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GLOBAL TRADE WARS AND THEIR IMPACT ON INDIA'S ROADMAP TO VIKSIT BHARAT 2047

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29	ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) in Startups: Frameworks, Challenges, and Pathway Towards Sustainable Entrepreneurship Sampreeta J C, A. Abinaya & Dr. M.S Ranjith Kumar	172
30	Empowering Rural Economies: The Role of MSMEs and Start-Ups in Driving Sustainable Growth Ms. M. Rubini & Dr. T. Malathy	176
31	The Impact of Currency Wars on India's Economic Roadmap to Viksit Bharat 2047 P. Soni Pawar	181
32	Women Entrepreneurs in MSMEs: Overcoming Challenges and Building Inclusive Startups S. Kokilavizhi	188
33	Emotional Intelligence of Women Entrepreneurs as a Driver of Economic Resilience amid Global Trade Wars Dr. T. Kiruthika	196
34	Supply Chain Disruptions, Trade Barriers and India's Export Competitiveness Dr. V. Sudha	201
35	Global Economic Climate and Its Impact on Indian Economy Towards Growth Rajagopalan S	205
36	Navigating Global Trade Uncertainty: Strengthening India's Export Competitiveness in the Roadmap to Viksit Bharat 2047 Dr. B. Rohini	211
37	Digital Transformation of MSMEs and Economic Stability Dr. P. Archanaa	219
38	Reverse Logistics as a Strategic Lever for India's Auto Export Competitiveness Nimit Sharma & Shivasharana	225
39	Global Trade Wars: Challenges and Opportunities for Viksit Bharat 2047 Sneha. K	226
40	India's Foreign Policy and Strategic Diplomacy in the Era of Trade Conflicts Dr. T. Mohana Sundari	232
41	India's Role in Global Trade Governance: A Strategic Diplomatic Perspective Mr. M. Prem & K. Vanitha	238
42	The Role of Digital Trade in Shaping Global Commerce: Opportunities and Challenges for Emerging Economies Dr. K. Chandra	243
43	Post-Pandemic Supply Chain Realignment: Opportunities for India Mr. M. Prem & S. Meenakshi	252

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AS A DRIVER OF ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AMID GLOBAL TRADE WARS

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Abstract

In recent years, global trade wars and economic uncertainties have significantly disrupted international markets, supply chains, and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Amid these challenges, women entrepreneurs have emerged as key contributors to economic resilience, particularly in developing economies like India. Emotional intelligence (EI) – the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions – has gained prominence as a critical soft skill influencing entrepreneurial decision-making, leadership effectiveness, and adaptability. This paper examines the role of emotional intelligence among women entrepreneurs as a driver of economic resilience in the context of global trade wars. It explores how emotionally intelligent women entrepreneurs navigate uncertainty, manage stress, foster innovation, and sustain business continuity during trade disruptions. Drawing upon existing literature and theoretical perspectives, the study highlights the linkage between emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial resilience, and inclusive economic growth. The paper concludes that strengthening emotional intelligence among women entrepreneurs can enhance their capacity to respond to global trade challenges, support MSME stability, and contribute meaningfully to national economic resilience.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Women Entrepreneurs, Economic Resilience, Global Trade Wars, MSMEs, Inclusive Growth*

1. Introduction

The global economic landscape has undergone profound transformations due to rising protectionism, geopolitical tensions, and persistent trade wars among major economies. Global trade wars – characterized by tariff escalations, trade barriers, and policy uncertainties – have disrupted international supply chains, increased production costs, and constrained market access, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Developing economies such as India face heightened vulnerability as trade conflicts affect exports, imports, and domestic industrial growth.

Within this volatile environment, women entrepreneurs play a crucial role in sustaining economic activity, employment generation, and innovation. Women-led enterprises, especially in micro, small, and medium sectors, contribute significantly to inclusive development and grassroots economic stability. However, women entrepreneurs often encounter compounded challenges, including limited access to

finance, market volatility, socio-cultural barriers, and heightened emotional stress during economic crises.

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a vital competency enabling entrepreneurs to cope with uncertainty, make informed decisions, and lead effectively under pressure. Unlike technical or financial skills, emotional intelligence focuses on self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills—qualities essential for resilience and adaptability. In the context of global trade wars, emotionally intelligent women entrepreneurs are better positioned to manage risk, sustain stakeholder relationships, and pivot business strategies.

This paper aims to examine emotional intelligence as a strategic resource that empowers women entrepreneurs to build economic resilience amid global trade disruptions.

2. Review of Literature

The concept of emotional intelligence was first popularized by **Salovey and Mayer (1990)**, who defined it as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively. Later, **Goleman (1998)** emphasized the relevance of emotional intelligence in leadership, organizational performance, and decision-making. Studies on entrepreneurship suggest that emotional intelligence significantly influences entrepreneurial success.

Baron (2008) argued that entrepreneurs with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle stress, uncertainty, and interpersonal challenges. Emotional regulation enables entrepreneurs to respond constructively to failure and external shocks. Research focusing on women entrepreneurs highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in overcoming gender-specific challenges.

Gupta and Sharma (2019), emotionally intelligent women entrepreneurs demonstrate higher resilience, adaptability, and confidence, which contribute to business sustainability. Women's empathetic leadership style often strengthens employee engagement and customer relationships, particularly during economic downturns. Economic resilience literature emphasizes the ability of enterprises and economies to absorb shocks and recover from disruptions.

Briguglio et al. (2009) noted that resilience is influenced not only by structural factors but also by human and psychological capabilities. In the context of trade wars, SMEs with adaptive leadership and emotional strength are more likely to survive market volatility.

Recent studies link emotional intelligence with crisis management.

Miao et al. (2017) found that emotionally intelligent entrepreneurs are more proactive in opportunity recognition during uncertain economic conditions.

However, limited literature explicitly connects women's emotional intelligence with economic resilience during global trade wars, indicating a significant research gap that this paper seeks to address.

3. Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Discussion

3.1 Emotional Intelligence Theory

Emotional intelligence theory suggests that individuals who can recognize and manage emotions—both their own and others'—perform better in complex and stressful environments. Goleman's (1998) mixed model identifies five key dimensions of emotional intelligence:

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

For women entrepreneurs, these dimensions support effective leadership, negotiation, conflict resolution, and strategic decision-making.

3.2 Women Entrepreneurship and Emotional Intelligence

Women entrepreneurs often operate in environments marked by uncertainty, resource constraints, and social expectations. Emotional intelligence enables them to:

- Manage stress arising from trade disruptions and market instability
- Maintain optimism and motivation during economic downturns
- Build trust-based relationships with suppliers, customers, and employees
- Balance professional responsibilities with personal and social roles

High emotional intelligence enhances confidence and risk-taking ability, which are essential for entrepreneurial growth in uncertain global trade conditions.

3.3 Emotional Intelligence as a Driver of Economic Resilience

Economic resilience refers to the capacity of businesses and economies to withstand, adapt to, and recover from external shocks. Emotional intelligence contributes to resilience by fostering:

- Adaptive decision-making during trade policy changes
- Innovation and diversification strategies in response to disrupted supply chains
- Effective crisis leadership and employee retention
- Long-term strategic thinking despite short-term volatility

Women entrepreneurs with strong emotional intelligence are more likely to pivot business models, explore alternative markets, and leverage digital platforms during

trade wars. Their resilience contributes to MSME stability, employment continuity, and local economic sustainability.

4. Emotional Intelligence, Global Trade Wars, and Inclusive Growth

Global trade wars disproportionately affect small businesses and informal sectors where women entrepreneurs are heavily represented. Emotional intelligence equips women entrepreneurs to interpret market signals calmly, avoid panic-driven decisions, and engage in collaborative problem-solving.

Furthermore, emotionally intelligent women leaders promote inclusive growth by supporting ethical practices, employee well-being, and community engagement. In line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), women entrepreneurs with high emotional intelligence contribute to gender equality, decent work, and economic growth even amid global economic turbulence.

In the Indian context, emotionally resilient women entrepreneurs align with national initiatives such as Atmanirbhar Bharat by fostering self-reliance, local production, and innovation-driven growth despite global trade uncertainties.

5. Conclusion

Global trade wars present complex challenges for entrepreneurs, particularly women-led enterprises operating within constrained economic ecosystems. This paper highlights emotional intelligence as a critical, yet often underemphasized, driver of economic resilience among women entrepreneurs. Emotional intelligence enhances adaptability, leadership effectiveness, and strategic decision-making, enabling women entrepreneurs to navigate trade disruptions and sustain business performance.

Strengthening emotional intelligence through training, mentorship, and policy support can empower women entrepreneurs to contribute more effectively to economic resilience and inclusive growth. Policymakers, educational institutions, and entrepreneurial support systems should recognize emotional intelligence as a strategic capability essential for sustaining entrepreneurship in an era of global economic uncertainty.

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