

Women Labor Force Participation through Home-Based Business Initiatives

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ABSTRACT

The basic purpose of this research was to divert the attention of economic and labor policy makers towards effective utilization of skilled female workers for initiation of home-based activities. For attaining this purpose, number of villages in the Punjab province of Pakistan were surveyed to identify skilled female workers to propose different nature of businesses. The research work used both qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection. Interviews were planned to know their economic conditions, motivational level of women labor force to participate in the local businesses and start their own business. The survey was carried out for designing a business model canvas for selected female participants who were highly motivated to start their businesses. The practical implication of this research is that the economic labor policymakers can get new insights for designing a business model to increase women's labor force participation. Academic implications of this research are that researchers can find a new domain of research by linking women's labor force participation with home-based business initiatives. The originality and value of this research is that it promotes insights for designing a sustainable home-based business model by identifying skilled female workers who can start their home-based businesses and they can indulge other local females of the community/villages in their business setups. This research enhances the participation of women labor force for initiation of economic activity and create more employment opportunities.

Key Words: **Women Labor Force Participation, Home-Based Business, and Sustainable Home-Based Business Model & Pakistan.**

Introduction

In Pakistan, there are over 167 million small-scale businesses. The middle-class is one of the most important groups in Pakistan, making it one of the populous countries in the world. Since its independence in 1947, the country has experienced economic instability and internal political disputes. However, since

the year 2001, it has started implementing various economic reforms including the privatization of banking sector.

The country's macroeconomic recovery has been marked by increased access to global markets. It is estimated that the country's GDP growth rate has been around 6 to 8 percent during the past few years. However, from a gender equality standpoint, Pakistan is still a patriarchal country. According to Syed (2009), practices that promote gender equality are embedded in both the workplace and society. Despite of the various challenges faced by women for becoming business owners and employees, the recognition for the role of female segment in evolving a progressive society is now widely accepted.

Women entrepreneurs often face multiple challenges. These include access to capital, lack of mentorship and networking opportunities due to societal biases and stereotypes. However, many resources are being channelized for empowering women entrepreneurs including business accelerators, incubators, and mentorship programs. Women entrepreneurs can make a significant impact on the local as well as international economy through driving innovation and growth in a variety of industries. They bring unique perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. Their leadership and success can serve as an inspiration to other women interested to take initiative for starting their businesses. There are number of organizations in Pakistan for supporting and empowering women entrepreneurs that mainly include:

Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry

This organization provides training, networking, and mentorship opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

Khud Kamao

This organization provides financial and business development support to women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

The National Institute of Small and Medium Enterprises

This organization provides training, financing, and other support to small and medium enterprises in Pakistan, including those owned by women.

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority

This organization provides a range of support services to small and medium enterprises in Pakistan, including training, financing, and technical assistance.

According to the Global Gender Gap report, Pakistan ranked 151 out of 153 countries (World Economic Reform, 2020). Women entrepreneurs in Pakistan are still facing numerous different challenges. Their start-ups are also subject to face

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typical challenges at the initial stages that sometimes shuns the growth of the entrepreneur. Consequently, this weakening structure of enterprises affect the economy of the country. One of basic factors of this low ranking is because of little opportunity for the rural women in Pakistan as compared to urban areas. In the rural area of Pakistan, females don't have enough opportunities to excel in their labor skills. This gender gap in Pakistan can be bridged through providing more economic participation and opportunities to the female labor force. Pakistan has already managed to bridge 32.7 percent of the gap between men and women in the workplace during previous year. According to the report published by World Economic Reforms (2020), only one-quarter of women participate in the labor force compared with 85% of men. Women entrepreneurs are often involved in a variety of industries that can help to diversify the economy and reduce reliance on any one sector. The women entrepreneurship creates new job reducing unemployment and stimulate economic growth. Women entrepreneurs help to improve market access and distribution channels specifically in the underserved communities for a kickstart of economic growth and development. Moreover, it also creates different nature of jobs for women and also for others. In previous research (Albanesi, 2019; Bejaković, 2019; Sarwar & Abbasi, 2013), emphasis was made on changing business cycles for providing employment opportunities to empower the women. It is noticed in research work of (Asian Development Bank, 2016) that in Pakistan women's labor force participation is low because of multiple factors amongst which the most dominant factor was restrictions faced by women from male head of the family on the physical mobility outside home due to prevailing social norms, security concerns, and transport services. Therefore, in order to increase participation of women's labor force some labor policy measures are to be designed for enabling them to have respectable means of earnings. Women entrepreneurs often bring unique perspective and approaches to problem-solving leading to the development of new products, services, and technologies for driving innovation and competitiveness. This specific gap in literature can be filled by the initiatives of home-based startups. Such initiatives need to be taken in the local communities for indulging women's labor force in align with the skills they possess. For identifying home-based businesses of women, a business model canvas will be used. This canvas will help to identify nine major components of business which are customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partners, and cost structure (see Figure 2). Although this research business model canvas in previous researches was used for large-scale business operations (Frankenberger et al., 2013; Poláková et al., 2015; Pölling et al., 2017; Mohammad & Malek, 2017), however, it has been rarely applied on small-to-medium-sized enterprises (Bouwman & Heikkilä, 2018; Müller, 2019). The studies have shown that businesses owned by women tend to be more productive and efficient than those owned by men, that can help to boost the overall productivity of the economy. Small-to-medium-sized enterprises can be reflected as “the driving force in most

economies” (Bouwman et al., 2018). Therefore, another major objective of this research will be to design a business model canvas of home-based businesses for women which might ultimately result in a sustainable business model to increase the employment ratio and women's labor force participation.

The Local Female Labor Force

The local female labor force refers to the group of women who live in a particular community or region and are available for work. This can include women who are currently employed, as well as those who are actively seeking employment. The size and characteristics of local female labor force can vary significantly depending on several factors including the local economy, the availability of job opportunities, and the education and skill level of women in the community. In many countries, the participation of women in labor force has been increased in recent years as more women have gained access to education and job opportunities. However, there are still number of challenges that women face to enter and sustain in the labor force including discrimination, lack of access to affordable childcare, and cultural and societal barriers. Supporting and empowering the local female labor force can have several benefits for both individual women and the community that mounts to increase economic independence and empowerment contributing towards improved economic growth and development. By starting and running their businesses, women can gain financial independence and decision-making power to serve as a role model for other women. There are several other ways in which entrepreneurship can empower women. By owning businesses women can generate their income and become financially independent making the impact quite visible in the economy. The reliance on salary or wage from a third person leads to economic dependence and in long-run can also create unemployment. Being owner of a business, women will have the liberty to make decisions for their businesses and create work environment that can shape the culture and values of their organizations. This will lead to decision-making power of women entrepreneurs that can serve as a role model and mentor for other women inspiring them to pursue their business ideas and leadership roles. Overall, women-owned businesses can have a positive impact on the communities in which they operate through job creation, supporting local suppliers and vendors, and contributing to the local economy. The entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool for empowering women and promoting gender equality. Several organizations and initiatives support encourage women to start their businesses. Entrepreneurship allows women to take control of their own lives and create opportunities. Women starting their business often have more control over their time, work environment and income that can lead to increase their autonomy and independence. In addition to the personal benefits of entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship contributes to broader social and economic empowerment. Women entrepreneurs serves as a role model and mentor

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for other women and helps to create job opportunities for other women in their communities. The whole process of starting an entrepreneurial venture and thereafter, managing it requires the help of government at different stages. There are several ways in which governments, organizations and communities support and empower women entrepreneurs including providing access to education and training. Women entrepreneurs often face barriers to education and training which can limit their ability to start and grow their businesses. Providing access to education and training programs can help to overcome these barriers and build the skills and knowledge needed to succeed entrepreneurship.

Providing Access to Capital

The access to capital is often a major challenge for women entrepreneurs who may face discrimination when seeking loans or other forms of financing. The access to capital through grants, loans or other financial instruments can help to support the growth and development of women-owned businesses.

Creating Networks and Mentorship Opportunities

Women entrepreneurs can benefit from networking and mentorship opportunities with other successful women entrepreneurs along with industry experts and other resources. Creating networks and mentorship programs can help to connect women entrepreneurs with the support and resources they need to succeed. Overall, supporting women entrepreneurs can be a powerful way to help promote women empowerment and drive economic growth and development.

The increase in employment opportunities for female workers are possible through entrepreneurial ventures. The home-based business initiatives are effective measure to induct local females for economic growth, provide employment opportunities for females, and enhance female labor participation. It is noticed that according to the World Bank data, female labor force participation was only 24.1% in 2019 (See Figure 1). Therefore, the initiative of home-based businesses and female labor force participation in such businesses will resolve the issue of inequality and social exclusion of women in local communities.

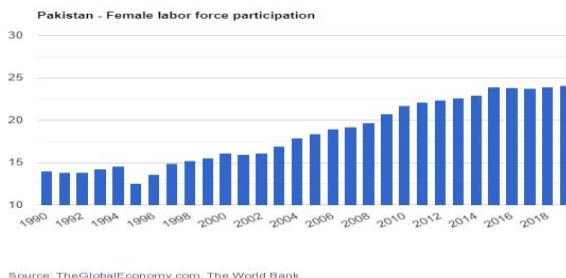


Figure 1. Pakistan-Female Labor force participation

Social Entrepreneurship in Pakistan

Social entrepreneurship in Pakistan refers to the practice of using business strategies for addressing social and environmental issues in the country. This can take the form of starting a non-profit organization or implementing socially responsible practices within a for-profit businesses. Some examples of social entrepreneurship in Pakistan include; Akhuwat provides interest-free microloans to low-income individuals to help them start small businesses and improve their financial situation. The Basecamp company produces outdoor gear and apparel using environmentally sustainable materials and practices and donates a portion of its profits to environmental conservation efforts. The Edhi Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides healthcare, education and social services to underserved communities in Pakistan. There are many other organizations and businesses in Pakistan that are designed to address social and environmental issues through entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship is a growing field in Pakistan where several organizations and individuals working to address social and environmental challenges in the country. Few of the examples of social entrepreneurship in Pakistan are as follows:

Aman Health

The organization works to improve healthcare access in rural areas of Pakistan by training local women to become healthcare providers.

The Citizens Foundation

This organization works to provide quality education to children in underserved communities of Pakistan.

H2O for Life

They work to improve access to clean water in rural areas of Pakistan through construction of wells and other water infrastructure projects.

Edhi Foundation

The organization provides a range of social services in Pakistan including emergency medical care, shelter for homeless and assistance to victims of natural disasters.

Pakistan Youth Outreach

They are working to empower young people in Pakistan through education, training and leadership development programs.

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There are number of other organizations and individuals that are working to address social and environmental challenges in Pakistan through social entrepreneurship. The women entrepreneurship is in the process of planning, organizing and operating a business venture by a woman. It is an ever-growing field involving more and more women to start their businesses and take leadership role in the business world.

Home-Based Initiatives

The home-based initiatives are businesses or projects that are run out of a person's home. These initiatives vary from small-scale craft business or consulting firms to on-line stores or freelancing services. Home-based initiatives can offer several benefits including flexibility, low overhead costs and ability to work around personal and family commitments. They are good option for people who are interested to start a business with small budget, or those who want to test viability of a business idea before launching it further initiative to a larger operation.

There are several challenges that home-based initiatives can face including the need to balance work and personal commitments, isolation from other professionals and support networks, and difficulties in separating work and home life. The home-based business owners need to consider these challenges and put strategies in place to address them. There are many options for home-based initiatives depending on their skills, interests and resources of the individual, or the team running their business. Some potential options for home-based initiatives include:

On-Line Store

The home-based on-line store can sell a wide-range of products and services such as handmade crafts, vintage clothing, or digital products like e-books and courses.

Consulting or Coaching Business

Home-based consulting or coaching businesses can offer expertise in a particular area such as business strategy, marketing, or personal development.

Freelancing

The home-based freelancers can offer a range of services such as writing, editing, design, or programming to clients around the world.

Service Business

These kinds of home-based service business can offer services such as dog-walking, house-sitting, or lawn care to local clients.

Manufacturing or Production Business

The home-based manufacturing or production business can create products such as jewelry, clothing, or home decor items to sell them on-line or through local retailers.

There are many other diversity of options for home-based initiatives depending upon the skills, interests and resources of the individual or team running the business. All sorts of the businesses can be run and managed by the women entrepreneurs in Pakistan provided the gender discrimination is kept aside.

Literature Review

There is a growing body of literature on social entrepreneurship with research covering a wide- range of topics including the definition and characteristics of social entrepreneurship, the motivation and values of social entrepreneurs, the impact of social entrepreneurship on society and environment, and the challenges and opportunities faced by social entrepreneurs. Some of the key themes that have emerged in the literature are:

Definition and Characteristics

There is an on-going debate in the literature on the definition and characteristics of social entrepreneurship. Some of the researchers have defined social entrepreneurship as a specific nature of business that seeks to create social or environmental value, whereas others view social entrepreneurship as a broader concept that encompasses a range of activities and approaches to solve social and environmental issues.

Motivations and Values

The research work have identified a wide-range of motivations and values that drive social entrepreneurs including a desire to make a positive impact on society and the environment, a sense of personal responsibility for addressing social and environmental challenges, and a belief in the power of business to create positive change.

Impact

Studies have examined the impact of social entrepreneurship on various stakeholders including the social and environmental problems being addressed, the communities in which social entrepreneurs operate, and the businesses themselves.

Challenges and Opportunities

The researchers have identified a range of challenges and opportunities faced by social entrepreneurs including access to capital, regulatory barriers, and the need to balance social and financial goals.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

Research has identified number of challenges come across by women entrepreneurs in Pakistan including limited access to capital, lack of education and training, societal biases and stereo-types, and lack of access to markets and distribution channels.

Impact of Women Entrepreneurship

The studies have examined impact of women entrepreneurship on the economy and society in Pakistan. According to their findings, the women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to economic growth and development, and also create a positive impact on social and economic empowerment particularly among the women and marginalized communities.

Role of Government and other Stakeholders: The Researchers Have Explored The Role Of Government and Other Stakeholders Such as Business Associations and Development Organizations for Supporting and Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

Lazear, (2005) defined entrepreneurship as the process of assembling various factors of production in an effective manner. He has referred to entrepreneurs as individuals who combine their knowledge and physical capital to create new products or ideas.

According to Ganesamurthy (2007), a study revealed that women entrepreneurs are individuals capable of achieving self-employment through their initiative or collaboration. They tend to start and run businesses by keeping up with their personal social life and family. The awareness of women rights can help women of developing countries to play more prominent role in their communities. They can serve the families better by starting and running their own businesses. The initiation of women businesses can help the developing countries to reduce poverty and improve employment opportunities. According to the different studies, women are much more aware of their rights due to increasing number of opportunities and social law reforms. In addition, the emergence of female-owned industries has been contributing to the growth of economies worldwide (Bulsara et al, 2014).

Despite the increasing number of women-owned businesses, the majority of these startups are still operating in small industries (Marlow & McAdam, 2013).

However, the increasing trend in the number of female-owned businesses has not been instrumental towards the progress of these organizations than that of their male counterparts (Morris et al., 2006).

Due to various other factors, the women entrepreneurs are bound to come across the problems relating to finance and management practices (Noguera et al., 2015). The existing literature on entrepreneurship focuses on social, institutional, and individual factors that affect development of female-owned businesses (Pérez-Pérez & Avilés-Hernández, 2016). Venkataraman and Shane (2000), noted that individual factors cannot fully explain entrepreneurship.

In addition to these, the contextual factors play a significant role in the success of women-owned businesses. For instance, men's dominance in Pakistan is still strong. According to the societal belief, the women are incapable of making their own decisions regarding their lives. It is also believed that men are more responsible for their families' financial well-being than women. This belief implies that the men are proved to be a better role models than women. They are more likely to look after their families including children and other dependents.

According to a study conducted by Nicols and Marco (2016), there is widespread evidence showing that running a business is beneficial for women. In 2013, Al-Dajani and Marlow noted that patriarchal and man-dominated societies have always regarded women as inferior (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). This has prevented the women to achieve full equality (Foss et al., 2013).

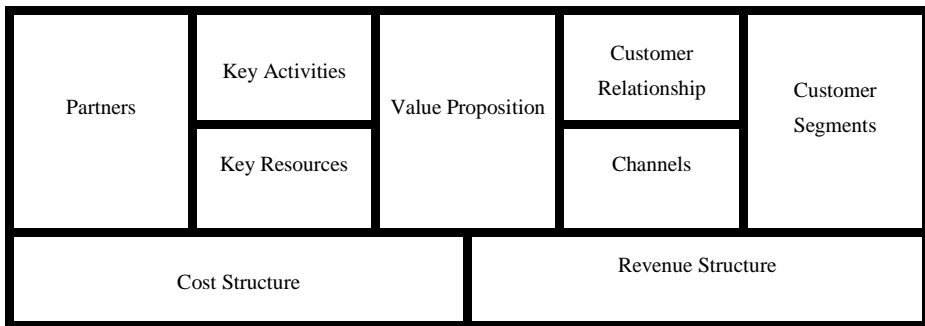
The women contribution to business actions have been slower than men's. This is because many of them are still not able to establish and run successful organizations (Minniti & Nardone, 2007). Due to the biased cultural and social values that prevent women from running successful businesses, male entrepreneurs are more likely to have opportunities. This point has been further substantiated in 2008 by Roomi and Parrot that the lack of women opportunity for entrepreneurship is due to prevalence of cultural values that are biased against them (Roomi & Parrot, 2008).

There are still many women-owned businesses that are not able to succeed in Pakistan. The reason being that they are not given necessary support and resources to establish and run their organizations. Besides this, the other factors such as training and resources also play important role that are needed to consider for women entrepreneurship especially when it comes to establishing and running a successful business.

The report in 2020 by the trading economic and index Mundi stated that the expected unemployment rate of women is expected to be higher than that of men. The global macro-economic model of trading show that the unemployment rate for women would be 6% higher from 2020 to 2021. The high number of unemployed individuals has convinced many people to demand the opportunity for starting their own businesses. The literature on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan highlights the potential of this field to drive economic growth and development for empowering women and marginalized communities across the country.

Methodology

This research work used qualitative technique for data collection. Interviews were planned to know economic conditions, motivation level to participate as a labor force in local businesses and to start their own business, and skills possessed by female workers to be engaged in different businesses. A survey was carried out for designing a business model canvas for selected female participants who were highly motivated to start their businesses. For designing a business model canvas, the below-mentioned structured form was utilized.



Source: Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010)

Figure 2. A business model canvas of Home-Based Business

The goals of this research work are (1) to identify home-based business activities in local communities by business model canvas; (2) to draw the attention of labor policymakers for women's labor participation through home-based business activities which can increase the employment ratio of female workers for economic prosperity.

Sample Size

The home-based initiatives for women from the rural areas of Chakwal are being considered under this research study. Therefore, the home-base businesses run by women in the Chakwal region is the selective sample-size.

Qualitative Analysis of Women's Labor Force Participation in Pakistan

In this section, the thematic analysis of the perspectives of respondent regarding home-based startups for women is represented. The data was collected through semi-structured open-ended questions.

Ques. No. 1: What kind of work women can do from home?

Table No. 1

Type of Work Women Can Do From Home

Sr.No.	Themes	Coding
1	On-line Education	Formal education, informal education, schooling, teaching, tuition, religious classes, on-line Quran sessions
2	Health & beauty industries	Health and beauty care classes, fitness & yoga classes
3	Crafts making	Flower making, makrama making, woodwork, handmade mantelpiece, glass work, paintings, calligraphy, nail art, beautician, interior decoration, gift packs
4	Food items	Snacks, BBQ items, unfried items i.e. kabab, samosa, fish, etc. frozen items
5	Fashion Designing	Embroidery, items, casual and formal dressmaking, fabric painting, ready-to-wear for all, party and bridal wear, cultural dresses
6	Men, women & children's accessories	Handbags, purses, stuffed toys, caps, shoes, hair accessories, jewelry
7	Virtual personals	Accountancy, data scientist, content writing, graphic designing, web designing, programming, gaming

Table No.1. Demonstrate the themes for different nature of work that women can do from home. These themes are on-line education, health & beauty industries, crafts making, food items, fashion design, men, women's & children's accessories, and virtual personnel. Detail is as under.

On-Line Education

The respondents of study shared their perspectives relating to home-based work for women. The majority has pointed out that on-line education is one of the best means of earning for literate women. As per their opinions, the on-line education includes formal education, informal education, schooling, teaching, tuition, religious classes, on-line Quran class, etc.

Health & Beauty Industries

The participants put emphasis on health and beauty industries as one of the best home-based works for women. They believed women can record videos relating to

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health and beauty care, fitness & yoga, and can upload these activities to increase their earning.

Crafts Making

Interior decoration that includes flower making, makrama making, woodwork, handmade mantelpiece, glasswork, paintings, and calligraphy is a good option for work from home. Some of the participants also highlighted nail art, on-line makeup classes, and gift packing as home-based work.

Food Items

The participants were of the view that illiterate women can sell frozen items as a means to increase their earning. The frozen items such as snacks, BBQ items including different variety of kababs and samosas, chicken, and fish can be a good option for low-cost home-based work, etc.

Fashion Designing

Fashion designing can be another highly paid home-based work for skilled women. The embroidery items, casual and formal dressmaking, fabric painting, ready-to-wear for all, party and bridal wear, and cultural dresses can help women to have reasonable size of earnings.

Men, Women & Children Accessories

The majority of men, women & children's accessories as handbags, purses, stuffed toys, caps, shoes, hair accessories, and jewelry items consider that these items can also be conveniently managed by women from home and can be a good source of earning activity.

Virtual Personals

The literate women are capable to serve professionally in different firms and industries from home. They are performing as an accountant, data scientist, content writer, graphic designer, web designers, programmers, game developers, etc. These are some of the popular and highly paid home-based works.

Q. No. 2: What do you think are the benefits of home-based work for women?

Table No. 2

Benefits of Home-Based Work for Women

Sr.no.	Themes	Coding
1	Empowerment	Health and education chances, self-confidence, independence, positive impact on the relationship, socio-economical awareness, social participation, less gender-wise discrimination, capability to manage work and home, half-time job.
2	Employment	Employment, contribution to household earning
3	Contribution to economic development	Participation in economic development
4	Security	No fear of corporate insecurities, no sexual harassment, work in a veil

Table No. 2. It demonstrates themes for the benefit of home-based work for women. These themes are empowerment, employment, contribution to economic development, and security. Detail is as given below.

Empowerment

The home-based employment support women's empowerment in number of ways. The home-based jobs increase contribution to women's health and education. It enhances their self-confidence and make them feel to be quite independent. The home-based jobs have a positive impact on their relations. They are being treated with respect. Moreover, they become well-conversant with the socio-economic circumstances. The home-based job opportunities increase women social participation. It discourages gender discrimination on account of employment and social rights. Home-based jobs support women to address their domestic and professional responsibilities in a much confident manner. The women who seek half-time job opportunity at home are substantially benefited in terms of their income.

Employment

The home-based jobs increase chances for women employment at all levels including literate or illiterate women, skilled or non-skilled women, young or old, physically fit or handicapped, etc. It supports women to actively participate for increasing family income.

Contribution to Economic Development Lead

An increase in women employment contributes towards economic development of the country. It helps in strengthening exports through availability of cheap local goods, etc.

Security

The work from home minimizes the women fear on account of work-related insecurities like being fired, abused, sexually harassed, etc. and their families feel much safer and more comfortable.

Q. No. 3: What is your experience regarding work-related gender equity in socio-economic domains?

There were mainly two perspectives regarding socio-economic gender equity. One group pertains to gender discrimination in home-based employment opportunities. The preference is for male as they are almost free from domestic responsibilities and thus, are able to concentrate more on their work. The male members enjoy better public relations and are best placed to establish market linkages. On the other hand, it is quite challenging for the women to search an appropriate market for their homemade products. Whereas a group of people are with an opinion that the men and women are equally capable to undertake the business related responsibilities in an efficient and effective manner.

Ques. No. 4: What are your experiences regarding socio-cultural and economic hurdles for women working from home?

The majority of participants are of the view that there are very few hurdles in working from home as compared to the office work. Although women are equally treated by the investors and purchasers, however, there is tendency of misbehaving by certain participants particularly with illiterate women. The women normally try their best to workday and night to increase family income, however, are not properly rewarded for the effort put in by them. On the other hand, the literate women are treated well and substantially rewarded for their work.

The majority of women agreed that they are treated with respect. They feel quite comfortable in executing their business responsibilities because of a generous support from the family members. However, most of the illiterate women are facing little difficulties due to inappropriate financial support. The women with comparatively an easy access to capital is much more comfortable for starting home-based businesses, but the majority of women are seeking help because of overburdened by loans. In the normal course of business, getting loan facility from the government is marked as difficult, whereas the private institutions are subject to charge heavy interest on loans.

Question No. 5: Do you think home-based work can enhance women empowerment?

The researcher noticed quite positive perspectives from most participants. According to women, the home-based work does enhance their income, confidence, socio-economic awareness, and chances for development.

Discussion

In the thematic analysis of respondents' perspective for home-based work of women, the collected data from the semi-structure open-ended questions revealed that it is easy for women to work from home and earn a handsome amount by teaching on-line, by providing health and beauty care classes, fitness and yoga classes. The home-based jobs engaged in craft making that involves flower making, makrama making, woodwork, handmade mentle piece, glasswork, paintings, calligraphy, nail art, beautician, interior decoration, and gift packs are considered a good source of earning. The production of food items is another reasonable source of income. It may include snacks, BBQ items, and frozen items like kabab, samosa, fish, etc. The fashion design is also another field for women to work from home. They can make remarkable progress in the field of embroidery, casual and formal dressmaking, fabric painting, ready-to-wear for all, party and bridal wear, cultural dresses, handbags, purse, stuffed toys, caps, shoes, hair accessories, jewelry, etc. The virtual personal services are related to accountancy, data scientist, content writing, graphic designing, web designing, programming, gaming, etc. It is observed that the respondents are quite comfortable in adopting on-line education career because of multiple options that includes formal education, informal education, schooling, teaching, tuition, religious classes, on-line Quran class, etc.

The second most appreciated is on-line home-based job of health and beauty products and services. The participants are of the view that illiterate women can sell frozen items for their earning. The frozen items such as snacks, BBQ items, different kinds of kababs and samosas, chicken, and fish are good options for low-cost home-based work, etc. Whereas the fashion designing is another highly paid home-based work for skilled women. The literate women can serve professionally to multi-industries and firms from home. They can work as an accountant, data scientist, content writer, graphic designer, web-designer, programmers, game developers, etc. These are some popular and highly paid home-based works. In response to the question about benefits of the home-based work, the respondent's response was that on-line work provides greater avenues for employment and provide more a sense of empowerment. Therefore, the on-line employment can visibly contribute towards economic development. One of the biggest advantages is, no fear of corporate insecurities, sexual harassment, and work under the veil. In response to the question regarding gender equality in socio-economic domains.

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There were two perspectives on socio-economic gender equity. One group is of the opinion that the gender discrimination does exist in home-based jobs. People normally prefer a male to work as they have no domestic responsibility because of which they can work more in less time, thus are rewarded properly as compared to women. The male member have greater opportunities to get variety of works. Whereas women feel much more difficulty in searching for the market of their homemade products. The others are of the opinion that there is hardly any inequality that exist between the genders. Men and women work equally and earn equally. They are being helped by one another. In response to the question about socio-cultural and economic hurdles for women working from home. According to the participants, there are very few obstacles for working from home. The women in this case are treated equally by both purchasers and investors. There are certain cases of misbehaviour especially with illiterate women who are also not properly rewarded for their work. Whereas the literate women on the other hand are treated properly and paid reasonably well.

The majority of women are satisfied from their work and are willing to work with the support of their families. However, many of them are facing financial constraints due to inappropriate support. Most of the women have money to invest and start their own business but are also feeling burdened with loans.

In a response to the question about women empowerment, a positive response was noted. The women claimed that home-based jobs help them boost their confidence and improve chances of development.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the practical implication of this research work is that the labor policymakers can get new insight for designing a business model canvas to increase women labor force participation. The academic implication is to help researcher find a new domain of research by linking women labor force participation with home-based business initiatives. The originality and value of this research is embedded in promoting insights into designing a sustainable business model canvas by identifying skilled female workers capable of starting their home-based businesses and can involve other local female members of the community/villages in their business startup. The research work finding enhances women's labor force for economic participation and to gain more employment opportunities.

Future Directions

There are several future directions that can help promote women's entrepreneurship and labor force participation in Pakistan:

Technology and Innovation

Technology and innovation can play a significant role in promoting women's entrepreneurship in Pakistan, especially in rural areas. The provision of easy access to digital tools and platforms can encourage women entrepreneurship as they feel better connected with customers and access to finance for improving their business operations.

Collaboration: The collaboration among different stakeholders including government, private sector, civil society, and academia can help develop and implement policies to promote women's entrepreneurship and labor force participation. This could include creating public-private partnerships to support women's initiatives.

Mentoring and networking: Mentoring and networking opportunities can help women entrepreneurs build relationships, share experiences, and learn from one another. This can include peer-to-peer mentoring programs, industry-specific networks and on-line communities.

Supporting women-led startups: The governments, investors, and incubators can support women-led startups by providing funding, mentorship, and access to resources. This could also include creating initiatives that promote women-led startups in the fields of technology, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.

Inclusion and diversity: The inclusion and diversity of women within the workforce can lead to increased innovation, creativity, and productivity. And, creating policies and programs to address biases and discrimination for ensuring that women have equal opportunities of success.

Limitations

This study is specifically targeting the Chakwal district, province Punjab, Pakistan . The Punjab province is the largest of all the provinces in Pakistan with majority of women initiatives focusing on agriculture sector. The Sindh is second-largest province of the country where women initiative for business activities is focused on a variety of sectors encompassing fashion and textiles, handicrafts, and food processing, etc. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is situated in the northwestern part of Pakistan where the major tendency of women businesses initiatives is for handicrafts, beekeeping, and agriculture. Balochistan area-wise is the largest province where majority of women initiative towards businesses is focused on handicrafts, agriculture, and livestock farming. The limitation of this research work is that a very small region is undertaken for conducting the study mainly because of time constraints and limited resources. If all the provinces of Pakistan are included in the study, then the results will be quite comprehensive and much reliable.

Recommendations

The following are some of recommendations for women home-based business initiatives.

Increasing Access to Education

Government and non-governmental organizations can work to improve access for education to girls and women including vocational training and entrepreneurship development programs. This can help women develop the skills and knowledge necessary to start and run successful businesses.

Challenging Cultural Norms

Addressing cultural and societal norms that limit women opportunities will require a multi-stakeholder approach that involves community leaders, policymakers, media, and civil society organizations. Strategies could include targeted campaigns for changing attitudes toward women roles in the workforce and promote the benefits of gender equality.

Creating Targeted Financing Programs

The governments and financial institutions can develop more targeted loan programs and microfinance initiatives for women entrepreneurs, as well as financial literacy programs to improve their financial management skills. Although the government is already working on it, there is a need to widen the scope of these loans and finances.

Improving Infrastructure

Investing in infrastructure such as reliable electricity and internet access can help women entrepreneurs overcome logistical barriers and improve their ability to connect with customers and partners.

Enacting Supportive Policies

Governments can enact policies that support women entrepreneurship and labor force participation for tax incentives, simplified licensing processes, and access to affordable childcare.

Strengthening Legal Frameworks

Addressing legal barriers that limit women ability to start and run businesses such as inheritance laws and discriminatory labor laws, will require changes to the legal framework to promote gender equality.

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