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Women Entrepreneurship: Journey of Becoming Entrepreneurs in Nepal

Sunil Chimariya

Lecturer, Bachelor in Social Work Department,
St. Xavier's College Maitighar, Kathmandu Nepal

Dilasha Nepal

Scholar, Bachelor in Social Work Department,
St. Xavier's College Maitighar, Kathmandu Nepal

Richa Kafle

Scholar, Bachelor in Social Work Department,
St. Xavier's College Maitighar, Kathmandu Nepal

Abstract

The number of women involved in entrepreneurship is increasing rapidly in Kathmandu Valley. Women entrepreneurs run many entrepreneurship ventures. This research paper seeks to study the problems, obstacles, opportunities, and level of motivation and satisfaction of the women involved in entrepreneurship. This research paper is prepared using a descriptive research design among twelve women entrepreneurs within Kathmandu Valley. This paper used both primary and secondary sources of information, and interviews were conducted using the qualitative data collection method. This paper explored the motivation factor, opportunities, challenges, and obstacles women entrepreneurs face in the Nepalese context. It is seen that the motivation and satisfaction of the participants involved in entrepreneurs are increasing. However, they needed more technical knowledge and a significantly lower awareness of the glass ceiling effect. From this research, it is hoped that women entrepreneurs will get a clear picture of the women involved in entrepreneurs and that the number of female entrepreneurs will increase.

Keywords: entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, challenges, obstacles, opportunities.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Producing something new and valuable, investing the required time and energy, and taking on the associated risk and profit are all referred to as entrepreneurship. People who establish women's enterprises are considered women entrepreneurs (James and Satyanarayan, 2015). Since modernization, Nepal has embraced a mixed economy, with the private and public sectors engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Many industries, including biscuits and confectioneries, bakeries, flour mills, contemporary rice mills, sugar, soap, tanneries, cotton and textile, solvent breweries, television and radio assembly, hotels, etc., have been pushed by private entrepreneurs. The government also takes on the role of an entrepreneur in developing industrial ventures when the private sector needs more resources and entrepreneurial ability. The government of Nepal has established businesses related to jute, sugar, tobacco, leather, timber processing, agro-lime and agricultural tools, bricks and tile, cement, dairy, textiles, herbs, pharmaceuticals, and paper spinning (K.C, 2004). In the same way, female entrepreneurs are currently making their mark by starting multiple businesses.

Among the significant developmental concerns of the third world nations, women are the most prominent issue. Women in Nepal cover more than half of the country's population but are limited to the housewife. They have to face subordination to men since they are dependent on their male counterparts for everything. The issue of women's empowerment is being raised everywhere nowadays; women's empowerment must become economically empowered first; for that, women should be involved in entrepreneurial activities. This will not just help the development of women; instead, it is important for the nation's overall development.

In Nepalese society, a woman has always been viewed in the traditional viewpoint of what role she should play in the home: homemaker or caretaker. As mentioned above, she falls in the reproductive workforce. Even if women break from the stereotypical role of "housewife" and join entrepreneurship, they still face several challenges and obstacles to acquiring the position seen as advancing or of higher recognition than they would like. Though females are treated as the second sex in the family and society, they are breaking the glass ceiling, coming out of their homes, and starting their businesses on their own.

The rate of women in entrepreneurship is growing, and the awakening number is increasing in Nepal, mainly in the country's capital. Women's involvement in entrepreneurship helps in women's empowerment. It provides opportunities for women to grow, helps them break

stereotypes, and gives them economic freedom. Meanwhile, women involved in entrepreneurship face several obstacles and challenges in starting their own business and making it sustainable. The primary root causes can be attributed to the patriarchal traditions, gender roles, socialization, and gender norms of Nepalese society. Women are still considered as submissive and weak.

Statement of the Problem

Women cover more than 50 percent of the population of Nepal. They are still marginalized and face several problems related to gender issues and domestic violence. Women are not taken as an economically active population in Nepal. Breaking the stereotypes of women, the rate of women involved in entrepreneurship is increasing. Women entrepreneurs can play vital roles in the national economy and help women's empowerment. Lack of proper guidelines to run a business and support from the family and patriarchy are significant problems for women involved in entrepreneurship. The involvement of women in entrepreneurship is a new trend, so women need to be made aware of the situation of women involved in entrepreneurship. The concept of entrepreneurship, its challenges, obstacles, opportunities, and strengths must be clarified for women entrepreneurs. Women hesitate to start entrepreneurship due to the need for past experiences and proper guidance.

Nepal still faces rampant poverty, regional imbalance, a deepening social divide, and numerous political, social, economic, and cultural problems. These problems manifest not only in people's daily lives but also in the lives of women involved in entrepreneurship.

Rationale of the Study

Nepal is a developing country where women's participation in high decision-making is meager. In Nepal, the number of women involved in entrepreneurship is slowly increasing. The trend of start-ups and entrepreneurship has started in Nepalese women. There are both challenges and opportunities for women to get involved in entrepreneurship. Though several studies on women's participation in different occupations have been done, situational analysis of women involved in entrepreneurship has not yet been conducted in Kathmandu. Even though women's entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the overall development of the nation's economy, enough studies and analyses on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of women involved in entrepreneurship still need to be highlighted. Therefore, a study in this field is highly necessary. The present study will benefit the people, the nation, and the coming researchers.

This study will provide more literature on the status of women involved in entrepreneurship. It will help entrepreneurs, planners, researchers, INGOs, NGOs, and the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare that set the program for women's entrepreneurship.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To analyze the problems and challenges faced by women involved in entrepreneurship.
- ii. To discuss the opportunities and strengths of women involved in entrepreneurship.
- iii. To explore the interest and motivation of women involved in entrepreneurship.

Research Question

- i. What are the challenges and obstacles faced by women involved in entrepreneurship?
- ii. What are the strengths and opportunities for the women in entrepreneurship field?
- iii. What has been the factor that brings a change in interest and motivation of women involved in entrepreneurship?

Methodology

Area of Study

The study area for this research is Kathmandu Valley. The study area focused on Kathmandu Valley because, being the capital city of Nepal, it has been the hub of many women entrepreneurs. Also, the easy accessibility and availability of the respondents in terms of the location is more suitable for the researcher. Thus, the area of study would be Kathmandu Valley.

Research Design

The study is based on a qualitative study. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in the study. The major instruments used for primary data collection are in-depth interviews, case studies, and Key Informant interviews (KII). Primary data has been collected through interviews, observations, and home visits to explore the journey of women's entrepreneurship, the challenges and obstacles they face, and changes in the lifestyle of women entrepreneurs after being involved in entrepreneurial activities. While secondary data are collected from books, journal articles, and several websites, multiple case studies are conducted based on convenient sampling. The universe population of this research is Nepali citizens aged 20 years and above who are involved in entrepreneurial activity in Kathmandu Valley. The sample comprised 12 participants aged 20 years and above, married and unmarried, and

engaged in entrepreneurial ventures. The participants have been selected from diverse ethnic communities and socioeconomic backgrounds. The researcher has analyzed the data collected through primary and secondary sources after the transcription of audio data obtained from the interview. The collected information has been transcribed, coded, and tabulated, and a theme has been generated from the tabulation. The themes were analyzed based on the participants' responses and the literature reviews.

Literature Review

Understanding the potential and difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs around the globe has gained more attention in recent years. In Nepal, a developing nation, the number of women engaged in entrepreneurship has increased. This review of the literature gives a broad overview of the body of knowledge regarding the state of women entrepreneurs in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Women-owned enterprises are well-positioned to enhance national prosperity and contribute to economic growth and development (Niethammer, 2013). Almost all women's enterprises are growth-oriented, increasingly operate firms across all industry sectors, and engage in global trade. Women-owned enterprises are well-positioned to enhance national prosperity and contribute to economic growth and development (Niethammer, 2013). almost all the women enterprises are growth-oriented and are increasingly operating firms across all industry sectors and engaging in global trade. Women-owned enterprises are well positioned to enhance national prosperity and to contribute to economic growth and development (Niethammer, 2013) almost all the women enterprises are growth-oriented and are increasingly operating firms across all the industry sectors and engaging in global trade.

Similarly, one can evaluate the reasons behind launching a business by comparing it to "push" and "pull" aspects. A push and pull factor has been found to operate as a motivator for people to work for themselves (Bollard, 1989). He also mentioned that the pull factor instead provides negative but powerful reasons for starting a new business, whereas push factors, on the other hand, though equally powerful, are more positive reasons for business ownership, which relates to the sense of intrinsic benefits attached to entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Several researches have been conducted on the general issues facing women entrepreneurs, shedding light on several gender-specific factors and challenges. Based on research conducted by Das in 2000, Das proposes three categories for women entrepreneurs: "Chance" entrepreneurs, whose companies begin with no specific objectives in mind, may have inherited their company from a family member or developed from a hobby."Forced" entrepreneurs are

business owners that were forced to launch their venture due to unfavorable financial conditions. "Created" or "pulled" entrepreneurs—those inspired by entrepreneurship programs or seeking a challenge and wishing to forge their path, grow as leaders, and uplift society through their business endeavors.

Women's entrepreneurship is influenced by a variety of variables, including societal influences, their complicated and interwoven lives, and their particular circumstances (Leung et al. 2005.). In the context of Nepal, Pandey and Acharya (2023) explored that complicated paperwork procedures, administrative hurdles, political unpredictability, unfavorable business settings, corruption, labor strikes, and unionization are some of the concurrent elements influencing Nepal's entrepreneurial climate.

Women entrepreneurs have long existed in Nepal among some ethnic groups, particularly in Gurung, Sherpa, and Newar communities; the concept of women in business has just lately gained traction throughout the nation. (Tuladhar 1996). Due to the added obligations women have at home, female-headed businesses typically make around two-thirds of what male-headed businesses do annually. Additionally, women's working hours are typically three to four hours longer each day than men's. These elements significantly restrict women's capacity.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The section deals with the qualitative analysis of the data collected from the participants through the interview process. The researcher interviewed a total of 12 participants, and all the participants were female. The collected data was transcribed, coded, and tabulated, and then, several themes related to the situation of women in entrepreneurship emerged from the interviews. The themes and subthemes were generated based on the responses and their commonality and contrast between each other. The major themes generated from data collection were a) predated work experiences, b) motivation to become an entrepreneur, c) Change in Motivation, d) strength and opportunities, e) challenges and obstacles, f) glass ceiling and corporate downsizing effect, g) reconciliation of family and work h) career in corporations i) satisfaction level.

Motivation to Become Entrepreneurs

The motivation for starting a new business can be analyzed against the pull and push factors. 'Push' and 'pull' factors have been set as a catalyst for people becoming self-employed (Bollard, 1989). For most participants, there were pull factors to be an entrepreneur, such as following

their passion, needing greater independence and flexibility, getting more opportunities, and doing more independently. Furthermore, some participants were involved in entrepreneurship by carrying the family's legacy and continuing the family business. Whereas, one of the participants there was a push factor for starting a business on her own where she mentioned, "I was exploited financially and emotionally while working for others, so, for getting tired of working for others, I have started this company on my own."

Thus, for most participants, there are both pull and push factors for females to start businesses independently.

Predated Work Experiences

All the women participants have arrived at entrepreneurship from a variety of prior work experience. They had worked in private and public sectors for more than a year before starting their own business, but their work experiences differed from 6 months to 17 years. When participants decide to start or purchase their own business, they do not limit their choice to past employment. Unless 2 of the participants, others are likely to own a business unrelated to a previous job. Through this, it can be analyzed that most past experiences of women entrepreneurs didn't have any role in them to start a business on their own.

Change in Motivation

Most of the research participants have been doing business for more than two years. For nine participants, the motivation level has been increasing rather than decreasing due to the continuous support and recognition from family, friends, and society.

One of the participants mentioned, "Since I am passionate about my business, and I am continuously receiving support, and I have enough courage developed to deal with challenges that come eventually which is increasing my motivation."

For one participant, however, it is decreasing rather than increasing; as she mentioned, "Paths and motivation have been decreased due to the fluctuation in business and economic loss."

Thus, from this, it can be analyzed that for most participants, paths and motivation have increased over time due to patience and dedication to their startup.

Challenges and Obstacles

During the interview, the participants mentioned that they have faced several challenges and obstacles from the initial day to the present day. Thus, the theme of challenges and obstacles has been analyzed by diving into many subthemes based on the continuous repetitiveness of

the answer. Some of the sub-themes of the theme of Challenges and obstacles are a) limited network, b) gender biases, c) no specific working hours, d) financial obstacles, and e) continuous ups and downs in the market.

Limited Network

10 out of 12 participants mentioned that women's need for a sound network to carry out the business is one of the significant challenges they have faced during their business ventures. One of the participants mentioned, "Growth of the company has been stagnant due to limited network, and networking programs in Nepal are minimal."

For business, it is as important to have networks as solid ties. From this, it can be analyzed that women having limited networks are one of the biggest obstacles for females in entrepreneurship.

Gender Biases

Most of the participants claimed gender biases as an obstacle in the field of entrepreneurship. One of the participants mentioned, "We females are taken as the second sex, and people don't believe that women also can do business, which will create difficulty in having a deal with clients."

Similarly, another participant mentioned, "Female is objectified based on gender in Nepalese society, and stereotypes such as female should come home early causes problems in coming out of the comfort zone for females."

The entire participant agreed on the point that gender bias is prevalent in society, which creates obstacles for women to come forward in any field. Thus, from this, it can be analyzed that gender bias and the objectification of females have created obstacles and are significant challenges for women in business.

No Specific Working Hours

7 out of 12 participants mentioned not having specific working hours in entrepreneurship is one of the challenges for women in the entrepreneurial field. One participant said that not having a thorough working hour is a challenge for her as she always has to be ready for work, making it very difficult to manage her personal life. However, the other 4 participants didn't mention having specific working hours as a challenge. Instead, some took it as freedom from the tedious and hectic 10-5 job.

Thus, working hours for women depend on their preferences and choices. Some see not having specific working hours as a problem, whereas, at the same time, some females see it as an opportunity and freedom.

Finance

The interviewees of 12 participants said they faced financial challenges at different stages of their entrepreneurial ventures. Some struggled to start the business, whereas some struggled to sustain it due to needing more.

One craft business participant said, “I want to expand my business since I am sure that if I could expand my business, I would be able to sustain myself, but I don’t have good financial status, so the project has been halted.”

Similarly, another participant mentioned, “I wanted to start a business on my own, but due to the lack of starting funds, I had to wait for more than two years working for another corporate house just to collect starting funds.”

Thus, from this, we can analyze that almost all the participants have faced finance as a challenge during their entrepreneurial venture, so economic sustainability is a major concern for all of them.

Ups And Downs in the Market

Many participants felt that an unstable market due to political instability and financial upheavals is one of the major challenges women in Nepal face when running their businesses. One of the participants mentioned, “I was going to sort down my business during the economic blockade in Nepal.”

Another mentioned, “Due to the increase in the competition in the market, it is tough to be stable in the business.”

Thus, it can be concluded that frequent ups and downs in the market and competition increases are some of the challenges faced by females in entrepreneurship.

Strengths and Opportunities

Similar to the weaknesses and challenges, during the interview, all the participants claimed to find several strengths and opportunities for the women involved in entrepreneurship. Thus, the theme strength and opportunities have been divided into several sub-themes and analyzed by the researcher. Some of the sub-themes are

- a) Recognition
- b) Education and experience
- c) Empowerment
- d) Independent
- e) Generate employment

Recognition

8 out of 10 participants claimed recognition of female entrepreneurs from Nepal's government, media, and non-government agencies is one of the significant opportunities for women entrepreneurs, which strengthens their capacity of women to run their businesses.

One participant mentioned, for example, "Several recognitions have been provided for the female entrepreneurs in Nepal by the such as *101 Nari Samman*, which motivates females like me to do more in this field and opens the door for several other opportunities."

Her other participant mentioned, "Recognition from media and the governmental sector provides an identity for females and boosts our confidence."

Thus, it can be analyzed that participants find recognition from different bodies like individuals, organizations, media, and government as an opportunity for this field.

Education and Experience

Most of the participants agreed that more educated and experienced women are entering the field of entrepreneurship, which is one of the major strengths for women involved in entrepreneurship. Among 12 of the participants, 5 of them had master's degrees, whereas 7 had bachelor's degrees, and they all completed their studies before starting the business.

One participant said, "Well-educated women are coming into this field, which increases network and broadens the perspective of society for women involved in the business."

From this, all the participants in this research find education and experience to be their strengths when starting and running a business.

Empowerment

Many participants mentioned feeling empowered due to their start-ups during the interview and took it as an opportunity for entrepreneurship.

Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (The World Bank, 2018).

One of the respondents said, “I think my entrepreneurial venture has given me a completely new perspective to think and has provided me a completely new experience, which helped me to grow, and I feel empowered.”

Her other respondent mentioned, “I think the biggest opportunity for females involved in entrepreneurship is they get space to grow and change to empower themselves.”

The entire participant felt empowered after starting a business by themselves and mentioned empowerment as an opportunity.

From this, it can be analyzed that entrepreneurship has allowed women to increase their capacity to make choices and transfer them into desired actions and outcomes, which help them get empowered.

Freedom and Unemployment

During the interview, participants claimed that entrepreneurship provides financial freedom and makes them independent in making decisions and implementing what they feel is an opportunity.

One of the participants mentioned that she started her entrepreneurial venture to have freedom of choice and independence in decision-making, which she is getting in her business and is motivating her to do more. Whereas other participant found freedom and independence compared with their male counterparts when she mentioned,

“Running their own business provides economic freedom and makes women less dependent on their male counterparts.”

Thus, it can be analyzed that almost all the participants took freedom in the economy and independence in decision-making as an opportunity for women involved in entrepreneurship.

Generate Employment

Furthermore, as an opportunity, participants answered that females involved in entrepreneurship could provide more job opportunities for other women, which is an ample opportunity for women. All the participants had been providing employment opportunities for more than two employees; however, some of them mentioned employment management as a challenge at the same time. Thus, through entrepreneurship ventures, participants not only empower themselves but also have been able to provide employment opportunities to many others. Hence, employment generation can also be taken as opportunities for women involved in entrepreneurship.

Glass Ceiling and Corporate Downsizing Effect

The glass ceiling is “A barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy (Morrison and von Glinow, 1990).”

To analyze the effect of glass ceiling and corporate downsizing on women choosing their own business as a career choice, a question was asked, “*What has been the influence of glass ceiling and corporate downsizing on you choosing to start your own business?*” to each participant. Only two participants mentioned that they had started businesses independently due to the glass ceiling effect they faced in their previous workplace.

“I was treated very well but not well paid, and unknowingly, my promotion was halted without any reason, and I felt used by the company's owner, so I left that office and started on my own.”

Similar to her, another participant mentioned, “I didn’t feel any glass-ceiling effect neither the effect of downsizing, but I have seen several women starting a business on their own due to the effect of corporate downsizing, they are replicating similar kind of business where they were working previously.”

The other 9 participants didn’t feel any glass-ceiling effect, and there is no relation between starting a business and the glass-ceiling impact on them.

Thus, it can be analyzed that the glass ceiling concept was new for most of the participants, and most of them had never faced such an effect. They hadn’t started businesses independently due to the glass ceiling effect. Instead, they began with their passion and willingness to do something alone.

Reconciliation of Family and Work

Regardless of gender, many entrepreneurs aspire to a work-life balance; nevertheless, mothers who launch enterprises must manage both their families and their businesses at the same time. Furthermore, conventional gender norms frequently still hold sway in this field. (Fernandes, 2017)

To analyze how female entrepreneurs have balanced their work and family, every participant was asked, “*How have you been able to reconcile your family and professional relationship?*” Among the 12 participants, only 6 of them were married, so a difference was seen between participants. Regarding their experience with the reconciliation of family and work, married participants felt slightly more complex than unmarried participants.

One of the married participants mentioned, “Since I am married, I have to give maximum time to my family. It is quite difficult, but I have managed it properly by segregating the time to the family and children.”

The unmarried participant mentioned that she didn’t face any challenge reconciling family and work: "Through proper communication with parents, I have been able to reconcile family and profession. Since I am not married, there is no marriage bar.”

Like other unmarried participants, due to the complete family support and time management, they didn’t face many challenges reconciling family and work. At the same time, they also mentioned that not having specific working hours sometimes creates hindrances in negotiating family and work.

Thus, it can be analyzed that only a few entrepreneurship participants have faced problems reconciling family and work. Instead, by managing time properly, they managed family and work properly.

Satisfaction Level

Among the 12 participants, 10 claimed that they were delighted by their entrepreneurial venture. In contrast, only one participant mentioned that she is not merely satisfied with her business due to the constant economic loss and ups and downs she has to face in running a business. Other participants were delighted as they got several daily growth opportunities and improved their skills.

Thus, it is analyzed that entrepreneurship participants have very high satisfaction levels and are highly motivated to do better.

Major Findings

Motivation to Become Women Entrepreneurs

All participants were highly motivated to start their own business, and their motivation to continue their business increased instead of decreasing. However, they have seen several ups and downs during Covid-19. Three of the participants were carrying the legacy of their family business. So, for them, significant sources of motivation were family members and carrying out the family legacy. Other participants mentioned their educational background, desire to do something independently, and influence from other businesswomen and friends as the motivation for them to start their own business. Furthermore, one participant said that their motivation has increased with time.

Thus, it is found that educational background, desire to do something independently, and influence from friends and family are the sources of motivation for the females involved in entrepreneurship. And their motivation has increased.

Obstacles and Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

All the participants said they had faced several problems related to gender, finance, networks, and specific working hours. Though there is a variance in the situation participants face, they have encountered at least one problem. The particular obstacles to the participants while carrying out their entrepreneurial ventures are limited or no networks, gender biases, no specific working hours, financial barriers, and continuous ups and downs in the market. It was found that though there are several obstacles and challenges in this field, the motivation level of women has not decreased.

Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs

Though several challenges and obstacles were there for women entrepreneurs, there are also several opportunities for women entrepreneurs. All the participants mentioned to have had several opportunities during their entrepreneurial journey. Some significant opportunities for women in the entrepreneur field are recognition, education and experience, empowerment, financial Independence, and employment.

Glass-Ceiling Effect

While interviewing twelve participants, only one participant had sound knowledge of the glass-ceiling effect; other participants didn't know the terminology, so they could not answer the impact of the glass-ceiling effect on choosing entrepreneurship as their career choice. Thus, it is found that several participants don't have an awareness of many terminologies related to business, which is lagging them behind. Knowing the glass-ceiling effect, the participants mentioned the start-ups of the women who faced the glass-ceiling impact as being a repetitive kind of business similar to the company they were involved in earlier.

Reconciliation of Family and Work

Among the twelve participants, only four were married, and it has been found that married entrepreneurs faced more problems than unmarried ones in the case of reconciliation of family and work. Instead, all the participants agreed that proper communication, support, and effective

time management help them to reconcile their work and family. Thus, it is found that if not considered, reconciliation of family and work becomes a challenge for women.

Satisfaction Level

Among the twelve participants, nine said they had the highest satisfaction level and mentioned seeing many positive changes in themselves and society. In contrast, only three participants had minimum satisfaction levels, but she was also said to be satisfied to some extent. Thus, participants involved in entrepreneurship are happy to a large extent as they receive several opportunities and can minimize the challenges.

Discussion:

The literature review and findings presented above provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of women entrepreneurs in Kathmandu, Nepal. The discussion will focus on some key themes and findings emerging from the literature and the implications for policy and practice.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs:

This study shows that female entrepreneurs in Kathmandu encounter various difficulties while starting their businesses. Their limited access to capital significantly hampers their need to improve and expand their businesses. This finding, which emphasizes the need to address this issue through better access to financial services and focused financial literacy initiatives, is consistent with earlier research done in different situations.

This report also addresses the issue of women entrepreneurs need more social networks and support. Social networks are essential for accessing resources, learning about entrepreneurship, and finding mentors. Thus, programs that encourage the formation of encouraging networks and offer mentorship opportunities designed especially for female business owners may be crucial in resolving this issue.

Women entrepreneurs in Kathmandu confront several significant challenges, including discrimination based on gender and societal expectations. Their chances are restricted by conventional gender norms and prejudices, which also lead to unequal access to opportunities and resources. Women entrepreneurs can flourish in environments more supportive of gender equality through policy initiatives and awareness efforts that address gender prejudices.

Enabling Factors for Women Entrepreneurs:

Despite these obstacles, the article identifies several supportive factors that help women entrepreneurs in Kathmandu. The success of women-led enterprises has been proven to be

positively impacted by access to training and mentorship programs. These programs give female entrepreneurs the abilities, information, and direction they need to negotiate the corporate world successfully. Organizations and policymakers should prioritize the creation and execution of such initiatives to increase the potential and success rates of female entrepreneurs.

Social capital and business networks are also critical in assisting female entrepreneurs. Creating robust corporate networks improves opportunity, information, and resource access. Women entrepreneurs in Kathmandu can flourish and succeed if business associations, forums for knowledge exchange, and networking events are made more accessible.

Policy Implications:

This paper underscores the importance of supportive policy frameworks to address women entrepreneurs' challenges in Kathmandu. It is crucial to have policies that address gender-specific barriers, promote inclusivity, and ensure equal opportunities for women in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This includes improving access to finance through targeted financial programs, implementing gender-responsive policies, and fostering an environment that supports women's economic empowerment.

Moreover, the paper highlights the need for collaborative efforts between government agencies, NGOs, and private sector stakeholders in developing and implementing effective policies and programs. This collaboration can facilitate knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and coordinated support for women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

This paper emphasizes the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Kathmandu, Nepal. By addressing challenges related to finance, social support, and gender biases and leveraging enabling factors such as training, mentoring, and business networks, policymakers and practitioners can create an environment that fosters the growth and success of women entrepreneurs. This, in turn, would contribute to the overall economic development and empowerment of women in Kathmandu.

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