

**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CURRENT
STATUS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES
IN PAKISTAN**

A CASE STUDY FROM MIANWALI



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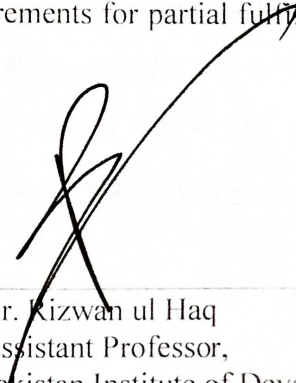


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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled: “**Women entrepreneurship: Current status, challenges & opportunities in Pakistan – A case study from Mianwali**”. submitted by Mr. Asif Ali is accepted in its present form by the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad as satisfying the requirements for partial fulfillment of the degree in Master of Philosophy in Development Studies.


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Abstract

Women empowerment can be achieved in many ways and women entrepreneurship is one of those ways. Women entrepreneurship can change women self-perception via providing financial security and decision making power. That is, playing multiple roles and multitasking allows women to generate sufficient amount of income and extend her decision making capabilities. However, the journey of women entrepreneurship is more challenging especially in developing countries as there exist institutional, socio-cultural and structural gender specific barriers that block the ways to women entrepreneurship. This study is an attempt to explore the current status of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali District and to identify associated challenges and opportunities. Two different research methods such as semi structured questionnaire for interviewing women entrepreneurs and focused group discussions have been used in this study. Study findings suggest that lack of access to financial resources, lack of social recognition and mobility, lack of decision making, lack of business skills, and less-dominating self-perception of women reflects the current status women entrepreneurship in Mianwali. Findings also suggest that an improvement in personal capacity of women is paramount to make life choices such as to become a women entrepreneur. Further, findings show that changing business environment can also attract more women entrepreneurs into the market. As an achievement financial security allows a women entrepreneur to perform other tasks efficiently and helps women to increase self-confidence and improve decision making abilities.

Key Words: Women Entrepreneurship, Women Empowerment, Business Environment, Entrepreneurship,

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The history of Entrepreneurship is not new to the globalized world. But the formal use of the term Entrepreneur was used in nineteenth century. With the passage of time, different scholars have described the term and its idea in different ways. For instance, Schumpeter (2000) describes it a traditional phenomenon in which it is considered as taking a risk of buying a product at a certain lower rate and selling them at higher rates taking the risks related to the market.

In modern period of innovation, the meaning is now updated with respect to the innovative and disruptive nature of capital investment. Therefore, according to Louw (2003) presence of entrepreneurial activities in an economy is regarded as a healthy and prospering indicator. Those entrepreneurs play a significant role in creating a robust economy of their country (Hild, 2005).

Recent studies have shown that the female entrepreneurs are gaining attraction by various agencies and institutions (Carter, 2006). Therefore, in these days, women entrepreneurship plays an important role for any country. Entrepreneurial activity varies with the regions and cultures. Bruin (2006) describes that under developed countries have comparatively lower number of women entrepreneurial instanced than the developed countries. Moreover, culture plays a key role and shows a clear indicator whether a country could be developed and underdeveloped, for example, the status of women in Arab countries constrains the women to work as entrepreneurs in those countries. Whether there is an increase in the number of women entrepreneurs around the world, there is still less women

entrepreneurship seen around the world. Previously, it was only discussed that the women entrepreneurship is facing difficulties due to less opportunities and space in the society. But thoroughly studying this fact, it would be seen that those opportunities were constrained due to gender related issues in which the work of women is not acknowledged by the society. The lack of education in a society with regard to their female members is also dependent on the entrepreneurial mind-set of a society. The societies where women are only seen as housewives and not breadwinners in a household, also pass-through financial issues in most of the segment of society. On the other hand, in such type of societies, financial systems also feel hesitation in giving finance to the investing women. Therefore, a woman facing hurdle in a system, would have to struggle with an overall system.

The number of female entrepreneurs is growing as they realize that they can do much more than just take care of their families and children. Economic development cannot be achieved without the participation of women in society. For example, there are more women entrepreneurs in developed countries than in developing countries. In developing countries, the growth of small and medium enterprises is an important tool for economic progress and by increasing women's entrepreneurial activities developing countries can also promote economic growth

The field of female entrepreneurship in Pakistan has grown rapidly in recent years due to changes in the social and economic environment. These changes were followed by unemployment, technological advances, inflation, media exposure and globalization and strengthened women's confidence. Thus, Women in urban areas of Pakistan are now more likely to engage in non-domestic activities and becoming career oriented. However, still in

many rural areas of Pakistan, it is observable that the share of women entrepreneurs is not satisfactory and requires genuine efforts on the part of both government and society.

The basic problem this research study investigates is to explore the current status, challenges and opportunities to women entrepreneurship in one of the rural areas of Pakistan. The issue of women entrepreneurship is directly related to women empowerment as development in the former extends the frontiers of women empowerment. However, resource constraints and ineffective policy making allows a huge gender disparity in rural areas of Pakistan. That is, women are far behind than their male counterparts in almost all existing domain and entrepreneurship is only one such domain. Whether it is access to basic rights such as access to resources, access to education and better health care, women in rural areas of Pakistan are always far behind than their male counterparts.

1.2 Research Gap

This research study contributes to the literature in many ways. First, it will describe the current status of women entrepreneurs in one of the many rural areas of Pakistan and to our knowledge there is no such study that applies the same phenomenon in Mianwali Pakistan. Second. It decomposes and categorizes challenges to women entrepreneurs in terms of startup challenges, operating challenges, and growth challenges, and thus looks into the issue in a more specific way than has never done before in Mianwali Pakistan.

1.3 Problem statement

The basic problem that motivates this research study is related to the challenges and opportunities of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali Pakistan. In a developing country like Pakistan, women entrepreneurs face various difficulties in developing their successful businesses. The challenges vary with demographic conditions and cultures. The women constitute more than half the population of the country and therefore can be helpful in determining the economic prospects of the country. Being a rural area of a developing country, Mianwali lacks the required socio-economic infrastructure need to promote and develop women entrepreneurship. Without proper realization of the role and equal participation of all genders, it is extremely hard to ensure the process of development in Mianwali Pakistan.

1.4 Research questions

1. What is the current status of women entrepreneurs in Mianwali Pakistan?
2. What are the different challenges women entrepreneurs face in different stages of developing their businesses such as startup, operating and growth in Mianwali Pakistan
3. What are the opportunities available for women entrepreneurs in Mianwali Pakistan?

1.5 Research objectives

1. To explore the current status of women entrepreneurs in Mianwali Pakistan.
2. To identify different challenges women entrepreneurs face in different stages of developing their businesses such as startup, operating and growth in Mianwali Pakistan.

3. To explore the opportunities available for women entrepreneurs in Mianwali Pakistan?

1.6 Significance of research

This research study is important in many ways. First, it will highlight the role of women entrepreneurs in the process of development by signifying different women entrepreneurs as role model in Mianwali Pakistan. Second, by identifying different issues and challenges women entrepreneur face in Mianwali Pakistan, this research study suggests practical recommendation that will be helpful for policy makers to improve the current status of women empowerment in Pakistan which is one of the many goals of sustainable development. And finally, this research study is helpful as it will encourage female population in Mianwali Pakistan to be engaged in entrepreneurship by highlighting all of the relevant issues.

1.7 Organization of the study

In the starting chapter, researcher presents introduction, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, and research significance. The second chapter is about reviewing the available literature and provides contribution to the literature. In the third chapter, entrepreneurship theory, research methodology, research design, units of data collection and interview and FDG guides have been discussed. The fourth chapter presents data analysis, both secondary and primary analysis, and discussions on results. In the final chapter, conclusion, recommendations, and study limitations are given.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The type of literature review used in this study is Semi-systematic in nature. We have already specified our research question and we have a plan & best strategy to search for the relevant literature, therefore using semi-systematic instead of traditional type of literature best suits this research study. For instance, Tranfield et al. (2003) opine that semi-systemic type of literature review is significant when researcher has defined and specified research question and has a good plan to search for relevant literature. In this type of literature review, researcher after inclusion and exclusion makes attempts to synthesize the available literature. In the following sections, we present literature review that starts from entrepreneurship, explores the current status of women Entrepreneurship, identifies support and Challenges faced by women Entrepreneurship in Pakistan and around the world, and explores societal and Cultural Influence on Entrepreneurship.

2.2 Entrepreneurship

Herron and Robinson (1993) argue that Adam Smith (classical economist) was the first began studying "entrepreneurship" in the mid eighteenth century. Many contextual research has been carried out and different definitions or explanations have been developed in the context of "entrepreneur" and "entrepreneurship". Early researchers called it "the risk of buying something at certain prices and then selling it at uncertain prices". The advanced meanings of "entrepreneurship" included the idea of combining elements to create something new. Ahmad & Symour (2008) argue that modern meanings

entrepreneurship include the concepts of "innovation and disruption", to describe entrepreneurship. As shown in the Venkataraman (1997) "entrepreneurship is about combining two phenomena an ambitious person and a valuable open door". According to his review, researcher describes "entrepreneurship" as "a process of finding evaluating and using open doors that leads to the presentation of various products and services".

2.3 Women Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is seen as an effective instrument for creating employment opportunities and thus female entrepreneurs play an important role in every country. Endogenous theory of economic growth signifies the role of entrepreneurial activities in enhancing innovation and technology (Cvetanović et al., 2019). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor GEM is a central company that measures enterprise movements around the world. There are countries where both genders men and women have the same ratio in companies such as Singapore, Thailand, Jamaica, Panama, Switzerland, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Brazil (GEM Report, 2012). Interestingly, Ghana is a country with more female entrepreneurs than the opposite sex. As the publications of GEM (2010) show 55% of women in Ghana engage in entrepreneurial activities as well as more women do business in South America and the Caribbean. On the other hand, in the Middle East and South Asia the number of female entrepreneurs is very low compared to their male counterparts.

Women entrepreneurship is a process in which establishment of new businesses taken place and income is generated while facing huge amount of risk. One basic outcome of all the necessary activities that must be taken in the process of women entrepreneurship is the generated income. The process is the same as one is availing available opportunities and creating some value in the form income generation (Ismail, 2016). That is, women

entrepreneurship guarantees financial security which is the most admired value especially under capitalism. However, there are numerous challenges exist on the journey of women entrepreneurship. For instance, lacking access to financial resources, property and education, as well as inequalities in household responsibilities do not allow women to avail opportunities related to entrepreneurship, lack of support by family members in collecting the required level of resources, the required set of business skills, restricted social mobility and networking capabilities (Antony, 2012).

2.4 Women Entrepreneurship in Pakistan

Pakistan is a developing country, which has limited resources and employment opportunities. The reason for requirement of skills is the low level of youth employment which fills the gap through entrepreneurship causing chain employment impacts. Haq, et al (2007) mentioned that Growth happens when policy and management at every level in the economy turns entrepreneurial, supporting the arguments of (Easterly, 2003 and 2005). This report also mentioned that entrepreneurs can be directed to earn and accumulate wealth and it is important to develop through ideas and innovation. Innovations are supported through economic backups. Currently, Pakistan is a developing country, with growth rate projection of 6 percent up to 2025. After such pandemic strikes it is debatable that the growth rate can be maintained or not. In the time crises, privately owned institutes and entrepreneurs are the backbone of the economy, which also supports innovation, products and services and it helps to shape preferences of a society or a community (Kazmi et al., 2016).

In Pakistan, many women are forced to stay at home. As a result, fewer women go out and have access to employment and education opportunities. Moreover, Pakistani women

cannot contribute to the economy. While they are involved in matters affecting their families and farms, this is not considered a contribution to the economy. In Pakistan, women have to bear the burden of both: being a woman and being poor. Despite the general problems faced by women around the world, Pakistan's business visionaries face unpredictable problems caused by social variables. Social and social habits play an important role in deciding who will become a visionary in business.

For example, social conditions in some departments prevent women from starting their own organization. Female entrepreneurs also lack management skills. These women do not have the proper training to start a business and do not understand the market conditions. Pakistan's economy is working hard, both locally and internationally, to remedy this, but women continue to grapple with it. Lack of knowledge is one of the factors that prevent Pakistani women from engaging in business activities. The business conditions of women in Pakistan reflect the unpredictable interaction of many elements. There are two main classes: The main set of variables comes from the core set, viewed as sacred structures, aid registers, administrative action plans, and institutional components. This class is more modern than custom, so it's fair. Custom sites create problems for women in two ways. First, they are biased in nature; second, they make it difficult to build on the value of existing foundations and their rationality.

Although, Vossenbergh (2013) noted that Pakistan and Iran have a lower-than-normal rate of female entrepreneurs in the world. Tambunan (2017) stated “The employment rate of women in Pakistan has not changed over the last decade However the number of self-employed women increased over the same period Pakistani women are mainly seen in the self-employed as in other countries in the region

The global entrepreneurship shows that entrepreneurship has increased during covid1-19 and employment has declined in most of world emerging economies and Pakistan is not an exception to rule. According to Haque, N. U. (2007) entrepreneurship is playing an important role in Pakistan's economy and its role is extending over the years with help of technology and economic investments. Ali et al. (2019) argued that women entrepreneur has an association with investment but in the other way around. The investment, economic legal and administrative factors influence the entrepreneurial performance of the female's population as an entrepreneur.

There are registered entrepreneurs from Mianwali, which indicates that trend exist in Mianwali for young entrepreneurs, but the trend is slowly maturing in these regions because the preferences from jobs are changing towards own businesses and partnerships in Mianwali. Due to lack of funding and training opportunities as well as the cultural softness, there quite limited number of female entrepreneurs in Mianwali. However, the trend of female entrepreneurs, is more dominant on urban side as compared to rural side. Specifically, by type of entrepreneurship very few types exist in district Mianwali.

There are millions of issues associated with gender gap in developing country and especially, in a country like Pakistan gender gap is much larger as comparative to developed countries. For women entrepreneurs the most triggering challenge is overcome this gap by educating and participating in a male dominant culture. After overcoming the cultural issues financial problems are associated with entrepreneurship in district Mianwali and rural areas have almost never been received any funding for promotion of business or establishment of an entrepreneurship model business. Economic issues are connected to

legal issues for female population in the context of property rights registration and transfer. These issues also restrict women from participating in entrepreneurship base businesses. Investment and social factors are also connected to the performance of women entrepreneurship performance and business outcomes (Ali et al., 2019). There are other challenges like formal training and cultural barriers, which are interconnected in the context of study area. The cultural barriers do not allow females to enroll for formal training on monetary earning however the training on religion issues is allowed in both the genders including male and female but rarely seen among the transgender community.

2.5 Societal and Cultural Influence on Entrepreneurship

Cultural and social considerations suggest that intangible components, including the social system and culture, have a significant impact on people's lifestyles, perceptions develop and influence culture as well. The social and cultural context plays a dramatic role in changing and developing the personality of individuals.

As noted by Sumi and Akhter (2014) cultural and social values arose centuries ago and change from generation to generation. The socio-cultural condition releases negative and positive effects in the context of entrepreneurship. Thornton, Soriano, and Urbano (2011) suggested that these components may influence the development activities and performance of businesspeople (entrepreneurs). Scientists point out that entrepreneurship brings benefits not only in money, but also in society. Thus, "entrepreneurship is influenced not only by the economic conditions of the environment, but also by the social and cultural aspects of the place where entrepreneurship takes place. (Steyaert, 2007)

As a study by Goheer (2003) shows: "In Pakistan, being part of the nuclear family increases the likelihood of women becoming a visual endeavor because women in nuclear families

are less involved with previous generations and therefore less culturally obliging / influential." Religion also affects the functioning of entrepreneurship. For example, in Islam, premium bank loans are rejected and weakened, preventing access to loans from these companies. Moreover, Islamic banking may have several answers to these problems, but nonetheless psychologically affects individuals. Meanwhile, bets and alcohol are banned in Islam, one of the myriad things to enjoy while on vacation. This further limits the door that is open to entrepreneurship for individuals, but it is not a gender issue. (Akhter and Sumi, 2014)

2.6 Support and Challenges Faced by Female Entrepreneurship

Women's entrepreneurship also emerges in the face of gender issues and neutrality. The socio-cultural status of women, as evidenced by the predominance of women in taking care of homework, is one of the greatest difficulties faced by women when starting a business in most Western countries (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggio, 2004). In addition, they say that most female business visionaries have encountered a problem when starting capital for their company. Financial organizations such as banks, partners, and even parents are reluctant or reluctant to help women financially, expecting that "women can't handle cash." Klapper and Parker (2010) point out that women in underdeveloped countries such as Uganda, Pakistan, Kenya, India, and Bangladesh face a serious challenge. It is a difficult bridge for new start-ups and business growth.

In Pakistan, female entrepreneurship has no value or opportunity compared to the opposite sex due to the great influence of society and long-established cultural norms. In a male-dominated society like Pakistan, women's problems are more serious. The problems are visible in the tool for helping women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. Women need access to

"investments, land resources, technological information and other critical assets," which puts their resources underutilized. Pakistan is a male-centered culture with an inherent approach that women are secondary men and that they are the most suitable housewives. This way of thinking creates great difficulties and problems for women entrepreneurs.

The proportion of female entrepreneurs in Pakistan is very low - just one percent of the country's entrepreneurial population. Unless more women take up business ventures, their economic participation and empowerment will remain and be a challenge. One of the main reasons for the delays in female entrepreneurship is the lack of access to finance. The breakdown of Pakistan State Bank's (SBP) gross loan portfolio by gender shows that only 3% of loans to SMEs go to women, compared with 97% to men. Likewise, only 19% of microfinance loans go to women and 87% to men. Similarly, an inspiring entrepreneur in Pakistan cannot open a bank account without giving the name of his father or husband in front of a witness. These obstacles are not based on discrimination in banking legislation. In fact, according to a study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this gap is due to preconceived notions about banks that do not have credit customers, rely on men, and it is difficult to obtain information about their credibility. In addition to these structural barriers, women in rural and urban centers have not been informed about the financial services available to them.

The female employment rate in Pakistan is also not optimistic, at around 4.3%. In industries it is even lower. The working environment discourages women from engaging in business activities due to the inability of organizations and industries to make special arrangements such as nursery schools for pregnant women, workplace harassment law enforcement, duly adopted by the federal government and small provincial government. Rural women suffer

even more from profit-seekers who take advantage of the fact that these women are illiterate, poor and do not know their statutory rights.

Just as the environment creates challenges for women, limiting their ability to undertake a business, there are challenges for women that hinder their path to economic independence.

Rachel S Shinnar, Olivier Giacomini and Frank Janssen (2012) in their research "Entrepreneurial Perceptions and Intentions: The Role of Gender and Culture" confirm that there are three barriers to women's entrepreneurial sense: lack of support, fear of failure and lack of skills.

Despite these restrictions, women in Pakistan, as in many South Asian countries, suffer from patriarchy rooted in social and cultural norms. Two trends - male dependency and the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities between men and women - have prevented women from gaining financial independence in the past. Other auxiliary factors such as poverty, illiteracy and family resistance contributed to the bigger problem. A woman is never entitled to her life, assuming her existence and honor depend on the men in her life. Pakistani women are killed in the name of honor by anyone other than their own father, brothers, or husband. On the other hand, the government has failed to create an environment conducive to women's empowerment and gender equality. Although the situation has improved significantly over the years and more women are now involved in business, financial independence is a forbidden result for many women because they are not free to make choices about their lives.

According to a 2018 poll by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan's GDP may increase by up to 30% thanks to the empowerment of women and an increased role in the labor market. According to another analysis of the World Investment Bank, Goldman

Sachs, closing the employment gap in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China) and in another 11 countries or N-11 (Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Korea, Turkey and Vietnam) could increase per capita incomes by 14% by 2020 and 20% by 2030. As Lloyd Blankfein, Managing Director of Goldman Sachs said, "We are disciplined in our investing, and when the topic comes up trying to invest and create GDP, there is no better or more effective investment - it is not easier to choose outcomes in the world - this is not an investment you will make in women. Moreover, compared to men, working women spend more resources on the education and health of their children.

The World Bank says Pakistan used only 40% of its human resources, which resulted in low economic growth. To reverse the situation, Annette Dixon, president of the World Bank, points out that Pakistan is "unlocking women's potential." In the early 1980s, when scientists began to investigate the causes of women's failure as entrepreneurs, the analysis relied on a comparison of characteristics such as age, attitude, and education to explain why men had a natural inclination to be successful entrepreneurs. These studies were later rejected on the grounds that the individual is a combination of personal characteristics and environmental factors, and if there are none, there is "individual error." Later studies adopted the concept of the "entrepreneurial ecosystem", according to which the socio-economic environment determines the failure or success of entrepreneurial activity. From this new perspective, female entrepreneurship is seen as influencing rights, access to education, national leave policy for families, and cultural and religious norms. The world has gone from "what is wrong with women" to "what is wrong with the system".

Pakistan will also need to improve the system to achieve a high proportion of women in economic activity. The model of women's empowerment in Bangladesh can only be emulated by addressing domestic challenges. The Bangladeshi government requires banks to lend 15% of their funds to female entrepreneurs and report on progress towards the target. The idea of linking institutional assessment to gender specific success rates could be a breakthrough. To accelerate women's entrepreneurial tendency and fully understand its impact on women's lives, the government will need to invest in policies and initiatives. Pakistan can only unlock the potential of 60% of its human development by creating a holistic environment where women can translate their ideas into successful business ventures.

2.7 Difference between Business and Entrepreneurship

Much of the material about business and entrepreneurship is fragmented and highly controversial. For example, freelancers and business owners may be surprised to learn that some academics and researchers would suggest that they are not really "entrepreneurs" but "small business owners." In fact, many people who have long viewed themselves as successful entrepreneurs would not fit some of the definitions currently offered.

Entrepreneurship is a process that involves a set of activities encountered by individuals availing the available opportunities and creating value (Ratten & Tajeddini, 2018). A woman entrepreneur is defined as a woman who uses her skills, expertise, and resources to initiate a new business. In this regard, women entrepreneurship is a process in which establishment of new businesses taken place and income is generated while facing huge amount of risk. One basic outcome of all the necessary activities that have to be taken in the process of women entrepreneurship is the generated income. The process is the same

as one is availing available opportunities and creating some value in the form income generation (Ismail, 2016). However, in developing countries such as India and Pakistan, women are in the initial phase of entering into the field of entrepreneurship by establishing small enterprises focusing on women-oriented businesses such as boutiques, beauty salons, bakery items, etc. (Asif et al., 2015)

There are several schools of thought that view the concept of entrepreneurship from fundamentally different perspectives. The term has been used to define a wide range of activities such as starting, creating, adapting, and managing a business. No discipline provides the tools to run an entrepreneurial business (Stevenson, 1988). With such a variation of opinion, it is not surprising that a consensus has not been reached on what entrepreneurship is. It can be quite difficult to clearly explain the difference between a business and an entrepreneurial attitude, but as if it were something.

Keeping the above discussion in context, it can be concluded that, what distinguishes an entrepreneur from an entrepreneur is the mental model (way of thinking): an entrepreneur is more of an `` analytical thinker, while an entrepreneur is more of a " possibility thinker. " This means that, for example, the main objective of an entrepreneur is not innovation, but to ensure that a company makes a profit. Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, is focused on creating new value, and this value can be social, emotional, aesthetic and / or financial. So, an entrepreneurship in contrast to business means focusing more on small improvements to an existing situation and trying to imagine how things might be in the future and work to make that idea a reality, by pushing the limits of what is known, that implies more risks but also greater rewards in case of success.

2.8 Contribution to the literature

This research study contributes to the literature in many ways. First, it will describe the status of women entrepreneurships in one of the many rural areas of Pakistan and to our knowledge there is no such study that applies the same phenomenon in Mianwali Pakistan. Second. It decomposes and categorizes challenges to women entrepreneurships in terms of startup challenges, operating challenges, and growth challenges, and thus looks into the issue in a more specific way than has never done before in Mianwali Pakistan.

Chapter 3

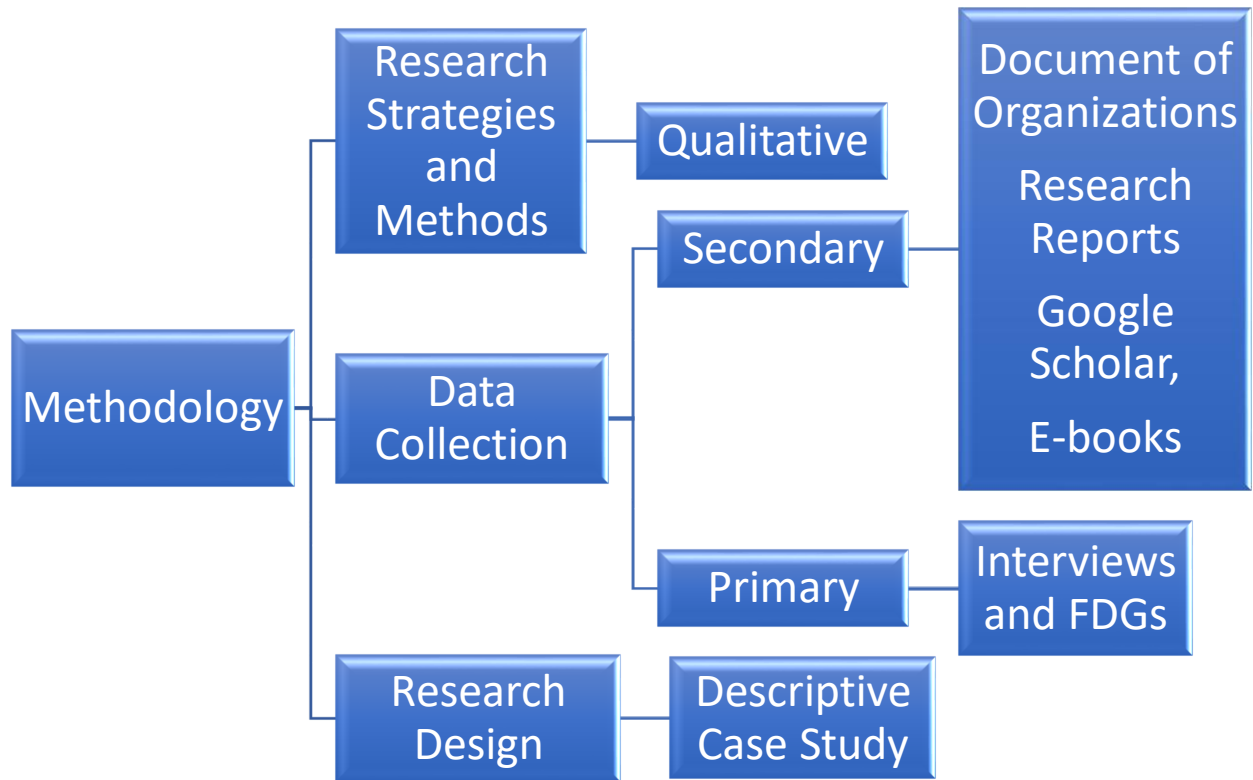
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Entrepreneurship Theory

This research study is based on theoretical foundations developed by Shane (2003). According to this entrepreneurship theory, three stages are critical for a successful entrepreneurship which are discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunity. As per this theory, there are three measures through which one can measure entrepreneurial performance, which are survival, growth, and profitability. In this same way, findings of the two focused group discussion have been analyzed based on framework developed by Kabeer (1999) and applied by De Silva et al. (2021). Under this framework, there are basically three dimensions of empowerment, I.e., Resources, agency and achievements. Resources as dimension of women empowerment implies all the preconditions in terms of challenges, opportunities, and available support. The second-dimension deals with the women personal capacity to make important life choices in a given setting. This dimension of empowerment is much critical for women entrepreneurship under which a women entrepreneur attempts to unlock the various barriers imposed by the prevailing institutional and socio-cultural structure. The third dimension is about achievements that are the outcomes associated with important life choices.

3.2 Research Methodology

Fig 3.1 Research Methodology



3.3 Research Strategy

Research methods is defined as “the theory of methods”, through which the sense of object of inquiry is clearly made (Sarantakos, 1998). Research strategy is a general plan which analyzes how the researcher is going to respond the research questions. (Saunders et al.2009). I have use qualitative methods to perform this research. There are different types of qualitative research methods including diary accounts, in-depth interviews, documents, focus groups, case study research, and ethnography. The results of qualitative methods provide a deep understandings of how people perceive their social realities, and in consequence, how they act within the social world. A good example of a qualitative research method would be unstructured interviews which generate qualitative data through the use of open questions. This allows the respondent to talk in some depth, choosing their own words. This helps the researcher develop a real sense of a person’s understanding of a situation. The reason is that these questions of my research involve qualitative perspective of the players involved in the research so that human experiences could be explained.

3.4 Research Design

Research design is defined as a plan that aim to investigate and solve the research questions or problems. By plan we mean a complete scheme or program of the research. Furthermore, it also provides an insight about “how” to solve a research problem by using a particular methodology. In simple words, the research question can be solved through research design. Thus, it is a framework that contain methods and techniques that are chosen by the researcher for the purpose of combining various research components in a logical manner.

(Kerlinger, 1986:279) So, that the study problem would be efficiently handled. Research design is an umbrella term that means “the overall plan the researcher will use in order to answer research question” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009). According to Bryman (2008) research design is an overall direction towards the processing of research.

There are several categories of case study. Yin (2003) notes three categories, namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies. I have used descriptive case study design in my research, since it involves around describing the existing situation of women entrepreneurship, and the challenges and opportunities related to that aspect.

3.5 Units of Data collection

We are using two UDC's to obtain detail information about current status as well as challenges and opportunities to women entrepreneurship in Mianwali, Pakistan. In this regard. The two UDCs would be:

- UDC-I: Organizations Documentation, E-Books, and Research Papers
- UDC-II: Interviews and focused group discussion with women entrepreneurs in Mianwali

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

In UDC-I, I will analyze the resources collected through google scholar and E-Libraries, in the form of E-Books and Research Papers related to women entrepreneurship in Pakistan in general and Punjab in particular. In UDC-II, local entrepreneurs of District Mianwali will be interviewed and focused group discussion, so that we may be able to know the challenges and opportunities that female entrepreneurs have in the district.

3.7 Locale of Research

I have chosen Mianwali District as my Locale, since from the last decade Mianwali has seen small and medium level entrepreneurs emerging into the market. The young women are seen establishing schools and academies, beauty parlors, stitching schools, vocational institutes etc. These young entrepreneurs must be interviewed and their issues and problems regarding their entrepreneurship need to be identified.

3.8 Data Analysis

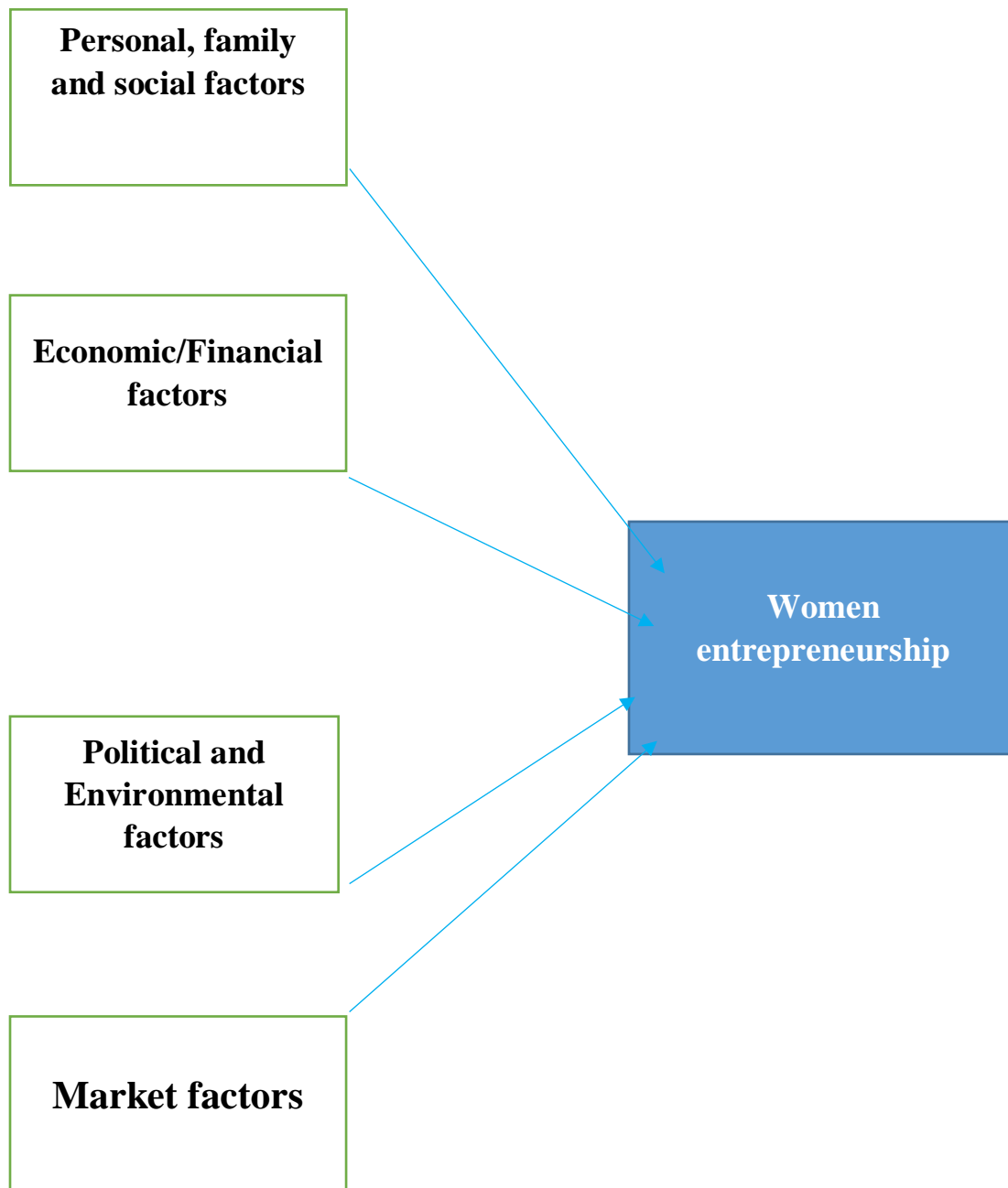
Data analysis is complex and requires genuine and careful efforts on the part of researcher so as to undertake both coding and analysis of the obtained data. There are basically three crucial steps in qualitative data analysis and this study would carefully undertake all these crucial steps (Lapan & Riemer, 2013). More specifically, after organization of data and information obtained through various sources, we will attempt to categorize them in order to generate useful themes and sub-themes to explain the results and findings.

In order for achieving objectives of this study, that is, to explore the current status of women entrepreneurship and identify challenges & opportunities related to women entrepreneurship, researcher has used both secondary and primary data analysis. Research strategy used in this study is such that, researcher has used qualitative research methods I.e., interviews and focused group discussion. To achieve the mentioned objectives. Initially, research has analyzed the available secondary sources such as peer-reviewed research articles and books, to understand and report the current development, challenges, and opportunities for women entrepreneurship. In addition, researcher has interviewed twelve business women by focusing on the current status of women and analyzed major

findings based on five major themes such as Access to financial resources, social recognition and mobility, decision making power, self-perception and business knowledge and skills. Further, to identify barriers and available opportunities for women entrepreneurship in Mianwali, this study uses two focused group discussions with local women entrepreneurs. In the first focused group discussion, participants are local women entrepreneurs who are running beauty salons while the participants in the second focused group discussion are engaged in clothing businesses. Findings of the two focused group discussion have been analyzed based on framework developed and applied. (Kabeer, 1999; De Silva et al. 2021)

3.9 Conceptual Framework

Fig 3.2 Conceptual Framework.



Source, Aslam et. al, (2013)

Personal, Family and Social Factors:

As per literature women entrepreneurs' motivation is linked to a variety of characteristics. These variables are classified differently by each author. In the light of findings presented by Boulton and Carland (1984) women were perceived as embarking into entrepreneurship for a variety of reasons, including the fulfilment of entrepreneurial goals such as expansion, profit, or innovation. Hisrich and Brush (1986) argued that these factors were classified into two categories: push and pull (factors). However, most women in their survey listed push elements as their primary motivation for starting a business. Frustration, divorce, deployment, job dissatisfaction, and boredom in past employment are among these factors. On the other hand, their study also highlighted family security, Independence, education and autonomy as pull factors for entering into their own businesses. Gelin (2005) further stated that “pull and push factors” may also include survival instinct, to get respect, to nurture one’s family, peer pressure, to seek the pride in ownership, to attain personal goals, desire to get recognition in the society, desire to handle the gender discrimination in labor market and one’s loss of job.

Zellner (1994) stated that women quit paid jobs to establish their own enterprises for a variety of reasons that including the ability to manage their simultaneous obligations and live rather more balanced life. Aktaruddin (1999) argued that personal characteristics have a big role in whether or not you succeed as an entrepreneur. Morris et al. (1995) also supported that and argued family difficulties and responsibilities are significant to women and might impact their professional choices. Iheduru (2002) argued that family influence was seen as a precursor to women's entrepreneurial growth. Roomi and Parrot (2008) argued that due to a variety of deeply ingrained discriminatory socio-cultural

attitudes and customs, female entrepreneurs do not get the same odds as males. These limitations may be found in the support systems in place to help women who are just starting out in business.

Economic and Financial Factors:

ILO (1998) and Morris and Lewis (1991) identified economic, legal, infrastructural, regulatory, and socio-cultural factors such as abrupt and threatening changes, school, one's family and work environment as environmental elements that might impact women entrepreneurs. Watkins and Watkins (1986) further categorized these elements as "push and pull" variables. According to Sinhal (2005), in comparison to other regions of Asia, the situation in South Asia is more dire. In South Asian regions, the business situation for women represents the complex interaction of numerous elements (e.g. educational aspects, economic, social/cultural, psychological and religion), resulting in women's disadvantaged standing in society. Women still lag behind males in terms of enjoying liberty and other fundamental human rights and it is very unlikely that they could work and excel just like the men do.

Therefore, female entrepreneurs' economic potential is not getting fulfilled due to the lack of access to agency aid, training, information technology, enterprise premises, land and finance. The inherent beliefs of a patriarchal culture, which hold that males are better as compared to females and also that women are ideally suited for being homemakers, pose significant obstacles for woman entrepreneurs. Often male members of the family also provide minimal support to women that results in limited territorial mobility and lack of social capital. Their findings stress that multiagency collaboration is necessary to

promote growth. Women's business development services might be improved with the help of the media, educational policymakers, and government organisations working together to enable local, regional, and national networks. This would aid women entrepreneurs' inclusion into mainstream economy Sinhal (2005).

Political and Environmental Factors:

The environment refers to the interconnected and interdependent factors or influences that affect how businesses run. The business climate is extremely dynamic, which affects the activities and operations of businesses. Understanding the dynamics and impact of the environment on the growth of women entrepreneurs is critical for policymaking (Okafor and Mordi, 2010). Keeble and Walker (1994) examined environmental elements from the standpoint of a developmental environment that encourages the local market. A number of environmental variables have been reported as major elements that either inhibit or restrict women entrepreneurs. Minniti and Arenius (2003) claimed that these variables are accommodating services which thus promote women's business development. Mansor (2005) listed the following environmental or external factors: living condition, supporting services, new technological development, transportation, land, government influences, new markets, customers, accessibility of suppliers, technical skilled labour force, presence of experience and venture capital availability.

However, through its activities, the government may affect both the economic and non-economic fields for businesses. Any government that is interested in assisting in economic growth can do so through a variety of programs. Women entrepreneurs can benefit from a supportive socioeconomic environment provided by the government. Such

favourable conditions reduce the risk that businesses will face. As a result, compassionate government acts might be deemed the most beneficial for entrepreneurial success and growth. Negative government activities, such as colonial disturbance, also operate as stumbling blocks to entrepreneurial growth. Any country may benefit from the government's commitment to entrepreneurial growth. However, for a long time, women's entrepreneurship was not thought to be crucial for economic progress (Nawaz, 2009).

Market Factors:

Apart from these variables, recent studies have focused on the topic of the "glass ceiling" (obstacles that female mid-managers face on their way to the executive offices) as a push for women to start businesses (Familoni, 2007). This was in accordance with the findings of Hisrich and Brush (1986) which identified the "glass ceiling" as an organisational stimulus for women to leave corporate jobs and start their own businesses. Inadequate access to markets, notably financial markets, is a source of economic exclusion for women all around the world (Kempson and Whyley, 1999; World Bank, 2014). It weakens women's economic capability (Ridgeway, 2011) and prevents women from starting businesses (Ault, 2016). Existing research on women's economic and entrepreneurial marginalisation is formed on a set of assumptions that are essentialist in nature. The perception that entrepreneurship necessitates "masculine" qualities (Ahl, 2006) or that women's economic marginalisation is founded in societal prejudice that inhibits their capacity to undertake financial decisions, even inside their own home, are instances of those assumptions (Serrano-Cinca and Gutiérrez-Nieto, 2014).

According to Roomi (2005) the majority of the difficulties experienced by Pakistani female entrepreneurs are a consequence of women's lower social status, undervaluation as

economic actors, and gender discrimination rooted in tribal, feudal and regional culture in the name of Islam. Tambunan (2009) argued that many reasons contribute to women's underrepresentation in the entrepreneurial realm, the most prominent of those are: (a) women are badly deprived in the business opportunities and society due to the lack of education and training options. (b) Excessive responsibilities in the home. (c) Women's ability to start their own business is limited by laws, traditions, conventions, culture, and religious rigidness. (d) Inadequate access to formal financing and other resources.

3.10 Demographics of Participants

Table 3.1 Demographics of participants

S/N	Name	Business Type	Age	Experience	Education	Married
1	Faiza haq	Beauty Salon & Training center	30	11 Years	MA	Yes
2	Wakeela	Clothing & Boutique	45	15 Years	Nil	Yes
3	Sakena	Clothing & Boutique	34	8 Years	Matric	Yes
4	Ayesha Batool	Beauty Salon	28	3 Years	FA	Yes
5	Sarah Jamal	Ladies Clothing	31	5 Years	BAc	Yes
6	Farzana Khan	Kids Clothing	27	2 Years	MA	No
7	Mussarat Jabeen	Beauty Salon & Training center	35	7 Years	Nil	Yes
8	Nabeela Rehman	Ladies clothing (Home based Shop)	42	10 Years	Primary	Yes
9	Kashmala Javaid	Handicraft training center	31	2 Yeras	MA	Yes
10	Sonya Khan	Ladies Clothing	36	8 Years	FA	Yes
11	Iram Qaiser	Kids Clothing	32	5 Yeras	BAc	Yes
12	Zara Falak	Beauty Salon	30	2 Years	FA	Yes

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Data Analysis

This chapter presents findings of two different types of analysis. That is, secondary data analysis is given by focusing on the status and challenges of women entrepreneurship across the globe. Secondly, this chapter presents primary data analysis using interview and FDG guides and focuses on the status, challenges and opportunities to women entrepreneurship in District Mianwali. In other words, status of women entrepreneurship has been explored via conducting interviews and challenges and opportunities have been explored via conducting two focused group discussions.

4.2 Secondary data Analysis

In order for achieving objectives of this study, that is, to explore the current status of women entrepreneurship and identify challenges & opportunities related to women entrepreneurship, researcher has used both secondary and primary data analysis. In the beginning of this chapter, researcher has analyzed the available secondary sources such as peer-reviewed research articles and books, to understand and report the current development, challenges, and opportunities for women entrepreneurship. In addition, researcher has interviewed twelve businesswomen by focusing on the current status of women and analyzed major findings based on five major themes such as Access to financial resources, social recognition and mobility, decision making power, self-perception and business knowledge and skills. Further, to identify barriers and available opportunities for women entrepreneurship in Mianwali, this study uses two focused group discussions with

local women entrepreneurs. In the first focused group discussion, participants are local women entrepreneurs who are running beauty salons while the participants in the second focused group discussion are engaged in clothing businesses. Findings of the two focused group discussion have been analyzed based on framework developed and applied (Kabeer, 1999; De Silva et al., 2021).

The true essence of entrepreneurship lies in the exploitation of available opportunities and as a result, entrepreneurship is an opportunity for women to meet practical and strategic gender needs (Keogh, 2000). Via attaining both practical and strategic gender needs, entrepreneurship contributes to economic wellbeing and helps in unlocking the barriers associated with the social inclusion of women (De Bruin et al. 2007). In the journey of entrepreneurship, women can encounter different institutional, cultural, and structural gender-specific barriers. For instance, the support of family is critical for a women entrepreneur especially in the time of starting a business. However, conventional familial contexts do not allow women to perform the triple role of production, reproduction, and community management (Drolet, 2011). Therefore, women entrepreneurs face a trade-off between fulfilling practical gender needs and strategic gender needs.

For some, it is imperative for women to attain empowerment in terms of avoiding the institutional, cultural, and structural gender-specific barriers through her personal capacity. In this regard, the role of agency¹ is critical to alter the current objective conditions of women via taking control of decision-making regarding life choices (Kabeer, 2001). By choosing entrepreneurship as a profession, women can empower themselves at least in the

¹ Agency as a dimension of empowerment indicates personal capacity of women or the capacity of women to make life choices I.e., to be an entrepreneur.

financial domain, hence, entrepreneurship is a source of empowerment for women as it helps in expansion of women's freedom and capabilities.

According to Kabeer (1999) empowerment is a process of capacity-enlargement in which an agent expands its capacity and ability to make strategic life choices. There are three fundamental dimensions of empowerment which are, resources, agency, and achievements. The first dimension indicates all the preconditions in terms of women self-perception, institutional, cultural, and structural barriers, opportunities, and available support, where the women made life choices. Agency as dimension of empowerment indicates the capacity of women to make life choices and achievements are the outcomes associated with the life choices. However, the use of agency to influence vital outcomes of life choices is difficult, especially, in a conventional social setting as such type of social setting is characterized by personal, institutional, cultural, and structural barriers.

But still women across the world are using agency as the capacity to take decisions related to strategic life choices and have been successful in altering important outcomes of life. For instance, the role of identity construction, structural changes, self-perception, and agency of women are paramount for women entrepreneurship (Haque, 2013). In this regard, one can note that this definition of empowerment is like the capability approach of Sen (1999) under which development is a process of removing barriers that limits women to exercise agency or the capacity to make life choices. In other words, women empowerment is critical for development and cannot be achieved until and unless the agency become independent to make life choices.

One cannot measure the degree of empowerment women enjoys especially in the absence of women's agency. However, both the empowerment and agency of women are equivalent

to the idea that women are powerful enough to control their own lives by attaching themselves to a business activity (Jejeebhoy, 1998). For instance, women play different role in the society which can be categorized into production, reproduction and community management (Moser, 1989). In this regard, women face a trade-off between fulfilling practical gender needs and strategic gender needs. However, for some women should not act only as recipient of change but also an agent of change. Because the agency of women is usually constrained by institutional, cultural, and familial contexts and these contexts influenced the agency, awareness and strategies of women. (Narayan-Parker, 2005)

The presence of gender biases in a specific social setting can pose serious challenges for women to initiate and develop entrepreneurship. Such challenges are gender specific and only women can face such challenges. For instance, gender roles, relationship and responsibilities are socially constructed and historically transferred from generation to generation. In this regard, patriarchal or conventional setting never allows women to get freedom and empowerment by availing opportunities related to entrepreneurship (DeCarolis & Saporito, 2006). As a result, the discovery of opportunities related to entrepreneurship become more difficult for women. For Bird (1989) In order to discover business opportunities, women must be able to change her self-perception regarding defined roles and relationships and look beyond traditionally defined household management and caregiver

For Bird (1989), the discovery of business opportunities depend on self-perception of women and this perception can be altered and shaped by personal capacity, business environment and society. In similar context, Madsen et al. (2008) argued that three factors are binding whenever a woman attempts to construct an entrepreneurial identity and which

are her self-perception, institutional and social barriers. In this regard, self-perception entails both confidence and risk-taking abilities of women. Institutional and social barriers also restrict opportunities related to women entrepreneurship by creating gender differences for women. Therefore, lacking access to financial resources, property and education, as well as inequalities in household responsibilities do not allow women to avail opportunities related to entrepreneurship. According to Antony (2012) other challenges women face while choosing entrepreneurship as a profession are, lack of support by family members in collecting the required level of resources, the required set of business skills, restricted social mobility and networking capabilities.

4.3 Current Status of Women Entrepreneurship in Mianwali

The current status of women entrepreneurship has been explored using listed Semi-Structured questionnaire which are based indicators that have been extracted after extensively reading the available literature on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan (Noor et al., 2021). To explore the current status of women entrepreneurship, twelve women entrepreneurs have been interviewed by the researcher. In the following section, researcher presents findings of the interviews based on the following themes, Access to financial resources, social recognition and mobility, decision making power, self-perception and business knowledge and skills.

4.3.1 Access to Financial resources

The current outlook of financial system and its institutions portray a more discriminatory attitude towards gender. For instance, evidence show that bank lends more to men than women and the same is true for the terms and conditions associated with these loans (Roomi et al., 2018). For some, it is the overall patriarchal structure under which any sort

of functional system or institutions appear to be gender discriminatory. However, under capitalist structure everyone is eligible to obtain loan from banks until and unless he enjoys the collateral bargaining. It implies that women access to bank loans is not constrained only by the prevailing financial system, but personal and familial factors also play a significant role in halting women to obtain bank loans.

In this regard, women entrepreneurs who are the participants of this study explored the importance of financial resources in different stages of entrepreneurship. Participants revealed that different sources of financial resources were available to them in terms of Assets, property, land, and collateral bargaining to obtain bank loans.

“In the starting of business, I had inherited commercial property, but I could not be able to utilize that property as it selling property is equivalent to social embarrassment”.(P.3)

However, family and cultural structure provided no room for the participants to avail these opportunities and expand their capabilities. For the participants, ownership of assets or property does not lead a woman to translate available resources into some profitable venture. In other words, some of the respondents claimed that family members appeared to be unsupportive when it comes to sale out assets or property for collecting the required amount to start own business.

“My family did not support me when I disclosed my intention to sale out property so as to start my clothing business”. (P.2)

Majority of the participants argued that even having ownership of properties, they were not allowed to utilize their properties for the sake of business foundation. In this regard, some of the participants pointed out the discriminatory gender roles and relationships that transmitted over the course of history. As a consequence, women lack the required business skills and confidence, and therefore economic returns on businesses run by women are expected to be lower than the expected economic returns of businesses run by men.

As far as bank loan as source of financial resources are concerned, half of the participants have obtained bank loans in the start of business while three participants have obtained bank loans in the operational stage of business. However, all the participants are of the view that the procedure of obtaining bank loan is quite difficult especially when the loan application lacks family consent.

“Without the consent of family or family member, it is quite complicated to get loan from banks”. (P.7)

Not only the procedures are difficult, but the available incentives also portray the same image. Despite the stated hurdles, some of the participants have appreciated the role of Micro-Finance bank in providing easy and soft loan scheme for women. According to the participants, it is quite easy to obtain loan from Micro-Finance bank than other private banks.

“I faced no difficulty in obtaining loan from Micro-Financed Bank as rules and procedures are quite women-friendly”. (P.9)

This shows an improvement in the status of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali because easy access to bank loans encourages women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses scale.

4.3.2 Social recognition and Mobility

Women entrepreneurship in its different stages get affected by the degree of social recognition or acceptance. Both start up and growth of business depends on various social and cultural factors. In one hand, socio-cultural attitudes, behaviors, and norms restrict women to avail business opportunities, and on the other hand religious constraints block the path for women to excel their entrepreneurial skills. Numerous studies in this domain suggest that women entrepreneurs encounter challenges in terms of social recognition and

mobility. Such constraints are mainly active in the initial stage of starting a business and have negative implications for women entrepreneurs. For instance, lack of social recognition and mobility aggravate insecurities of women entrepreneur and are associated with lower women confidence. As with lower self-confidence, women entrepreneurs make frequent decision-making errors and often fail to survive their businesses.

Participants of this study embraced the fact that prevailing socio-cultural structure is unfavorable for women entrepreneurship. For instance, one participant claimed that

“The first negative feedback a women entrepreneur receive is from his own family, as family members are also the product of prevailing socio-cultural structure”. (P.10)

If somehow a women entrepreneur gets approval from the family members to start a business activity, still she has to manage social recognition from relatives, neighbors and other members of the society.

“Social pressure matters in both starting and operational phase of the business especially from the relatives”. (P.1)

It is an observable fact especially in the male-dominated socio-cultural structure that women entrepreneur faces different kinds of social and cultural constraints and the Locale Mianwali is no exception in this regard. Majority of the participants in this study pointed out that socio-cultural constraints restrict women in almost all stage of entrepreneurship I.e., startup stage, operational stage and growth stage. However, for some participants only family approval is critical to become a women entrepreneur.

“For me both family and friends appeared to be supportive, and I faced no issue at all except some discouraging attitude on the part of close relatives”. (P.11)

That is, family recognition of the business and the associated relaxation in mobility is sufficient to start the journey of entrepreneurship because family recognition makes the rest of the approval's secondary such as recognition from relatives and neighbors.

In contrast, some of the participants claimed that family recognition is dependent on social recognition. That is, the survival and growth of business ensures social recognition in the first stage and then provides the required field for family recognition.

“When I disclosed to my younger brother about starting this business, he immediately told me that what outsiders would think that my sister is running a business.” (P.7)

“But any how I managed to launch this business and within three years of struggle I finally established this business along with the training center. This breakthrough enabled me to stand on my feet and started getting recognition”. (P.7)

In the same way, social mobility plays a significant role in determining the growth of women entrepreneurship. For instance, in clothing businesswomen participants disclosed that,

“They have to visit big markets located in Lahore and Faisalabad once in a month, and these visits are carried out with family members”. (P.5)

According to these participants, the support of family is critical in clothing business because women alone cannot afford such frequent visits. It shows that both social recognition and social mobility impact women entrepreneurship in its different stages.

4.3.3 Decision making and autonomy

Strategic decision making allows women entrepreneur to achieve both short term success goals as well as long-term growth-related goals. Decision making plays a vital role in every stage of business and women entrepreneur must be able to take important personal

decisions regarding the startup, operation and growth of business. Efficient and effective decision making usually depends on skills, experience and self-confidence of an entrepreneur. However, women in developing countries on a larger scale lack both required skills, knowledge and experience for entrepreneurship. Majority of women silently adhered to historically transferred roles and responsibilities such as household manager and only make decisions regarding household affairs. Under such circumstances, it is quite difficult for women to choose entrepreneurship as profession because of dual responsibilities i.e., Household manager and businesswomen.

In this regard, participants revealed that decision making authority usually rests in the hand of male household members.

“Before starting this business, almost all sort of family decisions were taken by family members and then my husband. However, engagement with this business and the resulting experiences gradually make me strong to take other personal and family decisions”. (P.2)

On average, decisions related to women’s carrier, profession and other important life choices are taken by the family without her consent. That is , majority of the participants in this study appeared to be dependent on family approval in almost all types of personal decisions. They revealed that the decision to engage in business activity for women has always been difficult.

“A women entrepreneur enjoys more autonomy than ordinary women as she is constantly making decisions related to her business and family”. (P.4)

The participants are of the view that the first decision to start a business is much more difficult because in the later stage a women entrepreneur learns from the past experiences and takes more effective decisions.

4.3.4 Self-Perception

Self-perception of women about herself, roles and responsibilities determine the discovery, success and growth of a business or a profitable venture. In the presence of gender-biases, women often underestimate her capabilities mainly due to lack of confidence as she is unfamiliar with complex social interactions. For instance, traditional role of a women is to navigate household activities and this role has been transmitted over the course of history. As a result, self-perception of women is not historically fit for any business activity and women lacks the required confidence and risk-taking behavior. For instance, Bird (1989) argued that to discover business opportunities, a women must be able to change her self-perception regarding defined roles and relationships and look beyond traditionally defined roles of household management and caregiver. Three factors are crucial and can alter self-perception of women I.e., personal capacity or agency, business environment and society. In this regard, participants argued that self-perception depends on the environment one is dealing with.

“We have been brought up in an environment where a woman has to perform certain fixed duties and beyond that it is unimaginable. Then, how one would expect from women the same level of potential and awareness of this potential than that of the man”.

(P.8)

According to the participants, self-perception of a women about her identity, roles, and responsibilities are largely determine by socio-cultural structure. If the socio-cultural structure allows women to perform the triple role, I.e., Household management, business management, and community management, then it can alter women self-perception in a more positive direction.

“A women can look beyond the fixed boundaries if she is willing to do so. Though, society and other cultural forces discourage this willingness but still many successful women are example for us”. (P.5)

On the other hand, if the socio-cultural structure restricts women in performing these roles, then women starts doubting her capabilities and her self-perception become more rigid. Further, the overall business environment also helps to change women self-perception. That is, business opportunities play an important role in changing women self-perception about starting a business. As with more opportunities, competition among businesswomen would produce more role models for ordinary women who want to start own business. For instance, government can incentivize women entrepreneurship and can change women self-perception by providing training opportunities and easy access to financial resources. Some of the participants argued that the role of women self-perception is important as it affects her confidence and risk-taking abilities.

4.3.5 Business Knowledge and Skills

Entrepreneurial education allows women to acquire necessary knowledge and professional skills and plays a significant role in the development of women entrepreneurship. It also contributes to the creativity, awareness, and other personal and professional skills of women entrepreneur. Hence, lack of business-related knowledge and skills restrict entrepreneurial abilities of women. The absence of required business knowledge and professional skills are also associated with lower women self-confidence. The role of entrepreneurial education plays a vital role in the development of women entrepreneurship, and therefore there is a need to change policy direction in this regard.

In this regard, majority of the participants stated that the required knowledge about how to start and run the business was unsatisfactory. According to the participants, the process of starting and registering business was unknown to them.

“I had zero knowledge in the start of business regarding contracts, agreement, purchasing and relationships with supplier”. (P.7)

In the same way, some of the respondents in clothing business claimed that a women entrepreneur can enhance her knowledge, skills and capabilities as she get more and more experiences.

“Initially, it was really difficult for me to visit from Mianwali to Faisalabad and deal with suppliers but over the course of time I learned the required skill to manage these type of situations”. (P.3)

For the participants, the role of government is significant to promote women entrepreneurship by establishing training centers and encouraging private sectors in this matter. On the other hand, some of the participants who are running beauty salons claimed that there are training centers in the district and offer different type of courses.

“There exists training centers in the District that offer different kind of courses and are available to women at relatively lower cost.”(P.712)

For the participants, there are many opportunities for women to acquire necessary business knowledge and skills by registering themselves in these training centers. According to the participants, their decision to acquire knowledge and skills by joining these training centers allow their business to survive and grow.

4.4 Challenges and opportunities to women entrepreneurship in Mianwali District

To achieve the second and third objectives, that is, to identify challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurship in Mianwali, this study uses two focused group discussions with local women entrepreneurs. In the first focused group discussion, participants are local women entrepreneurs who are running beauty salons while the participants in the second focused group discussion are engaged in clothing businesses. Under this framework, there are basically three dimensions of empowerment, I.e., Resources, agency and achievements. Resources as dimension of women empowerment implies all the preconditions in terms of challenges, opportunities, and available support. The second-dimension deals with the women personal capacity to make important life choices in a given setting. This dimension of empowerment is much critical for women entrepreneurship under which a women entrepreneur attempts to unlock the various barriers imposed by the prevailing institutional and socio-cultural structure. And in the final dimension of empowerment, researcher has tried to highlight business achievements of women entrepreneurs in Mianwali.

4.4.1 Resources

In the journey of entrepreneurship, women can encounter different institutional, and socio-cultural gender-specific barriers. Conventional familial contexts do not allow a woman to engage in any sort of business activity. For them, it is inappropriate for women to run a profit venture business because such activities are reserved for male counterparts. According to the participants, the role of family is more challenging as absorption of social pressure in male-dominated society is not an easy task. For the participants, unsupportive family members are the reflection of overall society and when society is not ready to stop

gender discrimination, it would be really hard for family members to avoid the social pressure.

“When I disclosed to my younger brother about starting this business, he immediately told me that what outsiders would think that my sister is running a business”. (P.1)

“I used to share my business plan with my family members for more than three years. Initially, the business plan was rejected by every member of the family except my mother. My father told me that the earning of women is not allowed in Islam, and we are not facing financial issues to let you start this business. However, after getting married I received family approval from my husband to start this business”. (P.2)

“Initially, I planned to start business as an event organizer, but mobility constraints imposed by family members did not allow me to continue with that profession. As a result, I am doing this business”. (P.4)

The approval from family is more than important when one takes financial resources into account. That is family is a source of startup capital and provide enormous support in terms of financing the business in the starting stage.

“I utilized my entire savings and also received family contribution of almost thirty percent of total startup cost”. (P.3)

This opportunity of enjoying family support is not known to many especially in developing countries. And it is more than clear when she said,

“My husband financed almost 80 percent of total initial costs and still supporting me in the operational stage of the business”. (P.2)

Even after initial rejection, the first participant still manages to get contribution from family members. This shows that family as an institution in one hand poses serious challenges to

women entrepreneurship and on the other hand also provides the required startup capital and appears as an opportunity for women entrepreneurship.

Apart from family, certain social structure also restricts a women entrepreneur to excel her entrepreneurial capabilities. Again, this is related to the male dominancy in each and every existing domain. It is also true for a socio-religious context, that opportunities are not much open and broad for women entrepreneurs. Participants have signified the role of social recognition in the operational stage of business. According to the participants, social interaction with contractors, purchaser and customers' needs social recognition. In the absence of social recognition, a women entrepreneur finds it hard to continue with her business activities.

“When you are being treated unfairly just because you are a women would haunt you mentally and emotionally. In the starting days, I used to think of discriminatory social attitude in the market and get effected both mentally and emotionally”. (P.3)

“The interaction with purchasers and suppliers is much pathetic for me as they visualize you an object not a human being”. (P.4)

This shows that the presence of gender biases in a specific social setting can pose serious challenges for women to initiate and develop entrepreneurship. Gender specific challenges stem from gender roles, relationship and responsibilities, and that are socially constructed and historically transferred from generation to generation. In this regard, patriarchal or conventional setting never allows women to get freedom and empowerment by availing opportunities related to entrepreneurship (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006). As a result, the discovery of entrepreneurial opportunities for women become rare, and negatively affect development of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali.

Despite familial and social constraints, participants are managing their businesses efficiently. For the participants challenges to businesswomen are multidimensional and these challenges are much more complicated in the operational stage of business. According to the participants, family recognition to start a business does not imply women autonomy but her life become more challenging. The revealed that time management becomes more difficult for a businesswoman as he has to perform dual responsibilities than an ordinary housewife.

“When your goal is to promote the well-being of family, then it looks fascinating and motivational to accept multiple roles such as mother, wife ad businesswomen”. (P.3)

“I consider my children and family members as significant assets in my life. I act on multiple roles for the betterment of my family members”. (P.1)

“As a businesswoman, multiple roles are associated with multitasking and responsibilities. As a result, work-life balance of a businesswomen gets affected”.

In similar instance, in the operational stage of business a women entrepreneur requires necessary skills and knowledge to operate the business efficiently. For the participants, a businesswomen must be able to acquire necessary level of knowledge and skills before starting any business. According to the participants, both necessary level of business skills and networking capabilities play a significant role especially in the operational and development stage of business. For the participants, networking capabilities of a women entrepreneur depends on social recognition and business skills.

“Social-Networking capabilities allows a women entrepreneur to attract higher number of customers and to obtain necessary information about the dynamics of business”. (P.3)

“Two years ago, I missed an opportunity to obtain bank loans as I have not been aware of loan procedure. But last time one of my friends who is also engaged in this business brought me into the light about the loan scheme”. (P.1)

4.4.2 Agency

Together, resources and agency constitute the capabilities of women to make independent life choices. In this regard, agency is the personal capacity of a women to make decisions about her life choices. The term agency has been operationalized in different form such as decision-making, cognitive process of subversion and resistance and negotiation. In a more positive sense, agency entails the capacity of women to define and pursue her life choices despite facing familial, social and cultural constraints. Women working in their agencies also brought meaning and purpose to their different activities in order for achieving life goals. For women, there are certain life choices that have long term significance and consequence I.e., to start and develop own business, but in available socio-cultural setting it would be really hard for women to exercise her personal capacity.

In order for identifying business opportunities, women must be able to change her self-perception regarding defined roles and relationships and look beyond traditionally defined household management and caregiver (Bird, 1989). For the participants, self-perception of women about her fixed roles and responsibilities is the main cause of gender discrimination against women in multiple domains. As a result, the discovery of opportunities related to entrepreneurship become more difficult for women entrepreneurs in Mianwali. According to the participants, self-perception of women depends on personal capacities, ease of doing business and social recognition.

“The growing trend of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali reflects the fact that self-perception of women is in the transitional stage, under which she is ready to perform dual roles of household management and business activity”. (P.1)

“Without realizing the fact that a women can own and run a profitable venture, it is impossible to be ready for multiple roles and multitasking”. (P.4)

Apart from personal capacity, the overall doing business opportunities also shaped self-perception of women. For the participants, easy procedures for registering a business, availability of access to electricity, and entrepreneurial education play a vital role in changing women self-perception.

“For a businesswoman, entrepreneurial education in the form of effective training and enhanced skills are required to change her self-perception about fixed roles and responsibilities”. (P.2)

“There are many different courses and training opportunities are available in different institutes. By availing these opportunities, a women can acquire necessary skills and adjust herself to new roles and can survive and grow her new business”. (P.3)

Another important indicator of women self-perception is the social and institutional recognition. Self-perception entails both confidence and risk-taking abilities of women. Institutional and social barriers restrict opportunities related to women entrepreneurship by creating gender differences for women. Therefore, lacking access to financial resources, property and education, as well as inequalities in household responsibilities do not allow women to avail opportunities related to entrepreneurship. For the participants, the role of financial institutions is paramount in changing the self-perception of women. Apart from the contribution of family members, financial institutions can also help a women

entrepreneur to unlock different barriers and provides the required capital to start and develop own business.

“I personally felt an increase in self-confidence and found myself more risk-taking after enabling myself to obtain loan from the bank because at the point of application stage, I never assumed myself to be eligible for obtaining bank loans”. (P.2)

4.4.3 Achievements

If together, resources and agency constitute the capabilities of women to make independent life choices, then achievement indicates the outcomes associated with these life choices. For instance, changing social status of a women entrepreneur is one outcome or achievement of making the life choice. i.e., to be an entrepreneur or businesswomen. In this regard, participants are of the view that the outcomes of choosing business as profession are multifaceted. First, a businesswomen can reduce financial insecurities of both herself and her family. For the participants, income generated through these ventures allow them to cover educational and health expenditures of their families. According to the participants, financial security is an important source of women productivity.

“A regular flow of income from the business indicates better survival chances as financial security wipes out many mentally constructed issues. The degree of happiness is unimaginable when you proved to be a responsible woman”. (P.1)

“Financial security allows women to perform other tasks efficiently and helps women to increase self-confidence”. (P.3)

Second, as social recognition under capitalism is attached to earning power, as a result a women can fulfil her strategic need in terms of socially recognized entity by taking the

decision to start own business. In other words, changing social status of women is another outcome associated with making independent life choices. For the participants, financial security from the business also helps women to be recognized socially. According to the participants, they were never imagined that they will be able to make important familial decisions.

“For me, individual dignity of women in this society attached to earning power and financial contribution”.

Further, participants revealed an improvement in the ability of multitasking also enabled them to be more confident and helped a lot in changing their self-perception. For the participants, multitasking women is more productive than ordinary women and this enhanced capability is another achievement linked with the decision to start a business.

“Effective use of agency allows a businesswoman to make other strategic decision inside the family like equal educational opportunities for all family members”. (P.4)

“A businesswoman while performing multitasking finds difficulties in terms of maintain a balance between work and life”. (P.2)

It implies that achievement also take form and further complicates the challenging environment. Acting on multiple roles do not allow a businesswoman to reserve some time for herself. According to the participants, irregular patterns of sleeping and wakening are causing different kinds of health challenges. However, the well-being of family members still provokes them to do more for their families.

4.5 Discussion

The purpose of this discussion is to highlight and explain major findings of this study. That is, this section summarizes major findings of interviews and focused group discussions that have been analyzed in the preceding section. At first instance, the discussion is about the current status of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali. After discussing major findings related to the current status of women entrepreneurship, researcher highlights and discusses major challenges and opportunities to women entrepreneurship in Mianwali.

The current status of women entrepreneurship has been explored via conducting interviews from twelve women entrepreneurs in Mianwali. Interview findings suggest that lack of access to financial resources appeared to be the main obstacle for women entrepreneurs in both at the point of starting a business and also in the operational and developmental stage. Findings show that different sources of financial resources were available to participants in terms of Assets, property, land, and collateral bargaining to obtain bank loans. However, family and cultural structure provided no room for the participants to avail these opportunities and expand their capabilities. It implies that ownership of assets or property does not lead a woman to translate available resources into some profitable venture. Findings also show that the procedure of obtaining bank loan is quite difficult for women especially when the loan application lacks family consent. Findings suggest that not only the procedures are difficult, but the available incentives also portray the same image. These findings are consistent with De Silva et al. (2021) that shows that women entrepreneurs lack easy access to financial resources in Sri Lanka like all women entrepreneurs in developing countries. Despite the stated hurdles, findings indicate recent development in terms of Micro-Finance bank in providing easy and soft loan scheme for business women. This shows an improvement in the status of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali because

easy access to bank loans encourages women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses scale.

The socio-religious context of Mianwali lacks social recognition for businesswomen. In similar instance, family and cultural structure appeared to be the main constraints for the participants to start entrepreneurship as profession. In a male-dominated family and social structure, women entrepreneurship is facing multifaceted constraints and social recognition is one of them (De Carolis & Saporito, 2006). Findings in this study suggest that social interaction with contractors, purchaser and customers need social recognition. In the absence of social recognition, a women entrepreneur finds it really hard to continue with her business activities. Apart from social recognition, decision making ability of women also plays a vital role in every stage of business and women entrepreneur must be able to take important personal decisions regarding the startup, operation and growth of business. Efficient and effective decision making usually depends on skills, experience and self-confidence of an entrepreneur. However, women in developing countries on a larger scale lacks both required skills, knowledge and experience for entrepreneurship. In this regard, findings suggest that decision making authority usually rests in the hand of male household members and decisions related to women's carrier, profession and other important life choices are taken by the family without her consent.

Together, lack of easy access to financial resources, social recognition and lack of decision making ability creates a self-perception for women under which a women is only reserved for familial responsibilities and cannot start and run own business (De Silva et al., 2021). Findings in this study also suggest that women self-perception about her identity, roles, and responsibilities are largely determine by socio-cultural structure. If the socio-cultural

structure allows women to perform the triple role, I.e., Household management, business management, and community management, then it can alter women self-perception in a more positive direction. On the other hand, if the socio-cultural structure restricts women in performing these roles, then women start doubting her capabilities and her self-perception become more rigid. Findings also suggest that the overall business environment also helps to change women self-perception and government can incentivize women entrepreneurship and can change women self-perception by providing training opportunities and easy access to financial resources.

Further, researcher has explored the available challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs via conducting two focused group discussions. In the list of challenges, family disapproval of initial business plan remains on the top as one of the participants revealed in this way, *'When I disclosed to my younger brother about starting this business, he immediately told me that what outsiders would think that my sister is running a business'*. Findings also suggest that the role of family is more challenging as absorption of social pressure in male-dominated society is not an easy task because unsupportive family members are the reflection of overall society and when society is not ready to stop gender discrimination, it would be really hard for family members to avoid the social pressure. However, findings also suggest some positive contribution of family in terms of providing the required startup capital and appears as an opportunity for women entrepreneurship.

Another important challenge to women entrepreneurship is dealing with gender-specific barriers in the marketplace. Findings in this study show that dealing with suppliers and

contractors become more difficult for women. In similar instance, findings also show that lack of proper business skills and networking capabilities among women entrepreneurs is negatively affecting the development of women entrepreneurship. On the other hand, opportunities to women entrepreneurship are rare in District Mianwali. In this regard, findings show some improvement in terms of access to financial resources. Findings show that Micro Finance Bank limited is currently engaged in offering easy loan scheme for women entrepreneurship. In the same way, different private institutes are also offering courses and diploma related to beauty salon industry.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Women entrepreneurship can provide opportunities for women empowerment and then for gender development. Women almost in every country constitutes half of the current population and can be utilized efficiently via directing policy and financial resources to encourage women entrepreneurship. Income generating activities of women in one hand contributes to national income and on the other hand brings financial stability in the household. However, developing countries mainly because of prevailing institutional, socio-cultural and structural conditions have not been able to utilize the untamed-entrepreneurial skills of women. In other words, there are opportunities available in terms of women entrepreneurship at which if policy and financial resources are directed would bring efficient economic outcomes.

This study is an attempt to highlight the significance of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan by choosing one of rural District of Mianwali. Specifically, this study has explored the current status of women entrepreneurship by interviewing twelve businesswomen in Mianwali district. In addition, this study also identifies the challenges and available opportunities to women entrepreneurship via conducting two Focused group discussions with 4 businesswomen. This study has used qualitative research methods, purposive sampling and both primary and secondary data analysis to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

To explore the current status of women entrepreneurship, researcher extracted five major themes via coding the available primary data in the form of participant-responses. For instance, lack of access to financial resources, social recognition and mobility, lack of decision making, lack of business skills, and less-dominating self-perception of women reflects the status women entrepreneurship in Mianwali. Further, researcher has explored the available challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs via conducting two focused group discussions. For instance, lack of family recognition of the initial business plan remained on the top of enlisted challenges. Family as an institution can play an effective role but under the current objective conditions and mainly due to social pressure is not playing a supportive role. However, findings also suggest some positive contribution of family in terms of providing the required startup capital and appears as an opportunity for women entrepreneurship.

Further findings suggest that gender-specific barriers also discourage women entrepreneurship in all three stages. In specific terms, businesswomen are facing issues related to interactions with contractors and suppliers. That is, lack of social recognition in terms of unaccepting women market roles appeared to be the second important challenge to women entrepreneurship. Further, findings also show that lack of proper business skills and networking capabilities among women entrepreneurs also blocks opportunities related to women entrepreneurship.

5.2 Policy Recommendations

Based on study findings, researcher suggests the following policy recommendations.

1. Family recognition provides enormous support both in the discovery as well as in the operational stage of women entrepreneurship. But in the District Mianwali, family on a larger scale playing a discouraging role in this regard and creates different kind challenges for women entrepreneurship. In other words, a nudge is required to change family attitudes towards women entrepreneurship. In order to achieve this objective, media can play an influencing role via promoting themes and ideas related to women entrepreneurship in District Mianwali. National level television channels such as PTV should initiate a weekly program to invite successful women entrepreneurs from all over the country, and to discuss ups and downs in becoming a women entrepreneur.
2. As business knowledge and skills play a significant role in the development of women entrepreneurship, therefore both Provincial and District government should need to allocate financial resources for Business skills development center. Around the world, and in some major cities of Pakistan, these types of centers are providing enormous support for women entrepreneurship.
3. In the same way, business facilitation centers need to be established in the district to facilitate women entrepreneurs especially in the operational and developmental stage of business. Most of the entrepreneurs need legal assistance in different business-related activities, and facilitation centers should provide such legal assistance.
4. Poverty alleviation fund and the First women bank have started providing financial resources to women entrepreneurs across the country. There is a need to extend the Micro credit to women initiated by the Poverty Alleviation Fund because women

entrepreneurs in Mianwali are still facing issues related to the required startup funds.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Qualitative studies lack generalizability but provide contextualized understanding of certain phenomenon or human experience and this research study is no exception in this regard. Second, participants in this research study are mostly engaged either in Beauty Salon or clothing business. As a result, lack of diversity in business selection of majority of the participants provide saturated information. In this regard, future direction is to include participants from different other business.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

This is a semi-structured questionnaire designed to explore the status of women entrepreneurship in Mianwali District by interviewing 12 businesswomen. In the construction of this questionnaire, rigorous efforts have been made by reviewing the available literature on women entrepreneurship in developing countries. By doing so, we have been able to identify major characteristics of developing countries with reference to women entrepreneurship. Specifically, developing countries across the globe are facing different types of issues related to women entrepreneurship such as Lack of access to financial resources, lack of social recognition and mobility, lack of decision-making power, bounded self-perception that entrepreneurship is male-dominated, and lack of business knowledge and skills. In this regard, you have been asked to discuss the following questions.

Q.1. How do you consider the significance of financial resources in starting your own business? Do you have property, assets, land, and other source of resources in your own name? How is it difficult for a women entrepreneur to get loan from a bank in both starting and operational stage of business?

Q.2. How would you explain different reactions of family members, relatives, friends, purchasers, contractors, suppliers, and customers about a women entrepreneur? Do you personally think that social recognition of a women entrepreneur is changing after having years of experiences in business or it is the same as it were in the starting days? How do you explain family restrictions on the social mobility of women and its significance for a women entrepreneur?

Q.3. Do women can take personal decisions in your family regarding significant life choices? If no, why is it the case that women cannot take decisions related to her life choices? How did you take this decision to start own business and who supported you in this regard?

Q.4. How is self-perception of women about her roles and responsibility is significant to start and grow her own business? How self-perception of an ordinary women is different from a women entrepreneur? Do you feel that your perception of women is changing after having so many years of experiences? What is important to change a women self-perception related to women entrepreneurship?

Q.5. Did you have basic knowledge and business related skills in the starting stage of business? How do business knowledge and skills are significant for a business women? Do you aware of any training center or institute that offers diploma to learn and improve business knowledge and skills?

FGD Guide

Two Focused group discussions with four women entrepreneurs have been conducted. The first FGD is conducted with two women entrepreneurs who run Beauty Salon and Training centers while the second is with women entrepreneurs who run clothing business.

Q.1. How do you consider the significance of financial resources in starting your own business? Do you have property, assets, land and other source of resources in your own name? How is it difficult for a women entrepreneur to get loan from a bank in both starting and operational stage of business?

1) Q.2. how would you explain different reactions of family members, relatives, friends, purchasers, contractors, suppliers and customers about a women entrepreneur? Do you personally think that social recognition of a women entrepreneur is changing after having years of experiences in business or it is the same as it were in the staring days? How do you explain family restrictions on the social mobility of women and its significance for a women entrepreneur?

Q.3. Do women can take personal decisions in your family regarding significant life choices? If no, why is it the case that women cannot take decisions related to her life choices? How did you take this decision to start own business and who supported you in this regard?

Q.4. How is self-perception of women about her roles and responsibility is significant to start and grow her own business? How self-perception of an ordinary women is different from a women entrepreneur? Do you feel that your perception of women is changing after having so many years of experiences? What is important to change a women self-perception related to women entrepreneurship?

Q.5. Did you have basic knowledge and business related skills in the starting stage of business? How do business knowledge and skills are significant for a business woman? Do you aware of any training center or institute that offers diploma to learn and improve business knowledge and skills?

Q.6. How much it is difficult for a woman to play multiple roles and perform multitasking? How time management in performing multiple roles crate problem and health challenges to women?

Q7. Without the supporting role of government, is it possible that women via only working in their agencies would bring growth to women entrepreneurship? How do you suggest government to lower the various challenges to women entrepreneurship?

Q.8. Discuss your achievements as a women entrepreneur? What have you achieved personally that has increased you self-confidence and capabilities? How financial security is linked with dignity of a women entrepreneur and paves the way for family and social recognition?