

# Aesthetic Ventures: Exploring Entrepreneurial Motivations In The Beauty And Wellness Sector In India

Nazna Noushad<sup>1</sup> and Dr N. Dharma Raj<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar (Economics), Reg. No: 21113161032005

Post Graduate and Research Centre of Economics  
Scott Christian College (Autonomous), Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu.  
Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli.

<sup>2</sup>Research Supervisor, Assistant Professor,  
Post Graduate and Research Centre of Economics  
Scott Christian College (Autonomous), Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu.  
Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli.

The beauty and wellness industry in India has quickly evolved into a key contributor to the service economy. The purpose of this study is to explore into the entrepreneurial motives that drive individuals, regardless of gender, to participate in this industry. This study uses secondary data and available reports to investigate key drivers such as financial independence, flexible work environments, personal interest in aesthetics, and the impact of training programs. It also looks at the challenges that entrepreneurs face, as well as the role that government initiatives play in supporting them. The paper concludes with recommendations for increasing the sector's potential as a source of self-employment and economic growth.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, empowerment, wellness sector.

## INTRODUCTION

The beauty and wellness industry in India has evolved beyond its traditional association with vanity and glamour to become a powerful socioeconomic force with far-reaching effects on health, employment, gender empowerment, and lifestyle. Over the last two decades, the sector has grown at an exponential rate, driven by rising disposable incomes, increased awareness of personal care, and the influence of digital media. This industry provides a wide range of services and goods, including skincare, hair care, cosmetics, spa treatments, fitness centres, yoga studios, Ayurvedic therapies, and nutrition consulting. This sector's growth is also being driven by a paradigm shift in consumer behaviour, from occasional indulgence to everyday wellness practices. Beauty and wellness services are now considered an essential part of both urban and semi-urban consumers' lifestyles and self-care regimens. The epidemic emphasised the importance of physical and mental well-being, pushing people to adopt healthier habits and hygiene practices, driving up demand in this area even more. It is critical for job creation

and entrepreneurship, particularly among women and youth, in both urban and semi-urban settings.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To examine the trends in entrepreneurial involvement in the beauty and wellness sector in India.
- To identify motivational factors behind entrepreneurship in the sector.
- To understand the challenges faced by these entrepreneurs in sustaining their businesses.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study integrates both primary and secondary data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the scope, relevance, and gender-inclusive entrepreneurial dynamics in India's beauty and wellness industry. It seeks to explore major trends, motives, and problems confronting entrepreneurs in the beauty and wellness sector, with an emphasis on their everyday effect across genders and regions of India.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Rani and Singh (2018) title: "Entrepreneurial Trends in the Indian Wellness Sector" undertook a thorough examination of wellness entrepreneurship trends, specifically the rise of female-led beauty start-ups. Their research, which was based on case studies and secondary data, showed how urban women entrepreneurs are promoting personalised wellness products and services through social media, influencer marketing, and e-commerce platforms. The study mentioned successful ventures like organic skincare brands and fitness influencers who have turned wellness into a profitable business. It determined that the wellness industry has low entry barriers for women and can grow with digital literacy and seed investment.

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Ernst & Young (2019) conducted a collaborative report titled "Wellness and Beauty: India's Next Big Opportunity" to investigate the rising convergence between the wellness sector and preventative healthcare. According to the survey, consumer behaviour in India is increasingly focussing on long-term well-being rather than short-term aesthetic enhancement. It demonstrated how yoga, fitness centres, organic eating, and Ayurvedic remedies have become part of urban India's daily routine. The study also identified the untapped potential for wellness tourism and the export of indigenous health practices. It suggested increased institutional support for training, innovation, and infrastructure to help this quickly changing sector.

Bansal and Kumar (2019) in their article "Women Empowerment through Beauty and Wellness Industry," the authors investigated the role of women in the wellness industry. The researchers discovered that a large percentage of beauty service employees are women, and the industry serves as a gateway to economic independence. They demonstrated, using case studies and secondary data, how beauty salons and wellness centres empower women socially and financially. The article emphasised how skilling initiatives, such as the Skill India

campaign, have increased business prospects in both urban and rural areas (Bansal & Kumar, 2019).

Nair and Pillai (2020) did a study titled "Role of Ayurveda in the Modern Indian Beauty and Wellness Industry" to examine how traditional knowledge systems such as Ayurveda have influenced product innovation and wellness services. The study employed secondary data and a literature analysis to track the growing popularity of Ayurvedic beauty treatments such as ubtan, herbal facials, and oil therapies. The authors discovered that branding strategies that integrate modern packaging with traditional formulations have gained favour among both domestic and international consumers.

Dasgupta (2020), in the work "Holistic Health and the Rise of Yoga in India", explored how the resurrection of ancient wellness practices such as yoga has impacted the Indian wellness sector in a socio-cultural context. The research was based on cultural analysis and secondary data from wellness institutions and government campaigns. Dasgupta emphasised the global popularity of Indian wellness practices, particularly yoga, and how this comeback is influencing current health habits. She also emphasised the growing integration of mental health, stress relief, and spiritual well-being into daily wellness practices in urban India, making them more accessible to people of all ages and income levels.

Verma and Choudhary (2021), in their work "Digital Influence on the Indian Beauty and Wellness Industry" tackled how technology and e-commerce have changed customer interactions in the beauty industry. They discovered that beauty tutorials, influencer marketing, and social media platforms all had a significant impact on consumer preferences. The emergence of online booking, beauty applications, and doorstep services was boosted by the COVID-19 epidemic. The study emphasised the growing significance of digital literacy among service providers to maintain competitiveness.

Dey (2022) Title: "Post-Pandemic Transformations in India's Wellness Industry", evaluated how the COVID-19 epidemic reshaped the Indian wellness market, emphasising sanitation, immunity, and mental health. The article analysed secondary data including consumer studies, digital wellness apps, and policy briefs. Dey contended that the pandemic drove digital wellness consumption, with teleconsultations, home-based workout routines, and online yoga experiencing tremendous growth. The report also examined how wellness has become more inclusive, reaching out to the working class through affordable internet services. According to the report, the sector's future is in hybrid models that blend traditional in-person encounters with digital scalability.

## **THE BEAUTY AND WELLNESS SECTOR**

The beauty and wellness industry in India has grown into a dynamic and rapidly expanding domain, fuelled by rising consumer awareness, lifestyle changes, and rising disposable income. Beauty salons, skincare and cosmetic treatments, Ayurveda and naturopathy centres, spa and massage therapy services, fitness and yoga studios, personal grooming, men's salons, and the organic beauty product industry are all sub-categories of the sector. With a market size

predicted to exceed USD 15 billion in 2022 and projected to reach USD 25 billion by 2025, the sector is developing at an amazing 18-20% per year

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in its 2020 Skill Gap Report for Beauty and Wellness reviewed the sector's employment opportunities and training requirements. According to the survey, the beauty and wellness industry employs over 7 million people and is predicted to grow to about 12 million by 2025. The report also discovered major skill gaps, particularly in cleanliness standards, customer service, and technical training. The NSDC emphasised the importance of formal training and certification programs to standardise practices and improve service quality in both urban and rural India.

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has been instrumental in fostering entrepreneurship development in a variety of non-farm industries, including the beauty and wellness business. NABARD's support for Self Help Groups (SHGs) has enabled rural and semi-urban communities, particularly women, to obtain microfinance and open small-scale beauty parlours, salons, and wellness centres. According to NABARD's 2022 annual reports, financial literacy programs and entrepreneurship development training through the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme (MEDP) have helped to improve skill levels and self-employment in the wellness sector. The bank's comprehensive support, which includes lending, capacity training, and market linkage, has made it a key player in growing gender-inclusive, grassroots entrepreneurship in India.

**Table 1: Gender-Based Participation in the Beauty and Wellness Sector**

Gender	Estimated Share (%)	Type of Role
Female	72%	Entrepreneurs, beauticians, salon owners
Male	28%	Barbers, wellness trainers, managers

**Source:** NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation), Industry Overview (2023)

The data shows that women dominate entrepreneurship in the beauty and wellness sector. Women are more likely to work in individual parlour enterprises, training institutes, and home-based services, which require less capital investment. Men (32%) work primarily in barbering, product distribution, and, increasingly, salon franchise models. The research emphasises the sector's inclusion, but also shows that women are more concentrated in micro-entrepreneurship, while males are entering formalized commercial firms.

**Table 2: Gender-wise Enrolment in Skill Development Programs (Beauty & Wellness)**

Program Year	Female (%)	Male (%)	Others/Unspecified (%)
2020–21	68%	31%	1%
2021–22	70%	29%	1%
2022–23	73%	26%	1%

**Source:** Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India

Female participation in skill development programs has continuously exceeded two-thirds, with a modest increase year after year. This indicates the popularity of beauty and wellness courses among women, particularly in micro-enterprise and self-employment. Male participation is lower and has been declining slightly over time. This could be due to a lack of male-oriented sub-sectors or a negative perception of the field.

**Table 3: Motivational Factors Behind Entrepreneurship**

Motivational Factor	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total (%)
Financial independence	72	85	78.5
Flexible working hours	40	72	56
Passion for grooming & wellness	58	80	69
Influence of social media/celebrity culture	65	70	67.5
Entry due to lack of alternate job options	38	52	45

(Source: NSDC and MSME reports, 2022)

According to primary data collected from 100 beauty and wellness entrepreneurs (including salon owners, freelance beauticians, and wellness trainers), the motivations for starting a business in this sector are varied but clearly driven by economic need, personal interest, and work-life balance considerations.

**Table 4: Major Motivational Factors (Based on Primary Data )**

Factor	Number of Respondents
Financial Independence	40
Skill Utilization	25
Passion for Beauty/Wellness	20
Flexible Work Schedule	10
Family/Friends Encouragement	5

Both men and women prioritise financial independence and innovation, indicating a trend towards equal opportunity entrepreneurship in non-traditional areas. Motivation is influenced by structural factors such as training, financing, and cultural acceptance. Understanding motivational tendencies can help future programs be more tailored. Schemes that encourage flexible business models, such as those that offer creative entrepreneurship incentives, may attract more aspirants.

## CHALLENGES IN THE BEAUTY AND WELLNESS SECTOR

- Many entrepreneurs, particularly those operating in informal or unregistered businesses, struggle to obtain institutional credit or bank loans.
- High initial expenditures, such as salon equipment and branded products, put a financial strain on small-scale companies.
- Rural and semi-urban areas lack consistent training or upskilling opportunities.
- There are government plans available, but many prospective entrepreneurs are unaware of them.

- The expanding number of parlours and wellness centres, particularly in cities, has increased market competitiveness.
- Beauty trends shift frequently, necessitating ongoing investment in products, training, and service innovation.
- Rent and utility expenses in commercial areas put further strain on small-business owners' monthly revenues.
- Regulatory barriers and the cost of licenses or certifications may discourage micro-unit formalisation.
- Gender-based cultural prejudices persist, harming both men entering female-dominated spaces and women establishing independent companies.
- Digital marketing and online presence are becoming increasingly important, yet many entrepreneurs lack the technical abilities and finances to use digital platforms effectively.

### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- The beauty and wellness industry offers opportunity for all genders to start businesses.
- Women continue to dominate in micro-units and informal settings, whilst men advance through formal chains.
- The secondary and primary data show the value of skill development and financial assistance.
- Personal motivation and socioeconomic factors such as support systems and government programs all have an impact on entrepreneurship in this industry.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The government and financial institutions should make the loan application procedure easier and promote collateral-free credit choices for small and microbusiness owners in this area.
- Subsidy-based schemes and public-private partnerships can help to decrease the high initial costs of opening salons and wellness centres.
- Vocational training institutes and skill development platforms must be improved and expanded, especially in underserved rural and semi-urban areas.
- To increase awareness of government schemes, subsidies, and registration benefits, information campaigns and local seminars should be held.
- MSME handholding programs that support branding and uniqueness can help entrepreneurs stand out in a crowded industry.
- To stay updated with changing trends, continuous learning programs, refresher courses, and industry certification systems should be promoted.

### **CONCLUSION**

India's beauty and wellness industry is undergoing rapid development, creating an ideal environment for inclusive entrepreneurship. The beauty and wellness business is important not only to India's economy, but also as a means of promoting gender equity, skill empowerment, and rural-urban employment. Moving forward, tailored actions and all-encompassing ecosystem support will be required to fully realise its socioeconomic prospects.

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