

Chapter 2

Empowering Change: The Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Poverty Alleviation in Developing Regions

ABSTRACT

This study explores how female entrepreneurship contributes to poverty reduction in developing regions. With over 700 million people living on less than \$2.15 a day, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America, poverty fuels cycles of exclusion and inequality. Entrepreneurship is presented as a pathway to economic empowerment. Women entrepreneurs, in particular, are key agents of social and economic development, reinvesting in families and communities. However, they face barriers such as limited access to finance, education, and legal protections. The research examines these challenges and highlights gaps in existing literature, which often overlooks the gendered experience of entrepreneurship. The study aims to assess women's impact at household and community levels and inform gender-responsive policies that align with the SDGs. It also addresses the limitations of data availability and focuses on developing nations.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Poverty continues to be among the most tangled and long-term global issues of the 21st century that touches several facets of human life. Notwithstanding tremendous international initiative, including that of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming to achieve the elimination of extreme poverty by 2030, progress has been patchy and in a large number of instances, precipitously sluggish. Over 700 million people around the world survive on less than \$2.15 per day, the global poverty line, reports the World Bank (2023). Most of them are based in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and parts of Latin America, where structural inequality, conflict, poor infrastructure, and political instability consistently erode economic and social advancement. The multifaceted character of poverty consisting of the absence of access to education, health care, shelter, political voice, and economic opportunity needs multiple, not singular, solutions that move beyond conventional types of aid or charitable contributions.

Economic empowerment in this context is increasingly viewed as a pillar in the war against poverty. Scholars, policymakers, and development practitioners all concur that generating sustainable income-generating opportunities at the grassroots is perhaps one of the most effective strategies to facilitate self-sufficiency and sustainable development. Against this backdrop, entrepreneurship has become a key driver of local economic resilience, job creation, innovation, and ending dependency cycles. The dynamical strength of enterprise is not merely that it can raise personal revenues, but that it can strengthen communities, establish new markets, and diversify neighborhood economies.

Notably, entrepreneurship has to be inclusive if it is to be an effective development tool. Half of all people in the world are women, yet they are often the ones with less when it comes to money. It is both right and smart to help them. Women starting and growing their own businesses is now seen as key to help the world's economy grow well and fairly. Studies show that women business owners bring special and often unused skills in shaping social and money growth, especially in places that are still de-

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