

Factors Working in Favor of Indian Women Entrepreneurs in 2017

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By [Ambika Sharma](#) March 8, 2017

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With female professionals holding only 12% seats in global board rooms, women entrepreneurs and business leaders are still a pretty rare breed today. The entrepreneurial landscape in India is no exception. According to the Sixth Economic Consensus, conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), women accounted for a paltry 13.76% of the 58.5 million entrepreneurs operational in the country. These statistics are quite worrisome, especially in a day and age where gender egalitarianism in workplaces is one of the most urgent global issues.

But the times, they are a-changing. The year 2017 is being touted as the year when the country's female professionals will finally break through the glass ceiling. Here's looking at a couple of factors which have been playing a crucial role in enabling this much awaited rise of the new-age Indian businesswomen:

- **More women, more power**

According to the recent report by LinkedIn, the number of women in leadership positions in India has increased by 25%. This greater representation of women as business leaders at the workplace is working in the favour of female professionals; not only is it rapidly dispelling the misinformed notion that women cannot be good business leaders, but has also given rise to more women-led businesses. Moreover, having more women in leadership roles provides the next generation of female entrepreneurs with role models to look up to, and also unlocks better mentoring opportunities for them.

- **Drastic changes in societal norms**

More and more women are now enrolling for higher education, joining the corporate workforce, and setting up their enterprises. This has triggered a massive shift in the prevailing social mindset and has led to a breaking down of gender-based barriers. The current generation has grown up seeing women working in and leading professional setups across various industries, and is therefore not surprised at female entrepreneurs taking charge of their own businesses. There is also a tangible decline in the social pressures that Indian women have had to face traditionally. They are no longer expected to just get married and 'settle down', nor are they expected to give up their professional ambitions to become homemakers after marriage. This minimises the resistance that Indian women now face while starting their own ventures.

- **Increasing government support**

Various government initiatives, such as 'Stand Up India', have played a vital role in the creation of this promising outlook for female business leaders by empowering women across the country with the support system and the skill set needed to make the entrepreneurial leap. Financial aid and loans between INR 10 lakh to INR 1 crore are being offered to female entrepreneurs under the 'Stand Up India' programme in order to promote entrepreneurship amongst women. These initiatives are most likely to benefit female entrepreneurs in the traditionally underserved rural, semi-urban, and tier-2/tier-3 geographies. This is supplemented by the overall upbeat sentiment generated by the Indian entrepreneurial sector, which has been one of the most prominent avenues of job creation and has attracted significant investor attention over the past couple of years.

The dearth of female entrepreneurs and business leaders has been one of the major issues which have hindered both the progress of Indian women and the rise of India as a global economic superpower. But with key stakeholders realising the impact women-led ventures can have on the overall business landscape, things are poised to change for the better. Enterprises with women at the helm are already performing better than their peers in various independent industry studies and reports. The time is ripe for aspiring female entrepreneurs in India to make the most of this unparalleled opportunity and drive forward not just their own business visions, but also the country's economy.



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