

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts are invited for papers from anyone with an interest in rural entrepreneurship; we encourage contributions from academics and practitioners alike. Please indicate which of the conference themes you think is/are most appropriate and limit your abstract to 400 words.

Your Details

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Please use the following headings: (boxes will expand as you type)

Title: Women Entrepreneurs and Informal Finance in Rural India: An Exploratory Study
Purpose of this paper (please also indicate whether empirical, conceptual or case study etc) This empirical paper investigates the role of women in the context of informal entrepreneurial finance in India. The paper provides in-depth contextualized exploratory research on women entrepreneurs in India to address several empirical and conceptual gaps.
Design/methodology/approach (including limitations if applicable) We adopt a contextualized lens to conduct this mixed methods study in a unique 'emergent' entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Punjab, northern India. Following a pilot survey, questionnaires and in-depth face to face interviews were undertaken among 185 borrowers (both women and men) from microenterprise households located in five districts of the Punjab, India. Excerpts cited were anonymized and only relevant data for this study were used to overcome confidentiality issues. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim and then analysed.
Findings Our study unveils some unique contextually novel insights, including particularly distinctive types of informal lenders – including <i>arthyias</i> , <i>ghumihar</i> (potters), <i>kirana</i> store owners (village grocers), <i>shahukars</i> (village goldsmith) and <i>zamindar</i> (landlords) – where it focuses on the actual practice of lending (in terms of how the process of decision-making in women entrepreneurs is determined by contextual factors, such as relationship lending practices on the basis of financial status, family background). Distinctive feature of this study is that lending decisions are based along caste lines and loans are provided on personal recommendations and guarantee to persons known to them. Within this context, contractual arrangements are non-formal and enforcement is external to the legal system.
Practical implications Informal approval and enforcement of loans give rise to exploitation, coercion and a suboptimal allocation of resources. The informal lending system based on the caste system is a limiting factor that restricts development, adaption of innovative practices and adversely impacts economic prosperity of the emerging economy.

<p>Policy Implications (if applicable)</p> <p>Operation of dual lending practices to marginal farmers is a hindrance and limits creativity amongst marginal farmers. Furthermore, non-regulated contractual arrangements give rise to social and economic welfare loss. This paper calls for a review of legislation and practice amongst the marginal farmers</p>
<p>What is the originality/value of paper</p> <p>This paper makes an important contribution to the literature on the role of women entrepreneurs and informal lending in a novel emerging economy context. It provides both quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence on financial lending and the borrowing structures in the Indian State of Punjab. This study also builds on extant theory by using a contextual framework for analysis.</p>
<p>Please state if your paper is a:</p> <p><u>Refereed research paper</u> Practitioner Paper Presentation only</p>
<p>Please indicate the theme(s) that you consider most appropriate for your paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship, farming and the natural environment <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Rural Entrepreneurship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International dimensions of rural entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> New approaches in rural theory, method and measurement <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities and challenges for rural development <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Innovation, EU funding and the role of Universities <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Social Entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Place Marketing

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