

## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: AN ULTIMATE REMEDY TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, AXHUNGER, MALNUTRITION, AND POVERTY

Saman Mazhar<sup>1</sup>, Ghazala<sup>2,\*</sup>, Rabia Mazhar<sup>3</sup>, Ghulam Qambar<sup>4</sup>, and Shujaat Gilani<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer Economics, Institute of Business Management, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Pakistan;

<sup>2</sup>Department of Economics, University of Sindh, Jamshoro;

<sup>3</sup>Post-graduate Student, University of Agriculture Faisalabad;<sup>4,5</sup>Educator, Government of Punjab, Pakistan;

<sup>4</sup>PhD Scholar, University of Okara, Punjab, Pakistan

\*Corresponding author's e-mail: Tunio\_ghazala@yahoo.co.uk

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During past three decades, entrepreneurship development among women has become a productive to mainstreaming women in socio-economic activities. This study tends to assess the prospects of entrepreneurial development in skills, personal qualities, socio-economic status, and family health status among women. Quantitative research design was used, data were collected from 300 women entrepreneurs through simple and stratified simple random sampling techniques using a pre-tested questionnaire. Average methods, interval of standard deviation from mean (ISDM) method, and correlation analysis are used in SPSS 22.0. Study concludes that women entrepreneurs have remarkably improved in development of skills, qualities, socio-economic status, and family health status. Result for correlation analysis shows all factors are significantly correlated to each other. Hence, results envisage there is huge room for nascent women entrepreneurs to be the part of entrepreneurial activity, gains from entrepreneurship, move toward entrepreneurial development with a sufficient pace, and ultimately face up to better-quality life. In contrast, women entrepreneurs are still caged, vulnerable, shaded, and unprovoked in some cultural and social barriers. Finally, study presents an optimistic and bright perspective of entrepreneurial undertaking and portrays it as; a platform to grow, endure, retain, and adhere women potentials to get recognized in the society. Moreover, inclusion of leadership, independence, participation in social and political activities among women entrepreneurs can boost entrepreneurial development into masses and could be a game changer leading to women empowerment. Besides this, study suggests country level researches to generalize the findings.

**Keywords;** Skills, qualities, Socio-economic, health status, entrepreneurship.

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### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has recognized to have socio-economic implications for economies to soar income and living standard (Alina, 2011). Developing economies are putting their efforts to take entrepreneurship as a key agenda, help poor sections for poverty reduction and captivating long term tools for income redistribution (Abdullah & Muhammad, 2008). Among developed economies, women have been regarded as the modular, builder and nuclei of the nation (Acs, Desai and Hessels, 2008). Index of civilizations can be measured from the role of women in the society (Varalakshmi and Shruthi, 2014).

Nowadays, unemployment is considered as the root of major problems faced by governments in most of the developing and underdeveloped countries, globally. In this regard, women entrepreneurship has gained popularity with untapped and unveiled aspects to spur economic growth (Pilkova and Rehak, 2014). Regardless of the fact that men are still playing a leading role in holding and running major businesses, scholars and policy makers have a consistent view for women entering in the businesses with the fact of growing women participation in businesses during past few decades (Bjerke,

2013; Daskalaki, Hjorth, & Mair, 2015; Davis and Shaver, 2012).

Therefore, small women business population has been a prominent feature in accelerating the growth among Asian economies (Dhariwal, Armstrong, & Damaren, 2011). Women entrepreneurs working in labour markets are tremendously contributing in creation of new jobs, income, poverty reduction, socio-economic upheaval, improved family nutritional intake, and helping to women owned enterprises to grow at large extent (Acs *et al.*, 2008; Baughn, Chua and Neupert, 2006). Conversely, women are unprivileged, non-appreciated and shaded in developing economies, however they can play a significant role to accelerate economic growth (Ezeibe, Diogu, Eze, Uzoamaka, & Chiaha, 2013; Mustapha, Yunusa, & Pelemo, 2013). Indeed, women are relatively much adoptive, innovative, risk taker, creative and have more contributions in informal sector (Blenker, Dreisler, Færgemann, and Kjeldsen, 2008; Dreisler, Blenker, & Nielsen, 2003). Moreover, entrepreneurial development among women is positively associated with women empowerment and reducing gender disparity (Thomson, 2002).

Currently, Pakistan is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in globe, whereas 4<sup>th</sup> among largest population of Asian countries (Ahmad, 2017). About 49.02 percent of the country's total population is comprised of women. Women being about half of the country's total population are contributing in very low proportions (about 24.8 percent) in labor force. The literacy rate among women has overtime increased from 35.4 percent in 2000 to 49 percent in 2015, it ensures the development of women entrepreneurship on the right way (Pakistan, 2016-17).

In contrast to developed economies, Pakistan currently do not respond to the economic shocks quickly, it needs social change and sectoral development as felt globally (Zamperi Ahmad, 2011). Hence, it has become contemporary for the local authorities to ponder the effect of global social change in line to regulatory framework to motivate household women and professionals for being economic agents in country (Ayadurai, 2006; Harris & Kinney, 2004). Unfortunately, in Pakistan women are economically deprived and socially handicapped in the society by having very low access to resources and markets (Jamali, 2009). Therefore, they are lacking behind in posing their productivity in economic activities and do not enjoying opportunities for socio-economic independence as men do (Sharma, Dua, & Hatwal, 2012; Ullah, Farooq, & Ahmad, 2012). In addition, Women are still in the cages of social and cultural barrier which are the major obstacles in their lower educational status, poverty, and least exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities. Moreover, limited access to resources undermines women capabilities of hunting entrepreneurial opportunities and securing a profitable idea into being (Ali, Mumtaz, Akhtar, & Ullah, 2014; Aslam, Latif, & Aslam, 2013; Rehman, 2015).

The empirical work of many researchers (Ali *et al.*, 2014; Alkaabi & Dixon, 2014; Kurgun, Bagiran, Ozeren, & Maral, 2011; Samer, Majid, Rizal, Muhamad, & Rashid, 2015; Sarkar, Echambadi, Agarwal, & Sen, 2006; Upadhye & Madan, 2012; Varalakshmi & Shruthi, 2014; Yunus, Moingeon, & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010) revealed the tremendous contribution of entrepreneurship development among women globally and it's yield insocio-economic upheaval as well in hastened higher folds of economic growth for countries.

During past three decades, entrepreneurship development among women has become replica to mainstreaming women in economic activities. It can substantially contribute in accelerating women empowerment leading to economic growth for countries. Hence, it has become crucial to examine areas in which women entrepreneurs have developed their skills in order to enhance the pool of women entrepreneurship and liberating their potentials for innovation. The basic theme encouraging this study into being is its need to develop an understanding of the entrepreneurial benefits gained by women entrepreneurs in; socio-economic upheaval, and mainstreaming women via entrepreneurial orientation. However, study also tends to assess the prospects of

entrepreneurial development in skills, personal qualities, status of women entrepreneurs subsequent to undertaking entrepreneurship in socio-economic and entrepreneurial activities, and improvement in family nutritional intake. Therefore, study will suggest some amicable policy interventions for improving the stagnant state of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan and mainstreaming women to equally participate in development of country.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted via using quantitative research design. Potential population for this study was consisting of women entrepreneurs in Punjab, Pakistan. In total, 4 districts (Faisalabad, Nankana Sahib, Okara, and Sahiwal) were randomly selected and sample size was designated by putting total number of registered women entrepreneur's on [www.surveysample.com](http://www.surveysample.com) at 95 percent confidence interval. A sample of 300 women entrepreneurs were taken for primary data collection through well-prepared and pre-tested questionnaire employing stratified simple random sampling technique. The factors of questionnaire were selected under review of various research studies (Afrin, Islam, & Ahmed, 2008; Bull & Willard, 1993; Godwin, Stevens, & Brenner, 2006; Jennings & McDougald, 2007; Kelley, Singer, & Herrington, 2012; Manolova, Carter, Manev, & Gyoshev, 2007; Mathew, 2010; Sidhu & Kaur, 2006; Soundarapandian, 1999; Tambunan, 2009). Therefore, survey showed response rate of 96 percent for this study and indicated that data were adequately taken. Five points Likert scale was used for taking information from respondents (varying from very low-very much).

Average method was utilized for empirically analyzed information into results. This method start from defining variables, proceed with scaling, and finally assimilate measurements. The interval of standard deviation from mean (ISDM) method was used for determining information levels (Qamar, 2002). Henceforward, correlation analysis was used to estimate association among factors. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 used for data analysis.

A = weak,  $A < \text{Mean} - \text{SD}$  (Standard deviation)

B = medium,  $\text{Mean} - \text{SD} < B < \text{Mean}$

C = good,  $\text{Mean} - \text{SD} < C < \text{Mean} + \text{SD}$

D = excellent,  $\text{Mean} + \text{SD} < D$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Skill development among women after undertaking entrepreneurship measured in 15 factors (Table 1). Results reveals significance of factors with priority/levels among women entrepreneurs. Describing significant factors in skill development; motivation, cost effectiveness, and knowledge pool are key prioritized factors, respectively. Whereas, women entrepreneurs have also significantly

developed their skills as; resource leveraging, pro-activeness, innovativeness, profitability, product differentiation, and managerial. This shows that women entrepreneurs in Punjab, Pakistan are developing in entrepreneurial skills remarkably. This envisages there is huge room for nascent women entrepreneurs to be the part of entrepreneurial activity, gains from entrepreneurship, move toward entrepreneurial development with a sufficient pace, and ultimately face up to better-quality life. In contrast, women entrepreneurs identified deficient (non-significant) in 6 factor among; marketing, communication, and mobility introduced as least scored factors, respectively. This enlightens that their institutions (formal or informal) are incapable, incompetent, and non-focused for delivery of knowledge among these areas. However, result presents a optimistic view of entrepreneurial undertaking among women and bright perspective in development of skills. Findings are similar to many researches (Gundry & Welsch, 2001; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Morris, Miyasaki, Watters, & Coombes, 2006; Mueller & Dato-On, 2008).

**Table 1: Skill development among women after undertaking entrepreneurship.**

Skills/factors	Mean	SD	Variation coefficient	Priority /level
Motivation	4.04*	1.05	0.261	1
Cost effectiveness	4.02*	1.28	0.318	2
Knowledge pool	3.98*	1.49	0.374	3
Resource leveraging	3.88*	1.37	0.353	4
Proactive	3.74*	1.68	0.450	5
Innovativeness	3.65*	1.55	0.425	6
Profitability	3.41*	1.62	0.477	7
Product differentiation	3.25*	1.32	0.406	8
Managerial	3.12*	1.49	0.478	9
Production	2.98 <sup>NS</sup>	1.42	0.488	10
Accounting	2.80 <sup>NS</sup>	1.44	0.514	11
Technical	2.74 <sup>NS</sup>	1.54	0.568	12
Marketing	2.38 <sup>NS</sup>	1.58	0.663	13
Communication	2.10 <sup>NS</sup>	1.47	0.702	14
Mobility	1.19 <sup>NS</sup>	1.39	0.739	15

\*Mean score greater than 3 statistically significant; NS stands for non-significant.

Improvement in individual qualities among women entrepreneurs measured in 10 factors (Table 2). Result depicts significance of various factors with priority/levels among women entrepreneurs. Explaining significant factors in improvement of individual qualities; confidence, self-reliance, and decision making are key prioritized factors, respectively. Therefore, rationality, putting idea into being, social networking, and risk taking has overtime improved among women entrepreneurs. This concludes women entrepreneurs has significantly transformed their qualities and entrepreneurship has provided them with a platform to grow,

endure, retain, and adhere their potentials to get recognize in the society. However, this overtime improvement in entrepreneurial qualities can soar women empowerment in the country, due efforts are required to create entrepreneurial development and its multiplication into masses. Contrary; team management, independence, and leadership are disowned factors among women entrepreneurs. This clarifies that either women have improved several factors with inclusion of entrepreneurship, but they are still lacking in enjoying social independence as men do. Consequently, results suggest social justice is indispensable to escalate entrepreneurial qualities development among women. Results are in line to recent studies (Afrin *et al.*, 2008; Buttner, 2001; Duflo, 2012; Sathibama, 2010; Sharma *et al.*, 2012; Thakur, 2009).

**Table 2: Improvement in qualities among women after undertaking entrepreneurship.**

Factors	Mean	SD	Variation coefficient	Priority /level
Confidence	4.06*	1.25	0.309	1
Self-reliance	4.01*	1.08	0.271	2
Decision making	3.91*	1.51	0.387	3
Rationality	3.69*	1.47	0.398	4
Putting idea into being	3.41*	1.81	0.526	5
Social networking	3.16*	1.36	0.431	6
Risk taking	3.05*	1.49	0.491	7
Team management	2.99 <sup>NS</sup>	1.43	4.781	8
Independence	2.44 <sup>NS</sup>	1.45	0.594	9
Leadership	1.91 <sup>NS</sup>	1.42	0.745	10

\*Mean score greater than 3 statistically significant; NS stands for non-significant

Improvement in socio-economic status of women entrepreneurs measured in 12 factors (Table 3). Describing significant factors in upheaval of socio-economic status; resource holding, children educational status, and family economic status are foremost ordered factors, respectively. However; admiration in family, entrepreneurial coaching, access to economic incentives, role in decision making, and esteem in society has also improved overtime among women entrepreneurial masses. Hence, entrepreneurship has aided women to have a better quality life and they are working to enlighten more entrepreneurial candles to fade poverty, disparity, and getting equity instead of equality. Adversly; social participation, recognition as role model, and political participation are least improved factors among women entrepreneurs. This highlights that although women entrepreneurs have done many fold improvements in socio-economic status, but they are still caged, vulnerable, shaded, and unprovoked in cultural and social barriers. Moreover, as women entrepreneurs are astonishingly has grown in entrepreneurial skills, they can encounter these barriers via; energizing their abilities, transforming cultural and social

values, defining new ways to economic activities, and setting new trends in economic settings. Results are similar to many studies (Das, 2000; Goethner, Obschonka, Silbereisen, & Cantner, 2012; Gundry & Welsch, 2001; Hughes, 2006; Lerner, Brush, & Hisrich, 1997).

**Table 3:Improvement in socio-economic status among women after undertaking entrepreneurship.**

Factors	Mean	SD	Variation coefficient	Priority /level
Resource holding	3.83*	1.42	0.371	1
Children educational status	3.68*	1.32	0.358	2
Family economic status	3.52*	1.71	0.485	3
Admiration in family	3.31*	1.61	0.482	4
Entrepreneurial coaching (skill development)	3.25*	1.83	0.563	5
Access to economic incentives	3.13*	1.69	0.529	6
Role in family decision making	3.08*	1.65	0.536	7
Esteem in society	3.01*	1.43	0.475	8
Awareness toward government economic incentives	2.72 <sup>NS</sup>	1.47	0.541	9
Social participation	2.52 <sup>NS</sup>	1.35	0.537	10
Recognition as role model	2.31 <sup>NS</sup>	1.44	6.231	11
Political participation	1.74 <sup>NS</sup>	1.22	0.705	12

\*Mean score greater than 3 statistically significant; NS stands for non-significant

Improvement in family health status of women entrepreneurs measured in 8 factors and results are arranged orderly (Table 4). Interpreting significant factors in improved health and nutritional status among women entrepreneurs; attitude toward family health, nutritional intake among children, and health care measures are highest improved factors, respectively. Therefore, dietary intake among adults, access to health care services, access to physician, and information concerning dietary intake has also improved after undertaking entrepreneurship among women. Thus, entrepreneurship is not merely improving skills, qualities, and socio-economic status, but also assisting entrepreneurs toward a better family health. On the other hand, access to food supplements and additives is not improved yet. This shows women entrepreneurs are on the right track to a better quality life, it will take some time to accomplish all products in one pocket. Finally, result illustrates an game changer aspect of entrepreneurial orientation and dramatic changes among women entrepreneurial masses. Finding are same as many prior studies (Ahmed, 1985; Gatewood, Shaver, Powers, & Gartner, 2002; Yusof, Sandhu, & Jain, 2007).

**Table 4:Improvement in family health status among women after undertaking entrepreneurship.**

Factors	Mean	SD	Variation coefficient	Priority
Attitude towards family health	3.73*	1.27	0.341	1
Dietary intake among children	3.54*	1.69	0.479	2
Health care measure	3.33*	1.58	0.474	3
Dietary intake among adults	3.12*	1.84	0.591	4
Access to health care services	3.02*	1.69	0.557	5
Access to physician	3.01*	1.64	0.546	6
Information concerning dietary intake	3.00*	1.42	0.473	7
Access to food supplements & additives	1.83 <sup>NS</sup>	1.32	0.719	8

\*Mean score greater than 3 statistically significant; NS stands for non-significant

Correlation analysis estimates association among underlying study factors (Table 5).Interpreting the results, qualities improvement is significantly (positively) correlated to skill development. It shows a unit change in one cause 0.426 unit change in other and vice versa. Socio-economic status shows significant (positive) relation to skill development, and qualities improvement. It reveals a unit change change socio-economic status results 0.192, and 0.281 unit change in skill development, qualities improvement and vice versa, respectively. Family health status significantly (positively) correlated to skill development, qualities improvement, and socio-economic status. It depicts a unit change in family health status leads to 0.253, 0.427, and 0.597 unit change in skill development, qualities improvement, and socio-economic status and vice versa, respectively. However, result shows all factors are significantly correlated to eachother, but correlation is not much higher.

**Table 5:Correlation among factors.**

Factors	Skill development	Qualities improvement	Socio-economic status	Family health status
Skill development	1	-	-	-
Qualities improvement	0.426**	1	-	-
Socio-economic status	0.192*	0.281**	1	-
Family health status	0.253**	0.427**	0.594**	1

\*,\*\* are significant at 5, and 10 percent level (2-tailed)

**Conclusions:** Study concludes that women entrepreneurs have remarkablyimproved overtime in development of skills, qualities, socio-economic status, and family health status. Result for correlation analysis shows all factors are significantly correlated to eachother. Hence, results envisages there is huge room for nascent women entrepreneurs to be the part of entrepreneurial activity, gains from entrepreneurshp, move toward entrepreneurial development with a sufficient pace, and ultimately face up to better-quality life. In addition, entrepreneurship observed assisting women empowerment and leading them to enlighten more entrepreneurial candles to

fade poverty and disparity, and getting equity instead of equality in the society. In contrast, women entrepreneurs are still caged, vulnerable, shaded, and unprovoked in some cultural and social barriers. However, as women entrepreneurs has astonishingly grown in entrepreneurial skills, they can encounter these barriers via; energizing their abilities, transforming cultural and social values, defining new ways to economic activities, and setting new trends in economic sittings. Finally, study presents a optimistic and bright perspective of entrepreneurial undertaking and portrays it as; a platform to grow, endure, retain, and adhere women potentials to get recognized in the soociety. Moreover, inclusion of leadership, independence, participation in social and political activities among women entrepreneurs can boost entrepreneurial development itno masses and could be a game changer leading to women empowerment.Besides, this study suggests country level researches to generalize the findings.

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