

OBSTACLES FACING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN YEMEN

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship stands as the catalyst for driving economic expansion, propelling the very mechanism that pushes the vehicle of economic progress. Its significance reverberates in its pivotal role in fostering job opportunities, generating revenue, mitigating poverty, and engendering wealth accumulation. In light of this, it has gained prominent recognition as a central tenet within economic development theories, constituting the most expansive business sector within economies. This phenomenon magnetizes individuals, encompassing both men and women, drawn by the allure of mutually beneficial cross-industry collaborations. Women's representation is notably pronounced among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) operators. Women entrepreneurs emerge as noteworthy contributors within this landscape, wielding considerable influence over national economies via their involvement in venture initiation and nurturing modest and moderate-scale enterprises. Nonetheless, women entrepreneurs encounter diverse obstacles, spanning their business's inception and progression phases. This study aims to scrutinize the impediments women entrepreneurs face in Yemen, encompassing challenges stemming from deficient educational and training opportunities, limited financial access, gender-based bias, unfavorable perceptions, and insufficient resources. Notably, this assertion holds particular weight when applied to women. Although specific gender disparities have shown signs of narrowing recently, substantial hurdles persist. Moreover, it is plausible that the crises confronted by Yemen in recent years have eroded some of the hard-won advancements in this domain. As Yemen charts its course forward, the nation must emphasize achieving gender parity as an intrinsic objective due to its pivotal role in establishing the bedrock of a more comprehensive and equitable society.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Woman entrepreneur, Women Entrepreneurship; Obstacles, Yemen

1. Introduction

Employing women and participating in society play an essential task in decreasing poverty and ending social and political instability for an extended period. With the help from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, between 2010 and 2015 women around the world entered the workplace about half a million women and 15,000 women who were displaced from their countries because of the crisis and war, have gained access to vocational training and education (2022).

In many nations, entrepreneurship, in general, has received little attention, let alone women's entrepreneurship (Langowitz et al., 2005). Although women entrepreneurs contribute to economic development, this is still insignificant compared to their male counterparts (Minniti and Arenius, 2003).

Compared to other parts of the world, the employment gap between men and women in the Arab world is quite wide (Mcloughlin, 2013) despite Islam's support for women to increasingly exercise their rights in economic and social activities. Women in the Middle East, particularly in the Arab countries, continue to be hampered by conservative cultural practices that prevent them from obtaining their rights in economic participation, education, and other aspects of society. Furthermore, because women are more likely to work in industries with smaller enterprises (Niethammer, 2013), it is assumed that any externalities such as war will have a more significant impact on their business activities.

This paper's research is about what challenges women entrepreneurs are facing in Yemen and highlights what are the most challenges they face. Yemen is similar to other Middle Eastern countries in its conservative society. Yemeni women entrepreneurs face a lot of difficulties in life especially in the situation of the country. Because of the war, a lot of men have been fired from their work and set at home doing nothing, also many have died going to the battle. This led a lot

of women to look for work so they could satisfy their daily needs but this didn't help. So, they tried to make their own business without the need of others to fulfill their daily needs or their families' needs. There are a lot of women who started to enter the market as entrepreneurs so they can satisfy their lack of daily needs. Previous studies proved that women entrepreneurs face obstacles in their businesses like family, gender, the traditional patriarchal culture, a lack of funds, recruiting talent and a lack of networks, securing funds, market expansion, stereotypes, male-dominated culture, and negative visibility (Cho et al., 2020). Moreover, lots of women have developed that they should stay home to care for their children, leaving the economic activities solely to men as the family's breadwinners. Such beliefs hinder women's employment opportunities (UNDP, 2006) and prevent them from reaping the potential benefits of economic participation for their families.

2. Literature Review

Yemeni women are capable of conducting business, not just to support their families but also to succeed as entrepreneurs. However, their low contribution to the market is due to many factors, such as a lack of self-confidence and the business information, skills, and experience needed to establish a business. Moreover, restrictive educational practices, family roles and responsibilities, and barriers to economic engagement are problems for women in Yemen and other Arab countries, mainly stemming from these societies' local cultures (Hattab, 2012). This suggests that government should endeavor to foster the growth of women-owned businesses and their participation in the labor market.

Generally, in Yemen, it is believed that women's rightful place is in the home and that men are responsible for earning a living to support their families. Primarily due to this negative cultural perception, Yemeni women have been prevented from contributing to their family's standard of living and Yemen's total GDP women. The gender segregation in Yemen adds to the problem; on top of society's negative perception of women's participation in business, women themselves worsen this perception by allowing only female trainers or instructors to train them throughout the initial business phases (Niethammer, 2013). Also, despite their desire and motivation to start a business, entrepreneurs in Yemen, regardless of gender, lack confidence in the reliability and accuracy of the information provided about their potential companies to investors, which contributes to a loss of trust, interest, and confidence among business investors in supporting proposed projects. Entrepreneurs in Yemen who can assess the potential of their enterprises and fully comprehend the interests and expectations of investors are few and far between (Qasem, 2017).

Based on Muharram and Hussain (2020, p.730), financial barriers, and market barriers were found to be the strongest predictors of women's entrepreneurial inclinations in Yemen. Entrepreneurial intentions are positively connected with both financial and market constraints. Economic and market restrictions both have a favorable impact, according to the study. As a result of the unique nature of the home culture, the Yemeni government must create a seductive culture to reduce the harmful effects of barriers within Yemeni society, as well as generate financing for new start-up governments. Furthermore, the Yemeni government should set aside a fixed percentage of contracts for small and emerging businesses. Access to markets will be made more accessible as a result. By tailoring training programs to the needs of domestic potential entrepreneurs, business associations can give sufficient help.

Due to several culturally entrenched discriminatory socio-cultural norms and customs, women entrepreneurs in Yemen do not have the same opportunities as males. Furthermore, these limitations can be seen in the support systems in place to help such nascent entrepreneurs. Female entrepreneurs' economic potential is not being realized due to a lack of finance, land, business premises, information technology, training, and agency aid. The inherent beliefs of a patriarchal society, which hold that males are superior to women and that women are ideally suited to be homemakers, pose significant obstacles. Some male family members also provide

Based on Ghouse, Durrah, and Mcelwee (2021, p. 1677), several issues affecting rural women entrepreneurs' business ventures were identified, including personality, family, educational, socio-cultural, facilities, legal, financial and economic, organizational, and geographical issues, with the household, administrative, and geographical issues being the most serious. The topic of rural women entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial opportunities is discussed. Another significant barrier to the long-term success of female-owned enterprises is a lack of education and training. In comparison to men, women have a higher percentage of illiteracy and lack management skills, which limits their access to resources, loans, and inputs needed for company success (Amaechi, 2016). In traditional African society, males are deemed fitter for training than women, hence the gender disparity in education has a cultural undertone for women.

Cultural norms and patriarchy are some of the most fundamental limiting factors that inform most impediments to the emergence of female entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Adekola, Olawole-Isaac, Ajibola, & Salau, 2015). This element promotes male domination and ascribes domestic traits to women as domestic creatures with family responsibilities, childcare, and household tasks, resulting in a 63-distorted view of women and their potential (Adekola et al., 2015). Women are placed in traditional gender roles as a result of this impression, which has molded gender bias and traditional notions that men are breadwinners and women are to stay a home, undermining women's business talents (Anyatengbey, 2016; Sumaira & Muhammad, 2012). As a result, women have become an underserved population that has been mostly disregarded in crucial commercial operations and substantial investments that will help them achieve their goals (World Economic Forum, 2019). Lack of access to money, financial resources, education and training, gender prejudice, discrimination, negative attitudes, inadequate resources, and a lack of business goal formulation have all been identified as critical impediments in business management in South Africa (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2016; Meyer & Mostert, 2016). Women's entrepreneurial development is also hampered by a lack of access to capital and financial management skills, according to research (Etim & Iwu, 2018; Iwu & Nxopo, 2014).

3. Methodology

This is a Review paper, where Review means research carried out by gathering a set of articles/journals related to the issue & research objectives. A thorough literature search on different online libraries including Google Scholar, EBSCO, and PROQUEST was carried out through the keywords 'challenges faced by women entrepreneurs' 'constraints faced by women entrepreneurs' 'women entrepreneurship,' and 'female entrepreneurship. To ensure the credibility and reliability of this paper, only peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles published from 2005 have been taken into account. This study aimed to highlight the challenges faced by Yemeni Women Entrepreneurs.

4. Results and Discussion

The objective of this research is to have an overview of the status of women's entrepreneurship in Yemen. While the research available about women entrepreneurship in Yemen is limited, the evidence suggests that women entrepreneurs face countless challenges and obstacles that obstruct their progress and advancement. One of the main problems is their ability to effectively understand their business models based on the absence of support, and due to this fact, their visions or expectation to attract local or overseas Investment falls through since they're not considered eligible for any potential funding. Consequently, some problems that hamper the business venture of women entrepreneurs, are linked with personal, Family, and Educational socio-cultural facilities legal, financial and Economic, Organizational, and geographic, Personality family Educational Socio Discussed the entrepreneurial possibilities of rural women entrepreneurs.

Consequently, to enhance the probability of women's participation in enterprises, one must encourage a more inclination in women to work in business; this might be done by adapting the education curriculum in schools and universities by aligning it with the demands and necessities. The attitudes, values, skills, confidence, and behaviors of Yemeni women entrepreneurs should be nurtured as well. Furthermore, it's also essential to foster leadership skills including innovation, critical thinking, EQ (Emotional Intelligence), mental fortitude, etc. Also, projects that equip women entrepreneurs with essential knowledge, skills, and training must partner with international development financial institutions to ensure they make the best of these opportunities. It's also necessary to raise awareness on how valuable small and micro businesses and entrepreneurship are for women and spread powerful narratives of women entrepreneurs through the media as an inspiration factor leading to the conversion of ideas to enterprises.

5. Conclusion

This paper aims to review those constraints and barriers reported in various studies on women entrepreneurship in Yemen. These most essential principles are challenging to identify and different have been the ways, and many writers attempted to do so. We as humans needed to sit at the same table, and share our diverse ideas to make decisions as to how best to empower women. Each person within a society is involved in building up that society. Entrepreneurship is one way in which people have an impact on the economic sphere and hence make a contribution to national well-being. However, it's vital for students — particularly female students — to have the same opportunities and resources to gain exposure to entrepreneurial thinking. And what can be the most significant drawback for an entrepreneur in Yemen.

To reap the maximum benefit of entrepreneurship for economic growth and others, men and women should contribute to the process (Aidis et al., 2007). For women entrepreneurs, there's a need for the government to increase fund allocation, especially for early-stage startups. The government should provide more budget allocations for female-owned micro businesses as there was also an observation that "financial challenges is one of the top reasons why there aren't enough women in action in entrepreneurship.

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