



Comparative Study of Perception of College-Going Boys and Girls Towards Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship equips youth with creativity, problem-solving skills, and financial independence. It drives economic development and empowers them to shape a better future. The primary objective of the present research was to conduct a comparative analysis of the perception of college-going boys and girls towards entrepreneurship, with a specific focus on Jammu and Kashmir. The study aimed to explore gender-based differences in entrepreneurial attitudes, motivations, and challenges to provide insights for policy interventions and educational reforms. A stratified random sampling was used to select participants from a college. The sample comprised of 100 respondents (50 males and 50 females) to ensure statistical reliability. The data was collected using a structured Google Form questionnaire, which was distributed through online platforms such as WhatsApp. A chi-square test was conducted to compare the differences in entrepreneurial perceptions between male and female students. There was no statistically significant difference between genders in terms of entrepreneurial awareness but statistically significant association was found between gender and the preferred sources of entrepreneurial information, entrepreneurship opportunities, awareness of government policies and entrepreneurial motivations. No significant gender-based differences was found as far as awareness of financial and legal knowledge, preferred business sectors and support system and training needs for entrepreneurship were concerned. Based on the results of the study, the recommendations were suggested to educational institutions and policymakers to consider developing tailored programs that incorporate both personal mentorship opportunities and robust online resources to foster entrepreneurial skills across the student population. Institutions should enhance awareness, training, financial literacy, digital networking, and policy support to foster inclusive student entrepreneurship.

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"Entrepreneurship is the key to unlocking the potential of young people, providing them with opportunities to innovate, create jobs, and contribute to economic growth." – Narendra Modi

I. Introduction

By encouraging innovation, creating jobs, and propelling social and industrial advancement, entrepreneurship has a profoundly positive impact on economic growth. There has never been a greater demand for resilient and agile entrepreneurs as countries move towards knowledge-based sectors. Recognizing the power of entrepreneurship, governments worldwide, including India, are increasingly promoting youth entrepreneurship as a means to drive economic self-reliance and sustainable development. Initiatives like Startup India, Stand-Up India, and Atma nirbhar Bharat reflect the government's emphasis on encouraging young minds to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. The popularity of entrepreneurship among youth has grown significantly, driven by changing aspirations, technological advancements, and greater access to resources. Young individuals today are more inclined toward self-employment, driven by the desire for independence, innovation, and financial success. Studies have shown that entrepreneurial intention among college students is influenced by multiple factors, including personality traits, social environment, education, and government policies (Sharma & Madan, 2014). With the rapid evolution of the global economy, entrepreneurial mindsets among youth have become increasingly important. In India, where 65% of the population is below the age of 35,

fostering entrepreneurship among young individuals is crucial for addressing unemployment and achieving sustainable economic growth (NITI Aayog, 2022).

However, gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions persist. Research by Gupta et al. (2009) highlights that male students tend to exhibit higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy and risk-taking behavior compared to their female counterparts. Similarly, Wilson, Kickul, and Marlino (2007) found that male students displayed greater confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities, which directly impacted their willingness to start a business. On the other hand, studies by Barber et al. (2021) and Ghouse et al. (2017) emphasize that exposure to entrepreneurial environments and targeted support mechanisms can significantly improve female students' entrepreneurial aspirations.

Gender Differences in Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Intentions

Barber et al. (2021) assessed the entrepreneurial attitudes of Indian university students and found that males scored higher across all subscales of the Entrepreneurial Attitudes Orientation survey. The study also highlighted that direct exposure to small business operations positively influenced entrepreneurial attitudes, suggesting that practical experience plays a significant role in shaping perceptions. Similarly, an international survey by Dabic et al. (2012) explored gender differences in attitudes towards entrepreneurship among university students from multiple countries. The findings revealed that female students were less inclined to start their own businesses, citing lower self-confidence and higher levels of concern and reluctance compared to their male counterparts. This study underscores the universal nature of certain gender disparities in entrepreneurial intentions. Contrastingly, some studies suggest that gender may not be a critical factor in determining entrepreneurial intention. For instance, research by Huezo-Ponce and Saiz-Álvarez (2020) found no significant gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions among university students, indicating that other variables, such as cultural context and individual personality traits, may play more pivotal roles.

Influence of Entrepreneurial Exposure and Support

Exposure to entrepreneurial environments and perceived support significantly impact students' entrepreneurial intentions. Barber et al. (2021) emphasized that previous work experience with small businesses was associated with higher entrepreneurial attitudes among Indian students. This suggests that practical exposure can mitigate some gender disparities by enhancing confidence and competence in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, a study by Tian et al. (2022) examined the role of perceived entrepreneurial support and found that it mediates the relationship between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention. Interestingly, the study revealed that while proactive male students exhibited stronger entrepreneurial intentions, the positive association between perceived support and entrepreneurial intention was more pronounced among female students. This highlights the importance of tailored support mechanisms to foster entrepreneurial aspirations, especially among women.

Educational Interventions and Self-Efficacy

Educational programs play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Dabic et al. (2012) found that both male and female students expressed a need for entrepreneurial mentoring and structured tutoring within academic institutions. However, female students rated these needs higher, indicating a greater desire for support in building self-confidence and navigating entrepreneurial pathways. Sharma and Madan (2014) investigated factors affecting youth entrepreneurship in Uttarakhand and found that individual traits such as risk-taking propensity and locus of control significantly influenced entrepreneurial intentions. The study also noted gender differences, with male students displaying higher entrepreneurial intentions, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive educational interventions to encourage female entrepreneurship.

Significance

While numerous studies have been conducted on entrepreneurial intention and gender disparities at national and international levels, limited research has focused specifically on the entrepreneurial aspirations of students in Jammu and Kashmir. The region presents unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics that may influence students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Given the government's increasing focus on fostering entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir through initiatives like the *J&K Startup Policy 2018* and various skill development programs, there is a pressing need to assess whether these initiatives have effectively impacted the youth's entrepreneurial mindset. This study aims to fill this research gap by providing empirical evidence on the perceptions of male and female students in the region, thereby contributing to a more localized understanding of gender and entrepreneurship. The present research was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To examine the level of awareness in entrepreneurship among college-going boys and girls.
2. To analyze gender-based differences in entrepreneurial intentions, preferred business sectors and training needs.

3. To suggest recommendations based on the findings of the study.

II. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive and comparative research design to analyze the perception of college-going boys and girls towards entrepreneurship. A quantitative approach is employed to collect and analyze data, ensuring objective insights into gender-based differences in entrepreneurial attitudes, motivations, and challenges. The target population for this study comprises college students in Jammu and Kashmir. A stratified random sampling was used to select participants from a college, ensuring diversity in terms of educational background and demographic characteristics. The sample size will be comprised of 100 respondents (50 males and 50 females) to ensure statistical reliability. The data was collected using a structured Google Form questionnaire, which was distributed through online platforms such as WhatsApp. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) was used to summarize the demographic and response data. A chi-square test was conducted to compare the differences in entrepreneurial perceptions between male and female students.

III. Results and discussion:

The results are analyzed and discussed under the following headings:

- A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
- B. Entrepreneurial Awareness and Exposure
- C. Gender Disparities in Entrepreneurial Motivational Factors
- D. Support System and Training Needs

A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic analysis of the 100 college students surveyed reveals that a majority (62%) are aged between 18 and 20 years, with the remaining 38% between 21 and 23 years. In terms of academic disciplines, students are distributed across Commerce (33%), Science (22%), Humanities (35%), and other fields (10%). Notably, a significant portion of the participants (67%) originate from rural areas, while 33% are from urban backgrounds (Table 1). This demographic profile suggests a predominantly young cohort with a diverse range of academic interests and a higher representation of students from rural settings.

B. Entrepreneurial Awareness and Exposure

The analysis of entrepreneurial awareness among the surveyed college students revealed high levels of awareness, with 88% of respondents indicating full awareness and 10% reporting partial awareness (Table 2). To investigate possible gender variations in the degrees of entrepreneurial awareness between male and female students, a Chi-Square test was used. The results yielded a χ^2 value of 2.045 with a p-value of 0.360, indicating no statistically significant difference between genders in terms of entrepreneurial awareness.

These findings suggest that both male and female students possess comparable levels of awareness regarding entrepreneurship. This aligns with previous research indicating that while gender disparities often exist in entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy, awareness levels tend to be similar across genders. For instance, a study by Dabic et al. (2012) found that although female students exhibited lower self-confidence and higher apprehension towards entrepreneurship, their overall awareness and perceived support were comparable to their male counterparts. Comparable exposure and awareness levels between the sexes are suggested by research by Nabila et al. (2024), which also showed that male and female students participate in knowledge discovery activities linked to entrepreneurship at comparable rates.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (N = 100)
Age Group (Years)			
18-20	30	32	62
21-23	20	18	38
Stream of Education			
Commerce	15	18	33
Science	12	10	22
Humanities	18	17	35
Others	5	5	10
Nativity			
Urban	18	15	33
Rural	32	35	67

Table2 : Awareness of Entrepreneurship Among College Students

	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (%)
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Entrepreneurial Awareness

Yes	45	43	88
No	-	2	2
Partial	5	5	10

value: 2.045 , p-value: 0.360, no significant difference

Table 3 : Sources of information regarding Entrepreneurship Among College Students

Sources of information	Male (n = 50)	Female(n = 50)	Total (%)
Formal Education	15	12	27
Social and Media online	15	28	43
Family and peer influence	20	10	30
Practical Exposure	-	-	-

value: 7.597, p-value: 0.022, Significant difference

Sources of information

Information sources regarding entrepreneurship among college students revealed significant gender-based differences. As depicted in Table 3, male students predominantly rely on family and peer influence (40%) and formal education (30%) for entrepreneurial information, whereas female students primarily utilize social and online media (56%) and formal education (24%). A Chi-Square test indicates a statistically significant association between gender and the preferred sources of entrepreneurial information ($\chi^2 = 7.597$, $p = 0.022$).

These findings suggest that male students were more inclined to gather entrepreneurial insights through personal networks, while female students tend to leverage digital platforms and social media. This trend aligns with a study conducted by Barber et al. (2019) found that male students often engage in knowledge exploration through direct interpersonal interactions, whereas female students prefer structured online resources and social media platforms for entrepreneurial learning. Similarly, research by Abirami and Kumar (2014) indicated that while both male and female students exhibit entrepreneurial interest, their primary sources of information differ, with males leaning towards familial and peer influences and females towards formal education and online media. Understanding these distinct preferences is crucial for designing targeted interventions that effectively cater to the informational needs of both genders. Educational institutions and policymakers should consider developing tailored programs that incorporate both personal mentorship opportunities and robust online resources to foster entrepreneurial skills across the student population.

Table 4 : Awareness of Entrepreneurial Opportunities.

Awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (%)
Business creation steps			
Yes	22	19	41
No	28	31	59
Different business models			
Yes	38	20	58
No	12	30	42
Promising Industries			
Yes	36	31	67
No	14	19	33
Famous entrepreneurs			
Yes	47	35	82
No	3	15	18

value: 24.559, p-value: 0.0009, Significant difference

Awareness of Entrepreneurial Opportunities.

There are significant gender-based disparities in college students' awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities. According to Table 4, male students are more aware than their female counterparts in areas like business formation procedures (44% vs. 38%), various business models (76% vs. 40%), promising industries (72% vs. 62%), and knowledge of well-known entrepreneurs (94% vs. 70%). The statistical importance of these differences is confirmed by a Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 24.559$, $p = 0.0009$). These results are consistent with earlier studies showing differences in entrepreneurial awareness between genders, despite having equal access to information as male students, a study by Dabic et al. (2012) discovered that female students frequently feel less confident and more anxious about starting their own business. Similarly, study by Baber (2023) revealed that

female students' inclinations to pursue sustainable entrepreneurship are more strongly influenced by moral obligation, indicating that gender-specific motivating variables differ. In contrast, some research indicates that there are no appreciable gender disparities in entrepreneurial awareness. According to Nabila et al. (2024), students of both sexes participate in entrepreneurship-related knowledge exploration activities at comparable rates, suggesting that exposure and awareness levels are equal.

Awareness of Government policies.

The examination of government policy awareness among college students highlights notable gender disparities. As illustrated in Table 5, a larger percentage of male students (76%) are aware of government schemes compared to female students (48%). Additionally, more male students (60%) recognize barriers to accessing these schemes than their female peers (36%). The data also indicates that 44% of male students have attempted to apply for government schemes, whereas only 28% of female students have made such efforts. A Chi-Square test confirms that these differences are statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 16.87$, $p = 0.0048$). These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating gender differences in awareness and use of government entrepreneurial programs. For example, Dhanapal et al., (2024) found that male students were more informed about government initiatives promoting entrepreneurship than female students. Similarly, Usha and Pushpalata (2021) observed that male entrepreneurs were more adept at identifying and overcoming bureaucratic challenges in accessing government support compared to their female counterparts. On the other hand, Nabila and Kumar (2024) reported contrasting findings, indicating no significant gender gap in awareness of government schemes among college students. Their study suggested that both male and female students possessed similar levels of knowledge regarding available government support.

Table 5: Awareness of Government policies.

Awareness of government policies	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (%)
Awareness of govt. schemes			
Yes			
No	38	24	62
	12	26	38
Perceived barriers to accessing schemes			
Yes			
No	30	18	48
	20	32	52
Attempted to apply for government schemes.			
Yes			
No	22	14	36
	28	36	64

value: 16.87, p-value: 0.0048, Significant difference

Table 6: Awareness of Financial and Legal Knowledge

Awareness of Financial and Legal Knowledge	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (%)
Awareness of startup funding options			
Yes	32	28	60
No	18	22	40
Knowledge of business registration			
Yes			
No	27	23	50
	23	27	50
Perceived risks of starting a business			
Yes	35	30	65
No	15	20	35

χ^2 value: 2.41, p-value: 0.791, No Significant difference

Awareness of Financial and Legal Knowledge

The analysis of financial and legal knowledge among college students, as presented in Table 6, indicates no significant gender-based differences. Both male and female students exhibit comparable levels of awareness regarding startup funding options (64% and 56%, respectively), business registration processes (54%

and 46%), and perceived risks associated with starting a business (70% and 60%). The Chi-Square test confirms the absence of statistically significant differences between genders in these areas ($\chi^2 = 2.41$, $p = 0.791$). These findings contrast with research conducted by Chen and Volpe (2002) that male college students generally possess higher financial literacy levels than their female counterparts, potentially due to greater confidence and engagement in financial matters. Similarly, a study by Lusardi and Mitchell (2008) reported that women often exhibit lower financial knowledge, which may impede their entrepreneurial intentions and capabilities. The current study's results align with a study by April et al. (2024) that while historical data indicated significant gender differences in financial literacy, contemporary cohorts of male and female college students demonstrate more comparable levels of financial understanding and confidence. This shift may be attributed to increased access to financial education resources and changing societal norms encouraging female participation in entrepreneurial activities.

C. Gender Disparities in Entrepreneurial Motivational Factors

An investigation of college students' entrepreneurial motivation reveals significant gender-based differences, as seen in Table 7. Male students (36%) and female students (40%) both say that money is their primary source of motivation. Nonetheless, there are significant differences in other motivating factors: female students are more motivated by innovation and creativity (20%), whilst male students are more influenced by family (28%) and a love of business (30%). These differences are statistically significant, as confirmed by a Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 14.77$, $p = 0.0052$). These findings aligned with previous research indicating gender-specific entrepreneurial motivations found that while both men and women are influenced by push and pull factors, women are more motivated by the desire for independence and considerations for their children, whereas men are more driven by job dissatisfaction (Kirkwood, 2009). Similarly, a study by Nabila and Kumar (2024) highlighted that increasing innovativeness and self-efficacy is key to enhancing students' knowledge exploration and exploitation, with agreeableness aiding female students in exploration activities. Ward et al. (2019) found that while both male and female students exhibit entrepreneurial intentions, their motivations differ, with males often driven by personal fulfillment and females by social impact considerations. Additionally, research by Sarmah and Sahidullah (2022) indicated that male entrepreneurs are largely motivated by factors such as necessity and opportunity, whereas female entrepreneurs often pursue entrepreneurship due to chance occurrences and personal circumstances.

Table 7: Entrepreneurial motivation

Entrepreneurial motivation	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (%)
Financial motivation	18	20	38
Passion for business	15	10	25
Family influence	14	10	24
Job dissatisfaction	3	-	3
Innovation and creativity	-	10	10

χ^2 value: 14.77, p-value: 0.0052, Significant difference

Table 8: Preferred business sectors

Business sectors	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (%)
Technology	15	10	25
E- commerce	10	7	17
Food and related	7	10	17
Education	5	8	13
Fashion	6	9	15
Agriculture	3	15	18
Others	4	1	5

χ^2 value: 12.34, p-value: 0.0547, No Significant difference

Preferred business sectors

The analysis of preferred business sectors among college students, as presented in Table 8, indicates no significant gender-based differences. Male and female students exhibit similar preferences across various sectors, with technology (25%), e-commerce (17%), and agriculture (18%) being the most favored. The Chi-Square test confirms the absence of statistically significant differences between genders in sector preferences ($\chi^2 = 12.34$, $p = 0.0547$). These findings aligned with previous research, study analyzing Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) data found that although women are underrepresented in certain industries, their entrepreneurial activities span a wide range of sectors similar to those of men.

D. Support System and Training Needs

Table 9 presents the results of an investigation of college students' training needs and support networks for entrepreneurship, which shows no discernible gender-based disparities. According to 88% of male students and 84% of female students, the support that their college provides for entrepreneurial endeavours is perceived similarly by male and female students. Additionally, the demand for financial support is nearly unanimous across genders, with 96% of both male and female students expressing this need. Mentorship is sought by 66% of male students and 54% of female students, while interest in business training is high among both groups (84% of males and 80% of females). Networking opportunities are desired by 76% of male students and 62% of female students. The demand for government incentives is also prevalent, with all male students and 82% of female students indicating interest. The Chi-Square test confirms the absence of statistically significant differences between genders in these areas ($\chi^2 = 14.28$, $p = 0.218$). These findings align with previous research suggesting that while male and female students may have different entrepreneurial intentions, their support and training needs are often comparable. For instance, a study by Dabić et al. (2012) found that both male and female university students emphasized the importance of establishing entrepreneurial mentoring and appropriate tutoring structures to succeed in entrepreneurial careers. Similarly, research by Njeru et al. (2012) indicated that both genders recognize the significance of financial support and business training in fostering entrepreneurial activities. Another study by Nabila and Kumar (2024) found no significant gender differences in how innovativeness affects knowledge exploration and exploitation activities among students, emphasizing the need for customized entrepreneurship programs that address gender-specific needs, such as mentorship and access to resources, to boost entrepreneurial intentions for both male and female students. Similarly, research by Barber et al. (2021) indicated that while female students may score lower in entrepreneurial intention compared to male students, the differences in attitudes towards entrepreneurship are consistent across genders, suggesting that support structures and training programs should be designed to cater to both male and female students equally.

Table 9: Support system and training needs for entrepreneurship

Support system and training needs	Male (n = 50)	Female (n = 50)	Total (%)
Perception that college supports entrepreneurial activities			
Yes	44	42	86
No	6	8	14
Need for financial support			
Yes			
No	48	48	96
	2	2	4
Demand for mentorship			
Yes	33	27	60
No	17	23	40
Interest in business training			
Yes	42	40	82
No	8	10	18
Need for networking			
Yes			
No	38	31	69
	12	19	31
Demand for govt. incentives			
Yes			
No	50	41	91
	-	9	9

value: 14.28, p-value: 0.218, No Significant difference

IV. Conclusion

The study highlights critical insights into the entrepreneurial landscape among college students, emphasizing both similarities and differences in gender-based entrepreneurial awareness, motivations, and support systems. While awareness levels are generally high, male students demonstrate greater familiarity with business opportunities, financial mechanisms, and government policies. This suggests a need for enhanced

financial literacy programs and policy-driven interventions that encourage female participation in entrepreneurship. Gender disparities in sources of entrepreneurial information underscore the importance of designing diversified knowledge dissemination strategies. Given the reliance of male students on interpersonal networks and female students on digital platforms, universities and policymakers should integrate both mentorship programs and digital learning resources to enhance entrepreneurial engagement. The study also underscores the necessity of addressing gender-specific motivational factors. While financial incentives remain a key driver for both genders, targeted programs fostering innovation and creativity in female students can help reduce gender-based confidence gaps in entrepreneurship. Similarly, institutional support, mentorship, and business training remain crucial for fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

V. Recommendations

The recommendations are suggested based on the findings of the study. To foster entrepreneurship among students, institutions should enhance awareness of government schemes through workshops and mentorship programs. Bridging gender disparities requires hands-on training, startup incubators, and experiential learning. Financial and legal literacy can be improved through specialized courses and partnerships with banks. Digital platforms and social media should be leveraged for entrepreneurial learning and networking. Establishing entrepreneurship cells and industry collaborations will strengthen institutional support. Integrate entrepreneurship education into various academic disciplines, ensuring equal exposure for students from all streams. Addressing societal and financial barriers through targeted policies and funding will empower aspiring entrepreneurs, especially women. Encouraging participation in high-growth sectors like technology and e-commerce will further boost entrepreneurial opportunities.

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