

Chapter 7

Rethinking Development: A Contextual Discussion on Women's Entrepreneurship and Structural Barriers

ABSTRACT

This research explores women's entrepreneurship as a key driver of poverty reduction and socioeconomic change in developing countries. It highlights how opportunity and necessity push women into business amid limited jobs and support. Barriers like cultural norms, legal inefficiencies, and financial exclusion restrict women's access to training, markets, and capital. Women respond through social capital, NGOs, online communities, and local networks. The study challenges Western models, emphasizing the need for gender- and context-sensitive approaches that recognize informality and intersectionality. It shows entrepreneurship as a path to empowerment, community development, and inclusive growth, and calls for policy reforms to foster digital inclusion and support scalable, culturally relevant models.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to explore the different ways in which female entrepreneurship helps alleviate poverty in developing countries. The research seeks to understand how women entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial activities facilitate social mobility and economic empowerment, recognizing the specific opportunities and limitations they face. The research is founded on the concept that women empowerment through entrepreneurship facilitates gender equality and broader economic growth besides assisting individual households (Hussain et al., 2019; Ogidi, 2016). Chapter 5 gave an in-depth analysis of the drivers that motivate women to establish their own businesses. Key findings revealed that, especially where there are limited formal employment options, women are often compelled towards entrepreneurship due to economic necessity. Other key drivers that emerged were, however, the quest for personal satisfaction, flexibility, and independence. Aside from acting as constraints on occasion, cultural and family pressures also act as support networks that facilitate corporate function (Jamali, 2009; Hundera et al., 2019). The chapter also highlighted the importance of identity and empowerment factors, since most women view entrepreneurship as a means to redefine social roles and prove their agency (Allioui & Chafik, 2023). “Chapter 5 explored the challenges and challenges encountered by female entrepreneurs and identified several significant issues.” Limited collateral and official financial history often rendered financial constraints, such as limited access to credit and savings, more adverse (Hussain et al., 2019; We-Fi, 2022). Legal and regulatory barriers, including complex registration processes and poor enforcement of property rights (Jamali, 2009), also hinder business attempts by women. Women's participation in the economic industry is nonetheless limited by cultural and social norms, including gender restriction and religious factors (Hundera et al., 2019). Major barriers also encompassed limited market and supply chain access as well as time poverty created by balancing work and family responsibilities, and psychological factors such as insecurity and fear of failure (Allioui & Chafik, 2023). Despite these challenges, women entrepreneurs have developed various ways of overcoming obstacles and running their businesses. Alternative mechanisms for capital mobilization are provided through the utilization of unofficial financial

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