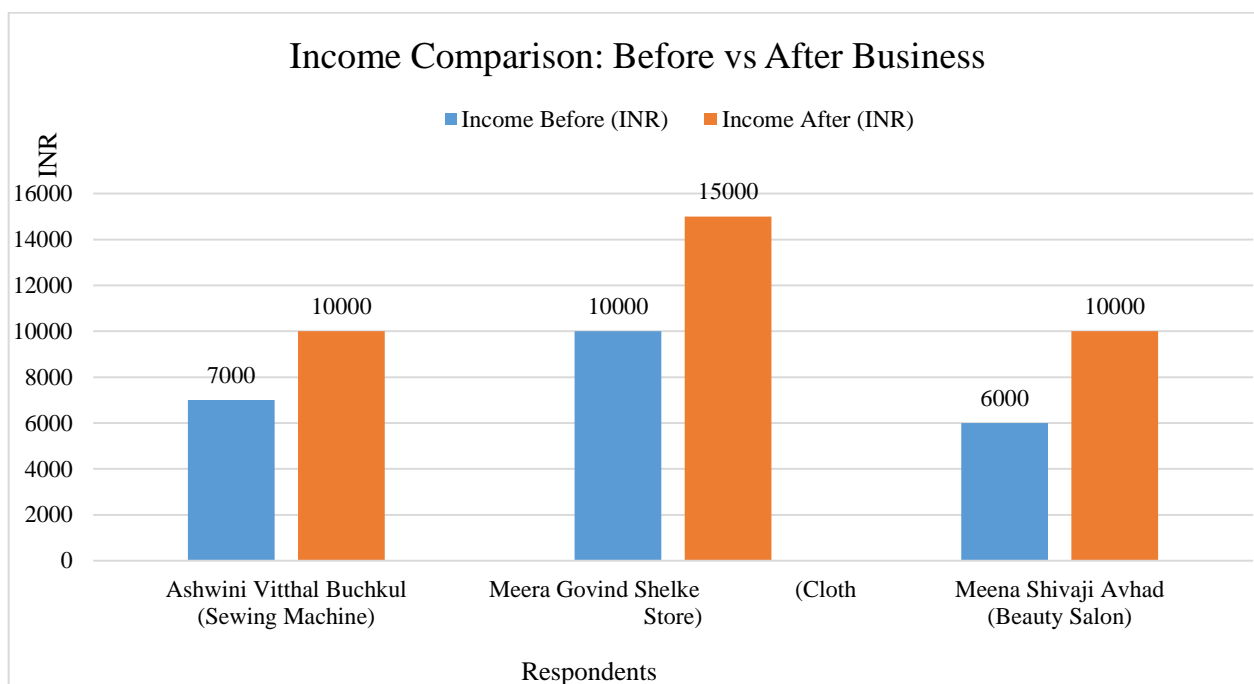
- **Challenges:** Initial difficulty in attracting customers due to lack of established reputation and financial constraints for beauty salon equipment.
- **Support Received:** Help from a friend who already had a beauty salon, provided initial training and tips for client management. Financial Support from Self Help group & Family to purchase the initial equipment's.
- **Marketing:** Local flyers, visit to local wedding halls for promotion in wedding season, word-of-mouth, and offering free services for the first few customers to build a client base

3. Financial Outcome:

Table & Chart Showing the Financial Outcome of Business.

Sr. No	Name of the Women Entrepreneur	Monthly Income (Before Business) (INR)	Monthly Income (After Business) (INR)	Contribution (INR)	Contribution to Household Income (%)
1	Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul (Sewing Machine)	7,000	10,000	3,000	43%
2	Meera Govind Shelke (Cloth Store)	10,000	15,000	5,000	50%
3	Meena Shivaji Avhad (Beauty Salon)	6,000	10,000	4,000	65%





• **Key Financial Findings:**

All three women experienced a substantial increase in household income, with their businesses contributing over 40-60 % of their family's total income. Their savings grew steadily, enabling them to invest in their children's education and household improvements.

5. Impact on Family Dynamics

a) Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul

- **Financial Relief:** Reduced financial dependency on her husband, allowing for more flexibility in household spending.
- **Confidence:** Gained self-esteem through financial independence and recognition within the community.
- **Role Change:** Became a role model for other women in the village, inspiring them to pursue entrepreneurship.

b) Meera Govind Shelke

- **Financial Relief:** Enabled her family to afford better education for their daughters and improved living conditions.
- **Confidence:** Developed leadership skills and confidence in managing her own business.
- **Role Change:** Took on a more prominent decision-making role in household finances.

c) Meena Shivaji Avhad

- **Financial Relief:** Provided a stable income stream that supported the family during her husband's periods of unemployment.
- **Confidence:** Enhanced her self-worth and sense of purpose, empowering her to expand her business.

- **Role Change:** Transitioned from being solely a caregiver to a key financial contributor to her family.

• **Social and Emotional Changes**

a) Self-Empowerment and Confidence

- **Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul:** Gained confidence in managing finances, improved self-esteem, and became a role model in her community.
- **Meera Govind Shelke:** Developed leadership skills, gained respect in her community, and became an independent decision-maker in family matters.
- **Meena Shivaji Avhad:** Experienced emotional growth, increased self-worth, and became financially autonomous, reducing dependency on her husband.

b) Family Dynamics

- **Greater Role in Decision-Making:** All three women played an active role in financial decisions, shifting traditional gender roles.
- **Improved Family Relationships:** Their contributions led to mutual respect and stronger family bonds.

c) Societal Perceptions

- Initially, they faced societal scepticism, but their business success transformed perceptions, inspiring other women to consider entrepreneurship.

Summary of Findings

- **Financial Impact:** All three women experienced a significant increase in household income, with their businesses

contributing over 50% of the total family income. Their savings improved substantially, providing financial security and reducing dependency on a single income source.

- **Social and Emotional Empowerment:** The women gained confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy. They became key decision-makers in their families, challenging traditional gender roles and inspiring other women in their communities.
- **Business Growth:** Despite facing challenges such as limited access to capital, societal scepticism, and time constraints, they successfully managed and expanded their businesses.
- **Role of Support Systems:** Family support, community networks, and local women's groups played crucial roles in their entrepreneurial success.

Key Learnings

- **Entrepreneurship as a Tool for Empowerment:** Financial independence through entrepreneurship fosters not just economic growth but also enhances women's social status and decision-making power.
- **Micro-Entrepreneurship Potential:** Small-scale businesses, even with minimal investments, can significantly impact household finances and community development.
- **Importance of Skills and Training:** Leveraging existing skills and participating in vocational training can help women start sustainable businesses.
- **Support Networks Matter:** Strong family support and community connections are critical for overcoming challenges in entrepreneurial ventures.

Conclusion

This research paper explored the transformative impact of women entrepreneurship on single-income households through the case studies of **Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul, Meera Govind Shelke, and Meena Shivaji Avhad** from Ahilyanagar and Nashik district, Maharashtra. Their entrepreneurial journeys provide valuable insights into how small

businesses can drive financial stability, personal empowerment, and positive social change.

References / Bibliography

1. Academic Journals and Books:

1. Chowdhury, M. (2019). *Gender Roles and Women Entrepreneurship: A Study of Family Dynamics in Rural India*. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 28(4), 445–460.
2. Deshmukh, P. R., & Raut, P. R. (2020). *Exploratory Study on Women Entrepreneurs in Maharashtra with Reference to Issues in Financial Matters*. *International Journal of Advances in Management*, 9(4), 9–16.
3. Gupta, R., & Sharma, A. (2022). *The Psychological Impact of Women Entrepreneurship on Self-Esteem and Confidence*. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(3), 124–138.
4. Kabeer, N. (1999). *Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment*. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435–464.
5. Patil, S. (2021). *A Few Cases of Women Entrepreneurs of Kolhapur Maharashtra*. *Research Gate*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net>
6. Reddy, P., & Kumar, S. (2018). *Barriers to Women Entrepreneurship in Rural India: A Study of Socio-Cultural Constraints*. *Rural Development Journal*, 34(1), 85–100.
7. Singh, A., & Verma, S. (2017). *The Role of Micro entrepreneurship in Women Empowerment: A Study of Rural Women in India*. *Journal of Rural Development*, 36(2), 215–230.

2. Government Schemes and Policies:

- *Government of India*. (2023). *Women Entrepreneurship Schemes in India*. *Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship*.
- *Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises*. (n.d.). *Schemes for the Development and Promotion of Women Entrepreneurs*. Retrieved from <https://www.dcmsme.gov.in>
- *NITI Aayog*. (2022). *Decoding Government Support to Women Entrepreneurs in India*. *Government of India*. Retrieved from <https://www.niti.gov.in>
- *Press Information Bureau*. (2025, January 27). *India's Women Entrepreneurs*. Retrieved from <https://pib.gov.in>

- **Photographs of Women With their business:**



Mrs. Meera Govind Shelke
(With her - Cloth Store Business)



Mrs. Ashwini Vitthal Buchkul
(With her - Sewing Machine Business)