

ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, women entrepreneurs have been recognized for their significant contributions to the socio-economic development of their countries. The literature is rich with articles and opinions on women entrepreneurship's various aspects, but much more is still expected. Most of the literature on women entrepreneurs has focused on developed countries and the results obtained are either not conclusive or generalizable. Women entrepreneurship has been kept on a neglected category in the context of developing countries, where limited knowledge exists on women entrepreneurship. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to examine the traditional constraints faced by female entrepreneurs in Nuwara Eliya District, Sri Lanka. A qualitative approach was used to collect and interpret data for the study. In this qualitative study, the social constructionist approach and an exploratory research design were used. A total sample of 08 female entrepreneurs from Nuwara Eliya was chosen for in-depth interviews using the purposive sampling method.

The findings of the study reveal that female entrepreneurs in Nuwara Eliya push themselves really hard to balance and manage their businesses, and personal and family relationships concurrently. Every day, they are combatting the discriminatory social norms and culture based on gender. These women entrepreneurs possess a unique human capital derived from their education and general exposure to entrepreneurial experiences. Their method of acquiring business knowledge and skills is primarily informal. The Easter attack and the worldwide Covid 19 pandemic which came at a time when the Sri Lankan economy was already struggling due to political unrest, had a negative impact on the labor force participation rate for both males and females, resulting in a higher unemployment rate. Accordingly, the study have practical implications for policymakers as well as for various institutions and organizations that are concerned with women entrepreneurs, for improving the involvement and success of women entrepreneurs in business activities in the context of rural Sri Lanka, since the findings from the analysis indicated that many challenges are needed to be tackled.

Key Word – Constraints, Female Entrepreneurs, Rural, Sri Lanka, Nuwara Eliya