

Formation of Social Capital by Women Entrepreneurship via Business Development Institutions of Government in Sindh

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Abstract

Major focus of this is to investigate how Government business development institutes have been creating social capital, supporting women entrepreneurship in Sindh province. This study takes into account the pluralistic approach i.e. a blend of qualitative methods. The content matrix analyses method from the qualitative approach was employed for the study. The eight key research themes were emerged under three dimensions of social capital based on Naphiet and Ghoshal 1998. The structural dimension included the Promotion of women entrepreneurs, Strengthen women entrepreneurs, Networking, and Dissemination of information. The cognitive dimension included Shared goals and Exchange of information. The relational dimension included Trust and Cooperation and commitment. The results in content analysis explained that government business development institutes had been working independently and in collaboration with other organizations to provide counseling and consulting services, arranging training, workshops, and exhibitions that helped towards progressive entrepreneurship movement among women. Further, It was found out that every construct had an adequate number of indicators loaded. As a result, all constructs were retained. However, future researchers need to look at some other items to be added to have more number of items in each construct.

Keywords: Social capital, Women Entrepreneurship, Business development, Sindh, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Economists, Industrialists, Manufacturers, and Governments are trying to find ways to reduce unemployment. The most suitable and adaptable is to engrave people with opportunities i.e. establishing entrepreneurship characteristics.. Since 1980, the small business owners and entrepreneurs have been much in debate as a source for economic development (Soriano, 2017). Researchers suggested that entrepreneurship must be continuously developed and considered because it serves many countries with the best result in reaping economic development (Slandana, Goran, Dragan & Radomir, 2012). Although today many Scholars, Business institutes, Government organizations, and Policymakers ponder on ameliorating the trend of entrepreneurship among people by looking its fruitful results in raising economy (Oke & Dorcas, 2013) but the biggest negligence is made for small businesses that deprive potential entrepreneurs of real projection and progress through scant steps and measures (Muske, Woods, Swinney & Khoo, 2007). Literature suggests that entrepreneurship must be monitored academically as well. The entrepreneurial activity can be increased through reducing the hardship of social, cultural and technological environment or inducing motivation in people towards entrepreneurship among people particularly youth (Neira, Portela, Cancelo & Calvo, 2013).

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Women have been considered as a growth engine to economic development that largely supports their families and contribute to the welfare of communities. World Bank (2017) encouraged women's economic participation and gender equality. This will enable economies to face a challenging environment, and assist to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through reaching full economic and social potential. Nowadays women around the world are breaking the glass ceiling and have assumed responsibilities in the top hierarchy, but yet many impediments, stereotypes, and distrust on women's capabilities have deprived them to assume important positions in businesses including family-owned business (Faraudello & Songini, 2018). Women and entrepreneurship have always been given the least importance, in some of the disciplines they constitute subfield at the same time in others they are ignored and in some others, they are incorporated (Aaltio, kyro, & sudin, 2008). Hence, there is a dearth of research and little debate about women entrepreneurship in both the society and social sciences (Singh and Raina, 2013).

Women entrepreneurs are known as a powerful force for shaping economies of developed countries (SN & HN, 2018). OECD (2014) identified that nowadays policymakers together with business institutes do not want to be ignorant towards women capabilities and establishing practical plans to engage women for growth that will serve consumer market in a better way, enhancing diversity, draw and retain greatest talent, to progress the economic conditions, and to deal with the future demographic change. The growth factors of the managed economy are Stability, specialization, and scale whereas growth factors of the entrepreneurial economy are based on flexibility, creativity, and connectivity (Kim, 2018).

Pakistan is a developing state where women constitute almost majority of the population but clearly, it represents an underprivileged class in availing basic rights, provided with poor facilities in education and health and extended less work freedom due to discriminatory socio-culture norms and mores (Roomi & Parrott, 2008). Female education and employment are vital to decrease overall poverty in Pakistan and bring change in the ingrained cultural ideals that universally constrained women in limiting their independence and autonomy (Karatela, Saleem, Syed, Noushad & Ahmed, 2017). Social skills and personal networks collectively contribute to social capital and through proper training sessions and relevant workshops; entrepreneurs earn better results in achieving prosperity in business (Baron & Markman 2000). The Government Supported extension offices can serve as a binding force for the whole system where the small business owners or entrepreneurs can get important information and register for future benefits (Muske et al., 2007). At present, the Government of Pakistan has initiated various programs where women are exposed to opportunities for growth and their concern is to ease women entrepreneurs' path to become a significant part of GDP contribution. Following are some institutions which have been working diligently to enhance the contribution of female in business through paving their way towards entrepreneurship.

The First Women Bank which was established in 1989 by the Islamic world's first female Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (Shaheed) wanted a bank that would meet the banking needs of women. The bank is carrying projects for women and helping the female entrepreneurs in getting a loan for business. The Prime Minister Youth Development Program is also served by the First Women Bank for young female entrepreneurs who are in the start-up phase or extending the existing business.

In a bid to control the ailment of unemployment in Pakistan, in 2013 the Prime Minister's Youth Program which was initiated by the Government which remained a revolutionary program for the socio-economic development of youth including males and females. With the assistance of National Bank of Pakistan(NBP), First Women Bank(FWBL), Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund(PPAF), National Vocational and Technical Training Commission(NVTTC), Higher Education Commission(HEC) and Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination(MIPC) run number of schemes aimed at enabling youth and poor segments of the population to get good employment, opportunities, Secure economic empowerment, acquire skills needed for gainful employment, access to higher education and IT tools, access to on-the-job training/internship for young graduates to improve the probability of getting a productive job.

SMEDA was established in October 1998 with a mission of employment generation and value addition to the national income. This organization has been successfully running a project from December 2009 for female entrepreneurs with objectives to provide offices, display facility, business development services which include a training program for female entrepreneurs. In 2012, to accelerate the process of promotion and development of women entrepreneurship through small and medium enterprises, First Women Bank Limited (FWBL) and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), an autonomous statutory body working under the Ministry of Industries joined hands to work together.

In 1979 Women Development Cell was created in the planning and development department, and then later the Government of Sind separated Women Development Department in 1994. In 1998 the Women Development Department was merged with the Social Welfare Department at the secretariat level. Finally, in 2003, the separate Women Development Department was re-established with important commitments of aiding women in provincial policy for women development, arranging donor-funded projects, elimination of gender gap and generating a favorable environment for women in business through amending rules. The central focus of the department is to nurture women empowerment and fading the discriminatory environment against women.

According to the report of The Express Tribune published on July 18, 2012, eight Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry are listed in Pakistan which came into being after presidential order on DEC 1,2006. Other than the two Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Sindh namely Sindh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SWCCI) and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sindh (WCCIS) were quiescent, the Central and North Punjab women chamber of commerce and industry (WNPWCCI) had elections and worked properly in conducting sessions to create awareness among women for business opportunities and helping them to achieve their targets. At present two chambers, Karachi Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KWCCI) (Dist. East) and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Karachi (WCCI) (South) are working in Karachi to help and cater to the needs of women entrepreneurs that facilitate them towards achieving higher targets in business.

The only possible solution left with the developing nations to protect and improve their economic conditions is to equip people particularly women with entrepreneurial abilities and skills. Women entrepreneurs must strengthen their formal and informal networks and identify routes to reach key business players who can provide them acquaintance with

opportunities locally and globally too.

RESEARCH GAP

GBDI's are established to create social capital and facilitate women entrepreneurship in developing economies. Social ties and networks in entrepreneurship provide vast opportunities for growth and progress. Previous research suggests that this field has been ignored and neglected otherwise developing economies could have facilitated poverty reduction and economic growth. This study, therefore, embarks on to address underlying issues to women entrepreneurship and social capital. The major focus of this is set to investigate how Government business development institutes have been creating social capital, supporting women entrepreneurship in Sindh province and how women entrepreneurs are being facilitated in business through social capital.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) This study tends to explore the role of Government business development institutes in creating social capital in Sindh.
- 2) This study tends to explore the role of Government business development institutes in supporting women entrepreneurs of Sindh.
- 3) This study intends to understand and analyze the current status of women entrepreneurs in Sindh.
- 4) This study intends to analyze the impact of social capital on the growth of women-owned businesses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of women entrepreneurship has never been differentiated based on gender and can be pushed to women entrepreneurs without any limitations. Women Entrepreneurship means a process of achieving business ownership, creating and controlling which endows women economically through increasing their economic strength as well as position in society (Sangolagi & Alagawadi, 2016). The literature identifies many challenging barriers and obstruction to be an entrepreneur but when it comes to women, a way to do business develops a tougher environment (Lee, 2015).

Muske et al. (2007) suggested that for expansion of business the agencies must intervene to remove the difficulties and strengthen the networks that are a vibrant source in making available of the required resources related to uplift business. Today, Women are educated, informed, innovative and have tried to shed off restrictions attached to the traditional norms but much of the potential of women entrepreneurs is still unexplored and underutilized that requires a favorable environment to dig out maximum advantage from their expertise (Slandana, Chamberlain, & wong, 2012).

It is observed that business supporting institutions have been working diligently to improve the trend of women entrepreneurship through coordination, assistance, guidance, and representation in policymaking (Sn & Hn, 2018). Vossenber (2013) has indicated that there is increasing interest in the promotion of women entrepreneurs by many Non-Profitable Organizations, Private Companies, National and Local Governments, International Public Institutions, Knowledge Institutes, and Business Associations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework consists on three major areas of this research, their relationship is given as under along with formulated framework.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, GOVERNMENT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

The government must take careful notice of those obstacles that hinder the way of females towards adopting entrepreneurship. Various researches and studies have identified the problems and obstacles of women in becoming a successful entrepreneur. The negligence towards female entrepreneurship will lag behind the economic power for sustainable progress.

The subject of women entrepreneurship has attracted a significant amount of interest among policy-makers who have acknowledged the potential of female entrepreneurship for speeding the engine of economic growth. It is suggested in many studies that women's potential has remarkably changed or shaped economies, particularly in developing countries. Hence, given the importance of women in the global economy and with the rise of the female as an entrepreneur, the practitioners and academics must try to focus on those determinants which could result in improved, better and greater access of women to the necessary skills, resources, and opportunities in emerging markets (Ajjan, Beninger, Mostafa & Cittenden, 2014). The success of female entrepreneurs largely depends on their traits along with entrepreneurial skills and how supportive institutions and stakeholders handle or work around these key limitations (Siba, 2019). This has been realized by policymakers and other business supporting institutions that a country that wants to progress and flourish on the track of economic growth and development must utilize the resources including natural, human and financial. When it comes to utilizing human resource then women cannot be ignored as the biggest untapped resource. Reynold (2001) argued that if the government is serious in improving economic growth then it must support and encourage women participation at priority. Roomi (2009) identified that support and encouragement can effectively contribute to women entrepreneurship lead to economic prosperity as a whole. Jhathial, Zaidi, Jariko, and Rajar (2012) argued that women without family support and government initiatives will be confined to a few businesses which will not require high capital, expertise, and skills. Government intervention can be very useful in growing entrepreneurship trends among females if they seriously take measures such as ease in finance and government policies, legal protection to their rights, and subsidies the gender disparity. Government intervention has been considered a prerequisite for Entrepreneurial activities whereas the integration between the government and the private sector will harvest the entrepreneurial society (Jamil, Ismail, Siddique, Khan, Kazi, & Qureshi, 2015). There is dire need to equip women with skills, expertise, networks and necessary information that assist her on the track of successful entrepreneurs (Singh & Kumar, 2012). Xavier (2012) study indicated that women who wish to stable themselves as an entrepreneur through establishing small and medium business need government support in providing finance, management skill training, networking, and consultation.

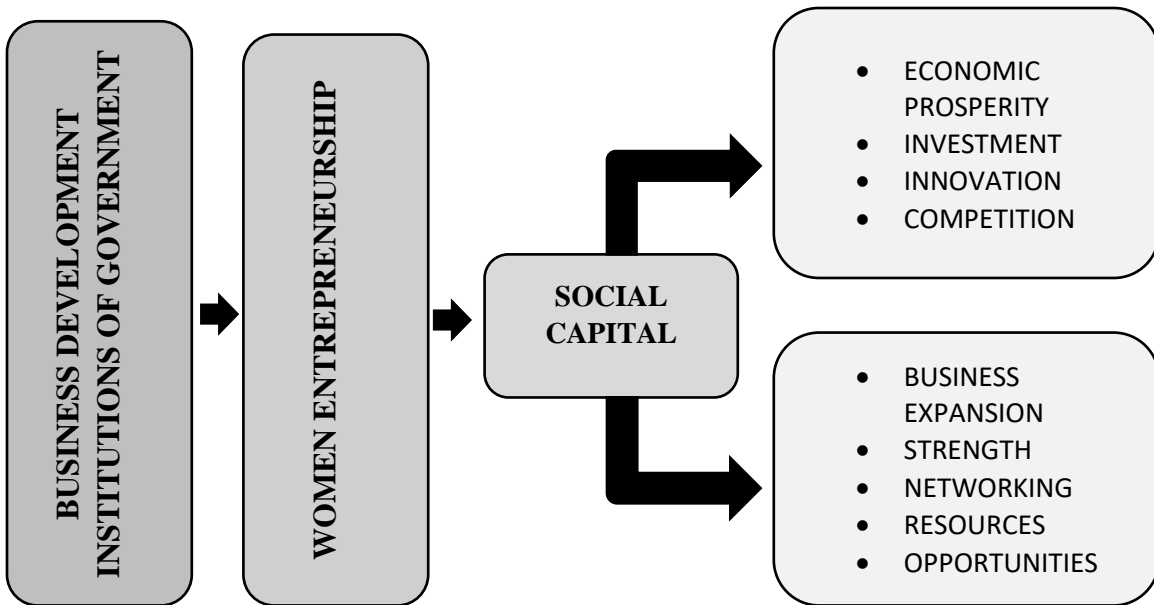


Fig: 1.1 Women Entrepreneurship, Government Business Development Institutions, And Social Capital

The relationship between social capital and economic growth has become an attractive research area. Governments should focus on factors such as social capital indicators for economic growth policies. The results of a study conducted on Small Industries in Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia indicate that the role of a good government would increase Social Capital and Empowerment of Small Industries. (Rafiy, Harafah, Rahim & Balaka, 2014). Yuliarmi (2011) and Rostin (2012) concluded that social capital is the most important factor that reinforces the small industry players in an attempt to improve their economic empowerment and support the government. Indeed, the social capital has been recognized as an important feature for entrepreneur's competencies and enterprise performance (Mamun et al., 2016).

Women perceive themselves in a less favorable business environment due to weak entrepreneurial networks, role models, low management education, skills, lacking guidance and access to information and support services (Yousafzai, Saeed & Mufatto, 2015). Dawson Fuller-love, Sinnott & Gorman (2011) considered networks indispensable for women for solving problems, sharing valuable knowledge and information and way to reach important business contacts. Xavier et al. (2016) identified that training, workshops, courses and orientation programs enable women entrepreneurs in assuming risk, amicably handling the business-related obstruction and equip them to bring innovation and creativity. Several scholars acknowledge the role of Social Capital to promote collective learning processes to help enhance the innovativeness and competitiveness of firms and regions (Amonarriz et al., 2017). Women entrepreneurs can reap better results in identifying opportunities if they belong and maintain a relationship with advisors, local business institutes, mentors and local and regional networks (Roomi, 2009). Role models and mentors have always worked as a

resource for improving business prospects (Iqbal, 2014). Women connected with GBDI's remained in a better position for accessing information, knowledge; strengthen business relationships through seminars, conferences, trade fairs, and networking forums, that ultimately enhances women entrepreneur's social capital.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND GOVERNMENT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS

In Pakistan, the impediments towards development are low incomes, poor living standards and unemployment (Kalhor, Qureshi & Shaikh, 2019). Thus to achieve economic development, the developing countries are coming up with different types of supportive financial and infrastructural policy programs (Obaji & Olugu, 2014). The greater chunk of the population in Pakistan is women so it is required to engage them productively to achieve desired economic goals. In comparison to the 21% of male entrepreneurs, women in Pakistan share only 1% which is the lowest rate of participation in business around the globe. Out of the 60 % of total women population, women-owned enterprises are very few and follow the comfort zone of traditional businesses concerning with women i.e. beauty parlors, bakeries, boutiques with major segments merge garments and handicrafts (www.smeda.org.pk).

Presently, some prominent institutions are helping and supporting women entrepreneurship. Noticeably, organizations that are helping out women entrepreneurs are First Women Bank Limited (FWBL), Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Women Development Department (WDD) and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI). These institutions are open for a woman entrepreneur to get registered and avail facilitation in terms of knowledge, experienced technical support, finance, and managerial know-how.

Lead (2012) mentioned that The Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) and the First Women's Bank Limited (FWBL) are the prominent government stakeholders that are promised to add in research and the building of capacity to bring progress in women entrepreneurship within Pakistan. Similar expressions were shared by Zeb and Kakakhel (2018) that woman entrepreneur can avail better knowledge and experience being member to First Women Bank Limited (FWBL), Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Women Business Development Centers (WBDC) and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) who are responsible in creating helpful and supportive networks for business prospects.

CONCLUSION

The qualitative data was collected through the twenty in-depth interviews from key employees working in the small and medium enterprise development authority, women development department, first women bank limited women chamber of commerce south and women chamber of commerce Dist East. The focus of conducting in-depth interviews was to understand and analyze the role of government business development institutes in mitigating problems and bringing significant growth to women entrepreneurs of Sindh.

The thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke, 2006 was used to analyze in-depth interviews. The eight key research themes have emerged under three dimensions of social

capital based on Naphiet and Ghoshal 1998. The structural dimension included the Promotion of women entrepreneurs, Strengthen women entrepreneurs, Networking and Dissemination of information. The cognitive dimension included Shared goals and Exchange of information. The relational dimension included Trust and Cooperation and commitment. The results in thematic analysis confirmed that government business development institutes have been working independently and in collaboration with other organizations to provide counseling and consulting services, arranging training, workshops, and exhibitions that help in the promotion of women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs are also allowed to discuss their issues related to business through the networks established through GBDI's. Networks assist them in identifying their weaknesses and strengths; help them in problem-solving and removing hesitations that ultimately strengthen women entrepreneur in pursuing entrepreneurship career. Women entrepreneurs are getting benefited from social media in seeking important business information. Moreover, GBDI's do use the local newspaper to properly disseminate information among female business owners about business prospects. The networks have been helping women entrepreneurs in achieving mutual benefit through sharing similar goal i.e. progress and growth in business. It was identified that government business development institutes have tried to create an encouraging environment where women could work together and groom themselves. Women entrepreneurs share their business stories, success stories and career stories with other women in businesses that lead them to learn from their experiences.

The women entrepreneurs look for a trustworthy relation with the associated networks but trust is reciprocal and arises and appreciated through sharing and sincerity. The trusted networks depend on the commitment of women entrepreneur who accepts organizations or networks and shows a willingness to work with cooperation to achieve mutual goals and values.

Although the government business development institutes have been trying their best to accomplish their goals lack of financial support have proved to be the biggest obstacle. Many of the interviewees complained about the mindsets of some employees occupying higher positions in government who do not give due consideration to this area. This whole scenario doesn't approve GBDI's to provide opportunities for business growth and cater to the needs of the maximum number of female-owned businesses. Women entrepreneurship is not on priority list particularly in funding and lacks concrete support by the government of Sindh. Hence, Government business development institutes have been relying on meager availability of finance to make their goal accomplished.

The study's theoretical contribution is the importance of dimensions of social capital. Women entrepreneurs with higher social capital are more likely to identify opportunities, generate ideas and show creative thinking in introducing novel products, services, locations, processes or systems, which makes their growth path exponential rather than incremental.

Furthermore, to benefit from social capital, women entrepreneurs must build their social capital ideally before starting their businesses. This will allow them to maintain and utilize these resources effectively and efficiently once they are on the growth path.

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