

Prominent factors affecting the role of women entrepreneurs' in Sri Lanka with special reference to micro level women entrepreneurs in Gampaha district

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Entrepreneurship for women is frequently seen as a way out of poverty in less developed economies and as a step towards equality. The number of women in entrepreneurship has grown as a means of survival for themselves and their families. Moreover, it is alongside their domestic duties that women entrepreneurs perform their entrepreneurial generating an additional income to improve their standard of living. With the growing trend of women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka, there is practical value in being able to identify the prominent factors contributing to their success. The main objective of the study was to identify the main factors which contribute to the success of women entrepreneurs in the Gampaha district. Five major criteria were applied in order to evaluate the level of significance of fifteen factors which were identified as the most contributory factors to their success. The study was mainly a quantitative research study in a descriptive format that used descriptive statistics for data analysis. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the respondents. In-depth and focus group interviews were carried out using a semi-structured questionnaires. Statistical treatment of the data included the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). As per the value of Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability of the study ranked at 0.730 which illustrates the high internal reliability of the study. The findings revealed that the personal factors such as the age of the women entrepreneur, her marital status, level of education/ knowledge of the field, practice and experiences in the relevant field and the support of the family are the main factors behind the success of women entrepreneurs. The study further revealed that women are motivated to entrepreneurship by "personal" factors especially from psychological perspective. The study found that these factors have a significant effect on their success since their role as a women entrepreneur provides a platform to achieve social recognition, a reduction in dependence and challenges the traditional stereotypical gender roles played out at home.

Key words: Women, entrepreneurship, personal factors, economic factors, social factors