

Beauty Centres as Platforms for Women's Empowerment: An SAP-LAP and Thematic Exploration

Sneha Verma¹, Dr. Harnam Singh²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, U.P., India
Email: [snehaverma7705\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:snehaverma7705[at]gmail.com)

²Assistant professor, Department of Economics, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, U.P., India
Email: [harnamsinghlu\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:harnamsinghlu[at]gmail.com)

Abstract: *This study investigates the potential of the beauty and wellness industry as a catalyst for women's empowerment and inclusive growth in urban India, with a particular focus on Lucknow. Employing a dual-method approach, the research integrates the SAP-LAP (Situation-Actor-Process-Learning-Action-Performance) framework and thematic analysis to systematically examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs, employees, and distributors in both registered and unregistered business. Primary case studies, interviews, and focus group discussions- are analysed to identify key challenges such as limited access to formal training, finance, and reliable supply chain. The SAP-LAP framework provides a structured lens to evaluate sectoral dynamics, stakeholder roles, business processes, and the outcomes of strategic interventions. Thematic analysis complements this by uncovering recurring patterns related to empowerment, business sustainability, supply chain management. Findings reveal that formalization, certified training, and robust distributor relationships are critical for enhancing women's economic independence, social status, and business growth. However, barriers such as informality, lack of institutional support, and gendered perceptions continue to restrict women's full participation and advancement in the sector. The study offers actionable recommendations for policymakers and industry stakeholders to foster inclusive growth, promote formalization, and strengthen support systems for women-led enterprises. By leveraging the strengths of both analytical frameworks, this research contributes to a holistic understanding of women's empowerment in the beauty and highlights pathways for sustainable and equitable sectoral development.*

Keywords: SAP-LAP Framework, Thematic Analysis, Women Empowerment, Beauty Industry, Economic Empowerment

1. Introduction

The beauty and wellness centres in India have emerged as a dynamic sector, significantly contributing to economic growth, job creation, and social transformation (Singh & Gupta, 2021). Urban centres such as Lucknow are witnessing a surge in demand for beauty and wellness services, driven by rising disposable incomes, changing consumer preferences, and increased awareness of personal care (ILO, 2018; World Bank, 2020). This growth has created new avenues for women's entrepreneurship and employment, positioning the sector as a promising platform for women's empowerment and inclusive development (Kabeer, 1999).

Women play a central role in the beauty and wellness industry, both as consumers and as service providers. They make up the majority of practitioners and entrepreneurs in this field, making the industry a key driver of women's economic empowerment. By focusing on the intersection of women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and the beauty and wellness sector, this analysis contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive economic development and gender equality.

Women constitute a substantial portion of the workforce and entrepreneurial base in this industry, benefiting from relatively low entry barriers, flexible working arrangements, and opportunities for skill enhancement (ILO, 2018). However, the sector's potential to drive women's empowerment remains under-realized due to persistent challenges such as limited access to formal training, finance, reliable supply chains, and prevailing societal biases (Singh

& Gupta, 2021; World Bank, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated digital transformation and highlighted the need for resilience and adaptability in business models (ILO, 2021).

To systematically analyse these dynamics, this study adopts a dual-method approach. The **SAP-LAP (Situation-Actor-Process-Learning-Action-Performance) framework** is used to provide a structured analysis of the sector's environment, stakeholders, processes, learning outcomes, actions, and performance indicators (Sushil, 2001). Complementing this, **thematic analysis** is employed to identify and interpret recurring patterns and themes in qualitative data collected through case studies, interviews, and focus groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This integrated approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how formalization, skill development, and supply chain management influence women's empowerment and business sustainability in the urban beauty centres.

By focusing on both registered and unregistered women-led enterprises in Lucknow, this research aims to generate nuanced, evidence-based insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and support organizations. The ultimate goal is to inform strategies that foster inclusive growth, sustainable development, and greater gender equality.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To analyse the role of the beauty centres in fostering women's entrepreneurship and empowerment in urban Lucknow.

Volume 14 Issue 10, October 2025

Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

www.ijsr.net

- 2) To apply the SAP-LAP framework to compare the sustainability and growth strategies of registered and unregistered women-led beauty enterprises.
- 3) To utilize thematic analysis for identifying key patterns and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, employees, and distributors in the sector.
- 4) To examine the impact of formalization and distributor relationships on business performance and women's empowerment.
- 5) To provide policy and practice recommendations for enhancing women's participation, leadership, and success in the urban beauty enterprises.

2. Literature Review

The beauty and wellness industry has been recognized as a significant sector for advancing women's empowerment and fostering inclusive economic growth (ILO, 2018; Singh & Gupta, 2021). Globally and in India, the sector's expansion is attributed to factors such as rising consumer awareness, increased spending on personal care, and the proliferation of beauty and wellness services (World Bank, 2020).

(Kabeer, 1999) research shows that Women's participation in this industry is notable, with many entering as entrepreneurs or skilled professionals, leveraging the sector's relatively low entry barriers and flexible work options.

Empirical studies highlight that women in the beauty and wellness sector often experience increased financial independence, improved self-esteem, and enhanced social status (Kabeer, 1999; Singh & Gupta, 2021).

However, persistent challenges remain. These include limited access to formal training and finance, gender biases, and inconsistent supply chain support (ILO, 2018). Informal sector dominance and lack of business registration further hinder women's ability to scale their enterprises and access government support (World Bank, 2020).

The **SAP-LAP framework** has been widely used to analyse complex organizational and managerial contexts, offering a holistic approach to understanding challenges, stakeholder roles, and learning processes (Sushil, 2001; Sushil, 2009). In the context of women's entrepreneurship, SAP-LAP helps map the interplay between situational factors, key actors, business processes, and outcomes, enabling the identification of best practices and areas for intervention.

Thematic analysis is increasingly applied in qualitative research to extract deeper insights from narratives and lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the beauty sector, thematic analysis allows for the identification of recurring patterns related to empowerment, business sustainability, supply chain management, and social recognition, which may not be fully captured by structured frameworks alone.

Despite the sector's promise, gaps remain in policy support, access to formal training, integration into formal supply chains, and the transition from informal to formal business operations. Addressing these gaps through targeted interventions and evidence-based strategies can enhance

women's empowerment and contribute to broader inclusive economic development.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, multiple case study approach within the urban context of Lucknow, utilizing the SAP-LAP (Situation-Actor-Process-Learning-Action-Performance) framework to analyse women's empowerment in the beauty sector. The research design is informed by the need to capture both the diversity of experiences among women entrepreneurs and the impact of formalization and supply chain practices on business outcomes (Yin, 2018; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through structured surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions with women entrepreneurs, employees, trainees, and distributors in the beauty sector Lucknow. The survey instrument focused on aspects such as business registration status, access to training, supplier relationships, income changes, empowerment, and challenges faced. Interviews and focus groups provided qualitative insights into lived experiences and business practices.

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure representation from both registered and unregistered women-run enterprises, as well as their distributors. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly maintained (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

3.3 Case Study Selection

Based on primary data collected through surveys and fieldwork, this study developed two case studies to capture the range of women's entrepreneurial experiences in beauty centres from Lucknow.

- 1) **Shakti Beauty Parlour (Registered):** Established in 2018, a GST-registered, women-led parlour with formal supplier contracts and authorized distributors. The parlour offers certified training and job placement support, and participates in city-wide beauty events.
- 2) **Roop Ladies Parlour (Unregistered):** Started since 2018, an unregistered, women-run parlour sourcing products through informal local distributors. The business provides on-the-job training to helpers and relies on word-of-mouth for growth.

Both cases were constructed based on patterns observed in primary data and supported by literature on formalization and supply chain management in women-led enterprises (Kabeer, 1999; Singh & Gupta, 2021).

3.4 Analytical Framework: SAP-LAP

The SAP-LAP framework structures the analysis as follows:

- 1) **Situation (S):** Examines the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the urban

beauty sector, with attention to registration status and supply chain practices.

- 2) **Actors (A):** Identifies key stakeholders, including owners, employees, trainees, distributors, clients, and NGOs.
- 3) **Processes (P):** Analyses business operations, training, supplier relationships, and community outreach.
- 4) **Learning (L):** Derives insights from successes and setbacks in both registered and unregistered settings.
- 5) **Action (A):** Documents strategic actions such as formalization, supplier management, and training expansion.
- 6) **Performance (P):** Assesses outcomes using indicators like income growth, job placement, business sustainability, and social recognition.

This approach enables a nuanced understanding of how formalization and distributor relationships affect women's empowerment and business success in the urban beauty and wellness sector (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Kabeer, 1999).

While the use of two case studies provides depth and context, the findings are illustrative rather than fully generalizable. The integration of primary data from a range of urban beauty businesses and distributors which enhances the credibility and transferability of results (Yin, 2018). Future research with a larger, more diverse sample could further validate and extend these findings.

3.5 SAP-LAP Framework

The SAP-LAP (Situation-Actor-Process-Learning-Action-Performance) framework is a holistic analytical tool developed to understand and improve organizational and managerial contexts through systemic flexibility and continuous learning (Sushil, 2001). Originating from the Flexible Systems Management paradigm, SAP-LAP enables researchers and practitioners to examine how different elements within an organization interact to generate insights, drive action, and enhance performance.

3.5.1 Core Components of the SAP-LAP Framework:

- 1) **Situation (S):** Refers to the internal and external environment in which an organization or sector operates. This includes identifying key challenges, opportunities, and contextual factors such as market trends, regulatory issues, and societal attitudes.

- 2) **Actor (A):** Encompasses the individuals, groups, or organizations involved in or affected by the situation. Actors may include entrepreneurs, employees, clients, suppliers, policymakers, and other stakeholders, each with distinct roles and influences.
- 3) **Process (P):** Describes the methods, strategies, and operational activities undertaken to address the situation. Processes may involve training, business management, supply chain coordination, and service delivery.
- 4) **Learning (L):** Represents the insights and knowledge gained from analyzing the interactions between situations, actors, and processes. Learning helps organizations adapt to changing environments and informs future strategies.
- 5) **Action (A):** Involves the implementation of specific steps or interventions derived from learning. Actions are designed to address identified challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and drive improvement.
- 6) **Performance (P):** Measures the outcomes and impacts of the actions taken. Performance indicators may include economic growth, customer satisfaction, social empowerment, and other relevant metrics.

The SAP-LAP framework is particularly valuable for studying dynamic and complex sectors like beauty sector, where multiple stakeholders interact, and continuous adaptation is required for sustained success (Sushil, 2009). By systematically analyzing each component and their interrelationships, the framework facilitates a comprehensive understanding of sectoral challenges and enables the formulation of targeted, evidence-based interventions.

4. Case Study Analysis

4.1 Case Study 1: Shakti Beauty Parlour (Registered)

Background: Shakti Beauty Parlour is a GST-registered, women-led enterprise located in central Lucknow. Founded by Ms. Priya Singh, the parlour is known for its professional beauty services, certified training programs for women, and strong partnerships with authorized distributors and suppliers. Shakti Parlour's formal status enables it to offer high-quality branded products, participate in city-wide events, and provide job placement support for trainees. The parlour's structured approach to business operations and supply chain management positions it as a model for sustainable women's entrepreneurship in the sector.

Table 1: SAP-LAP Mapping Table: Shakti Beauty Parlour

SAP-LAP Element	Details	Outcome
Situation (S)	Operates in urban Lucknow; faces high demand for quality services; benefits from formal registration and access to government schemes.	"We are able to offer branded products and official certificates to our trainees."
Actors (A)	Owner (Priya Singh), 12 staff, 80+ trainees, registered distributors, urban clients.	"Our distributor ensures timely delivery of genuine products."
Processes (P)	Certified training, formal supplier contracts, mentorship, alumni network, community outreach.	"We have a contract with reputed distributors for all our supplies."
Learning (L)	Formal registration and supply chain increase trust and business growth; exposure to best practices.	"Clients trust us because we use only branded, authentic products."
Action (A)	Expanded training modules, digital marketing, financial management, supplier relationship management.	"We regularly review our supplier agreements for quality assurance."
Performance (P)	80+ women trained, 60% job placement, 20% entrepreneurship, 50% revenue growth, enhanced reputation.	"Our registration helps us participate in city-wide beauty expos."

4.2 Case Study 2: Roop Ladies Parlour (Unregistered)

Background: Roop Ladies Parlour is an unregistered, women-run beauty business located in a busy Lucknow neighbourhood, founded by Ms. Suman Yadav. The parlour operates informally from a rented shop and caters to local

women. Suman sources products from local, often unverified, distributors and provides on-the-job training to helpers without formal certification. The business relies on word-of-mouth and seasonal promotions, but faces challenges with supply consistency, product quality, and limited access to formal support systems.

Table 2: SAP-LAP Mapping Table: Roop Ladies Parlour

SAP-LAP Element	Details	Outcome
Situation (S)	High demand for affordable services; limited access to formal training and quality products; operates without registration.	"Sometimes we run out of products or get low-quality items."
Actors (A)	Owner (Suman Yadav), 4 helpers, local informal distributors, neighborhood clients.	"Our distributor is a local shopkeeper who sometimes gives us discounts."
Processes (P)	On-the-job training, informal supplier relationships, flexible pricing, cash transactions.	"We teach new helpers by letting them assist during busy hours."
Learning (L)	Lack of registration limits access to quality supplies and business growth; learning is informal and ad hoc.	"Customers sometimes ask the quality of products we use."
Action (A)	Occasional product upgrades, local advertising, seasonal discounts.	"We try to buy products like herbal and organic and also support local manufactures."
Performance (P)	15+ women trained informally, steady but limited income, no official recognition, vulnerable to supply disruptions.	"We can't offer certificates or participate in formal beauty events."

5. Comparative Insights

- 1) **Registration and Supply Chain:** Shakti Parlour's formal registration and partnerships with authorized distributors result in higher business credibility, consistent product quality, and access to growth opportunities. Roop's informal operations lead to supply challenges and limited recognition.
- 2) **Empowerment and Training:** Shakti provides certified training and job placement, empowering women for upward mobility. Roop offers informal training, limiting professional growth.
- 3) **Business Sustainability:** Formalization supports revenue growth and participation in industry events for Shakti,

while Roop remains vulnerable to market fluctuations and supply issues.

5.1 Thematic Analysis: Method of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative approach used to identify, analyse, and report recurring patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, thematic analysis was applied to the primary data collected from interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, as well as the SAP-LAP mapping of two contrasting case studies: Shakti Beauty & Wellness Parlour (registered) and Roop Ladies Parlour (unregistered). This method enabled a systematic comparison of women's empowerment, business practices, and supply chain management in the urban beauty parlour of Lucknow.

Table 3: Key Themes and Thematic Comparison Table

Theme	Shakti Beauty Parlour (Registered)	Roop Ladies Parlour (Unregistered)	Findings
Empowerment & Skills	Offers certified training, formal mentorship, career advancement, job placement	On-the-job learning, informal mentoring, limited career mobility	"After training, I felt confident to apply for jobs in premium salons." (Shakti)
Supply Chain & Distributors	Uses authorized distributors, ensures product quality, stable supply	Relies on informal suppliers, faces product shortages, variable quality	"Our distributor ensures timely delivery of genuine products." (Shakti) "Sometimes we run out of products or get low-quality items." (Roop)
Business Sustainability	Registered, eligible for government schemes, participates in expos, steady growth	Unregistered, limited access to finance, vulnerable to supply disruptions	"Our registration helps us participate in city-wide beauty expos." (Shakti)
Social Status & Recognition	Enhanced reputation, greater client trust, higher social standing	Limited recognition, trust issues with clients	"Clients trust us because we use only branded, authentic products." (Shakti)
Challenges & Barriers	Navigating compliance, managing growth, competition	Inconsistent supply, lack of formal support, no access to training funds	"We can't offer certificates or participate in formal beauty events." (Roop)

5.2 Narrative Discussion of Each Theme

- 1) **Empowerment & Skills Development:** Shakti Beauty Parlour stands out for its structured, certified training programs, which equip women with industry-recognized skills and boost their confidence. Many trainees secure jobs in reputed salons or start their own ventures, reflecting upward mobility and empowerment. In contrast, Roop Ladies Parlour relies on informal, on-the-job training, limiting the professional growth and career

- 2) **Supply Chain & Distributors:** Shakti Parlour's partnership with authorized distributors ensures a consistent supply of high-quality products, supporting business reliability and client trust. Roop's dependence on informal suppliers leads to frequent product shortages and quality concerns, undermining both business sustainability and customer satisfaction. "Sometimes we run out of products or get low-quality items." (Roop)

- 3) **Business Sustainability:** Registration allows Shakti Parlour to access government schemes, participate in industry events, and benefit from formal supplier credit, driving growth and stability. Roop, being unregistered, faces barriers to accessing finance, official recognition, and market expansion opportunities, making the business more vulnerable to disruptions. *"Our registration helps us participate in city-wide beauty expos."* (Shakti)
- 4) **Social Status & Recognition:** Formalization and quality assurance at Shakti Parlour enhance its social standing and client trust, while Roop struggles with limited recognition and customer skepticism due to its informal status. *"Clients trust us because we use only branded, authentic products."* (Shakti)
- 5) **Challenges & Barriers:** While both businesses face challenges, the nature and severity differ. Shakti Parlour navigates regulatory compliance and competition, whereas Roop remains vulnerable to supply disruptions and lacks access to formal support systems, such as training funds or business development programs. *"We can't offer certificates or participate in formal beauty events."* (Roop)

The thematic analysis reveals that formalization, reliable supply chains, and structured training are critical for sustainable growth and women's empowerment in the beauty sector. Registered enterprises like Shakti Parlour are better positioned to offer quality services, empower women, and achieve business sustainability, while unregistered businesses face persistent barriers that limit their impact and growth.

5.3 Synthesis of SAP-LAP and Thematic Analysis Findings

The comparative application of the SAP-LAP framework and thematic analysis to the two case studies- Shakti Beauty Parlour (registered) and Roop Ladies Parlour (unregistered)-reveals significant contrasts in how formalization, supply chain management, and organizational practices affect women's empowerment and business sustainability.

- 1) **Empowerment & Skills:** Shakti Beauty Parlour, with its formal registration and structured training programs, demonstrates a higher capacity for empowering women through certified skill development, mentorship, and job placement. This institutional approach leads to increased confidence, employability, and career advancement for women. In contrast, Roop Ladies Parlour offers informal, on-the-job learning, which, while providing basic skills, limits professional growth and upward mobility.
- 2) **Supply Chain & Distributors:** The registered parlour's reliance on authorized distributors ensures consistent product quality and business reliability, enhancing client trust and reputation. Roop's informal sourcing results in frequent product shortages and quality concerns, undermining both business sustainability and customer satisfaction. The SAP-LAP analysis underscores that robust supplier relationships are critical for operational efficiency and market competitiveness.
- 3) **Business Sustainability:** Formalization enables Shakti Parlour to access government schemes, participate in industry expos, and benefit from supplier credit, driving revenue growth and stability. The unregistered Roop Parlour, by contrast, remains vulnerable to supply

disruptions, lacks access to formal financial support, and is excluded from industry platforms, which constrains its growth and resilience.

- 4) **Social Status & Recognition:** Shakti Parlour's formal status and quality assurance practices elevate its social standing and client trust, while Roop faces limited recognition and persistent scepticisms from clients due to its informal operations.
- 5) **Challenges & Barriers:** Both enterprises face challenges, but their nature and impact differ. Shakti Parlour must navigate regulatory compliance and competition, whereas Roop contends with inconsistent supply, lack of formal support, and exclusion from training and business development resources.

6. Implications for Women's Empowerment, Business Sustainability, and Policy

- 1) **Women's Empowerment:** The findings highlight that formalization, structured training, and strong supply chain management are key enablers of women's empowerment in the beauty and wellness sector. Registered businesses can offer certified training, job placement, and career advancement, contributing to economic independence and enhanced social status for women. Informal enterprises, while accessible, often lack the resources and networks to provide sustained empowerment.
- 2) **Business Sustainability:** Sustainable growth in women-led beauty businesses is closely linked to formal registration and reliable supplier relationships. These factors not only ensure business continuity and product quality but also open doors to financial services, industry recognition, and expansion opportunities.

This study has explored the transformative potential of the beauty industry as a platform for women's empowerment and inclusive economic growth, using the SAP-LAP (Situation-Actor-Process-Learning-Action-Performance) framework. Through comparative case study analysis and thematic exploration, several key insights and contributions have emerged.

6.1 Key Insights and Contributions

- 1) The beauty sector offers significant opportunities for women's entrepreneurship, employment, and skill development, particularly in urban India. Registered enterprises with formal supply chains and structured training programs, such as Shakti Beauty Parlour, demonstrate higher levels of business sustainability, client trust, and women's empowerment compared to unregistered, informally run businesses like Roop Ladies Parlour.
- 2) The SAP-LAP framework has proven effective in systematically identifying the challenges (such as access to finance, skill gaps, and societal biases), mapping the roles of key actors, and highlighting the importance of processes like certified training, mentorship, and reliable distributor relationships.
- 3) Thematic analysis revealed that empowerment, business sustainability, social recognition, and supply chain management are interlinked. Formalization and quality

assurance not only enhance business outcomes but also elevate the social status and decision-making power of women entrepreneurs and employees.

- 4) Despite these opportunities, women in the sector continue to face barriers including limited access to capital, lack of formal support networks, and persistent social stigma. Unregistered businesses, in particular, remain vulnerable to supply chain disruptions, inconsistent income, and limited growth prospects.

7. Potential of the Beauty Sector for Women's Empowerment:

The findings underscore the immense potential of the beauty and wellness industry to drive women's empowerment in India. The sector's low entry barriers, flexibility, and alignment with women's skills and aspirations make it a powerful vehicle for economic independence, social mobility, and enhanced self-esteem. By providing pathways for entrepreneurship and employment, the industry not only improves the livelihoods of individual women but also contributes to broader societal change.

However, realizing this potential requires targeted interventions: simplifying business registration, expanding access to certified training, strengthening supplier networks, and addressing societal attitudes that undervalue women's work in this field. Policymakers, NGOs, and industry stakeholders must collaborate to create an enabling environment that supports women-led enterprises, ensures fair labour practices, and promotes inclusive growth.

The beauty and wellness sector stands as a promising domain for advancing gender equality and economic development. By leveraging its strengths and addressing its challenges through evidence-based strategies, this industry can play a pivotal role in empowering women and shaping a more inclusive future for India.

8. Policy Recommendations

- 1) Simplify registration processes and offer incentives for women entrepreneurs to formalize their businesses.
 - 2) Facilitate access to authorized distributors and supplier networks for women-led enterprises.
 - 3) Promote certified training programs linked to job placement and entrepreneurship support.
 - 4) Develop targeted support schemes (e.g., microfinance, mentorship, digital literacy) for informal sector women entrepreneurs to transition into the formal economy.
- [3] Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
 - [4] Duflo, E. (2012). Women empowerment and economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(4), 1051–1079. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.50.4.1051>
 - [5] International Labour Organization. (2018). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture* (3rd ed.). International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_626831/lang--en/index.htm
 - [6] International Labour Organization. (2021). *Impact of COVID-19 on the beauty and wellness sector in India*.

9. Limitations and Areas for Further Research

While this study provides valuable insights through the SAP-LAP and thematic analysis of two contrasting case studies, several limitations must be acknowledged:

- 1) Generalisability: The use of two case studies, though grounded in primary data and sectoral patterns, limits the generalizability of findings across the entire urban beauty sector.
- 2) Sample Size: Broader quantitative research with a larger and more diverse sample of women-led enterprises would strengthen the validity of the conclusions.
- 3) Depth of Supply Chain Analysis: The analysis focuses primarily on the distributor relationship; future studies could explore the entire supply chain ecosystem, including manufacturers and logistics.
- 4) Longitudinal Impact: This study offers a cross-sectional view; longitudinal research could better capture the long-term impact of formalization and empowerment initiatives.

Future research should consider multi-city or pan-India studies, include more case studies with varying business models, and examine the impact of digital transformation and e-commerce on women's empowerment in the beauty and wellness sector.

The comparative analysis underscores that formalization, structured training, and robust supply chains are crucial for empowering women and ensuring the sustainability of beauty and wellness enterprises. Policymakers and industry stakeholders must address the barriers faced by informal businesses to unlock the sector's full potential for inclusive growth and women's empowerment.

Declarations

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests.

Funding: - There is no funding available for this research.

References

- [1] Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544–559. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1573>
- [2] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_814733/lang--en/index.htm
- [7] Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>
- [8] Kantor, P. (2002). Gender, microenterprise success and cultural context: The case of South Asia. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 26(4), 131–144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104225870202600409>

- [9] Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India. (2020). Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B&WSSC). <https://www.bwssc.in/>
- [10] National Sample Survey Office. (2019). Periodic Labour
- [11] Force Survey (PLFS), 2017-18. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India. <https://www.mospi.gov.in/web/mospi/reports-publications/-/reports/view/templateTwo/16201?q=RPCAT>
- [12] Singh, R., & Gupta, S. (2021). Women entrepreneurship in India: Trends, challenges, and future prospects. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies*, 7(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2393957520971771>
- [13] Sushil. (2001). SAP–LAP framework. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 2(1), 51–55. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03396552>
- [14] Sushil. (2009). SAP–LAP analysis of flexibility in Indian organizations. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 10(4), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03396580>
- [15] UN Women. (2022). Women’s economic empowerment in India. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/india/womens-economic-empowerment>
- [16] World Bank. (2020). Women, business and the law 2020. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/reports>
- [17] Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publication.