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# Effects of entrepreneurial factors on women entrepreneurs in Kenya: a case of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) owned by women in Eldoret municipality, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of entrepreneurial factors namely; financial, psychological and social factors on women entrepreneurs in Kenya. This has been achieved through addressing five specific objectives namely; examine the effects of financial factors on women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality, establish the influence of psychological factors on women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality, determine the effect of sociological factors on women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality, examine if experience influences significantly women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality and determine if education level influences significantly women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality. The study sampled 184 businesses owned by women out of the targeted population of 424 registered women MSMEs in Eldoret Municipality's records. The sample was arrived at using stratified sampling at first to categorize businesses into; micro, small and medium enterprises. Proportionate simple sampling was carried out to select a representative of each group and finally random sampling was done to get required respondents. 156 responses were recorded representing 85% of the sample. The study was the survey design that involved descriptive and inferential statistics in the process of addressing its objectives. This method of investigation was found appropriate since it could provide in-depth information on the effects of entrepreneurial factors on women entrepreneurs in Eldoret municipality.

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## Introduction

All over the world, women continue to perform vital productive roles which have helped in the economic development of the nations, especially in the Micro and Small Enterprises. They constitute half of the world's population, perform nearly two thirds of its work hours but receive only one-tenth of income and own one-hundredth of property (Savitha, 2004).

The importance given to entrepreneurship in economic growth and development especially in the developed economies such as United States of America (U.S.A), Britain, Japan, Canada and others have made most developing economies to adjust their developmental concepts and plans and now see new enterprise development as very vital to their economic problems (Culkin and Smith, 2000). Entrepreneurship as the engine of economic growth and wheel that pedal the vehicle of economic development has been recognized for its importance in the area of job creation, revenue generation, poverty alleviation and wealth creation. This concept is now identified as the central element in the theory of economic development and it makes up the largest business sector in economies (Wang, Walker and Redmond, 2006).

Entrepreneurship is important for the support of small and medium enterprises and with an active Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sub-sector in the production process, developed and less developed economies are expected to depend less on large industries to drive their economies

towards posterity (United Nations 2006). This is because economic renewal and growth is expected to be increasingly driven within the vehicle of enterprise creation and the industry clusters (Peacock, 2004). Entrepreneurship is a process that involves a willingness to rejuvenate market offerings, innovate, risks taking, trying out of new and uncertain products, services, markets and being more proactive than competitors towards exploring new business opportunities (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005).

It attracts both men and women who are interested in profitable inter-industry relationship. To ensure adequate development and competitiveness in entrepreneurship, considerable research has examined the participation of both male and female in venturing in business activities, particularly those reported to have personal dreams of entrepreneurship. This category has rapidly joined hands together to achieve success in business and enterprise development (Gelin, 2005).

Women are becoming increasingly important in the socio-economic development of both developed and developing economies as they account for significant percentage of the operators of MSMEs (Kjeldsen and Nielson, 2000). Women entrepreneurs make a substantial contribution to national economies through their participation in start-ups and their growth in small and medium businesses. Their interests and activities in the economic growth and development especially in the area of MSMEs have received outstanding interest of researchers (Kosimbei et al., 2006, KIPPRA 2008).

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Arenius, Langowitz, Minniti( 2007) confirmed that women participate in a wide range of entrepreneurial activities across the world and their activities in different countries have paid off in form of many newly-established enterprises for job and wealth creation. According to Gitile, Wegulo, Kaimenyi (2008) entrepreneurship is usually seen from the perspective of men driven economy due to its complexity, particularly its gender issues. The role of women entrepreneurs has not been properly documented, and especially in sub Saharan Africa, for example Kenya.

In more than two decades, the experience of Kenya in the process of economic development has not been encouraging and has resulted in low rate of most economic indicators(Gakure 2001). The report further states that, our country's over dependence on unprocessed agricultural products has contributed much to her economic underdevelopment.

The situation did not improve significantly until late 2003 when macro-economic variables began to rejuvenate under National Alliance Rainfall Coalition (NARC) government. As the change of guard began, more development variables were injected into the economic process with new ease of life and new value systems(Mogire,William 2003). Among them are strengthening inter-industry relationships, reviving stalled projects, restructuring of production and distribution processes, recognition of micro, small and medium enterprises(MSMEs), a new role assigned to development of entrepreneurship, enhanced public-private partnership, economic restructuring, industrial development and employment generation strategies (GOK, 2003). These measures targeted the improvement of citizens standards of living.

According to Ministry of Planning and National Development 2003 report, women's entrepreneurship is a central aspect of economic development and public policy concern in most countries. Scholarly research about their entrepreneurial activities is comparatively scarce. The role of entrepreneurs as agents in the labour market for creation of employment, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and provision of resources has helped tremendously to increase the number of women-owned entrepreneurial ventures in the world (Gelin 2005). The emergence of the private sector as the major participant in the industrial development of many countries has also improved women's access in employment opportunities as against when they experienced denial in employment opportunities as wage workers because of their family responsibilities, lack of skills, social and cultural barriers (Josiane, 2001).

Considering the various challenges and obstacles(Mc Cormick and Dorothy, 2001) facing MSMEs particularly in Kenya which include; capital inadequacy, gender inequality, independence, control, unavailability of the required infrastructures, shortage of manpower to mention but few, someone may quickly conclude that women are usually discouraged from venturing into enterprise development. But today the story is a different one; women are starting and growing businesses at an unprecedented rate.

For instance, in USA, the analysis of gender creative businesses shows that the rate of growth of women -owned businesses is twice that of men and this comprises more than 35% share of all entrepreneurial ventures. They generate over \$2.3 trillion in annual revenue, and employ 18 million individuals (Hagen, 2004).

## The problem

Countries around the world are increasingly formulating policies to make it easier to start a business and these changes are inclined in favour of women entrepreneurs significantly. Countries that are ranked high on ease of doing business are associated with higher percentages of woman entrepreneurs and employees in comparison with their male counterparts. Despite women's participation in economic development through entrepreneurship, they lack access and control over financial and other forms of resources (McCormick,2001).

In Kenya, there is an observable increased influx of women into the field of entrepreneurship. According to Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009, women constitute more than 50% of the total population, thus represent a substantial labour force. This influx of women entrepreneurs into entrepreneurial activities suggests that there are some fundamental factors that influence women to enter into and survive in entrepreneurship. Therefore, this study is motivated by such un- investigated scenario on the impetus leading to this influx of women into business. Thus the need to establish whether entrepreneurial factors significantly influence women entrepreneurs in Kenya.

Eldoret town (Municipality) is a business hub in North Rift region of Kenya and has attracted investors from different cultural backgrounds, education, professions, business culture, business lines, capital size, and a number of active women entrepreneurs. Like any other towns in Kenya, there is an observable influx of women exodus into the field of entrepreneurship in Eldoret municipality and exhibit similar system discriminatory factors. That is women are situationally less empowered economically, for example, a few are involved in business activities because men decide mostly and grade them lesser relatively. This is due to the socio-cultural structures that are patriarchal in nature which can also be changed through building and enhancing capacity for reason, moral agency and self-actualization. Therefore, carrying out the study in Eldoret municipality would fill the scholarly research gap and would shed light on the effects of entrepreneurial factors on women entrepreneurs in Kenya.

## Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the effects of entrepreneurial factors on women entrepreneurs in Kenya. Specifically the study sought to;

- (i) Examine the effects of financial factors on women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality.
- (ii) Establish the influence of psychological factors on women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality.
- (iii) Determine the effect of sociological factors on women entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality.

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study was based on liberal feminist theory as advanced by a number of authors (Sarri and Trihopoulou, 2005; Martin, 1984; Hurley, 1999; Fisher, Reuber and Dyke 1993; Flax, 1990; Ferguson, 1989). Liberal feminism sees women as disadvantaged relative to men due to overt discrimination and to systemic factors that deprive them of vital resources required for business and economic decisions such as; finance, education and experience. This theory works towards democratic society which would uphold the right of each individual to fulfill their potential without considering gender discrimination. Liberal feminism advocates that social and economic reform can only be possible if women are given the opportunities and status as their men counterpart to participate in economic developmental

issues. The treatment of the theory is conventional in evoking the idea that men's and women's ways of knowing and coping with the world are essentially the same, so that the main task of feminist research and policies is to allow women's estate to reach a state of similarity with men's via the removal of overt or systemic forms of discrimination against women (Trihopoulou et al, 2005). The liberal feminists have persuaded that lifting the barriers to women's participation and involvement in development in all spheres of activity, including business ownership, ought to be the main direction of practice. Also they opined that gender inequality stems from unequal participation of women in sphere of activities outside of the family; business, education and paid labor decision making process (Kutanis and Bayktaroglu, 2003).

Eldoret town has attracted investors from different cultural backgrounds, education, professions, business culture, business lines and a number of active women entrepreneurs. Like any other towns in Kenya, there is an observable influx of women exodus into the field of entrepreneurship and exhibit similar system discriminatory factors. That is women are situationally less empowered economically, for example a few are involved in business activities because men decide mostly and grade them lesser relatively. This is due to the socio-cultural structures that are patriarchal in nature which can also be changed through building and enhancing capacity for reason, moral agency and self-actualization.

### Conceptual Framework of the study

In order to measure the study's variables effectively, the researcher considered the available study's variables and conceptualized in order to guide the study all through.

These variables are represented diagrammatically as shown below.

Independent Variables    Dependent Variables

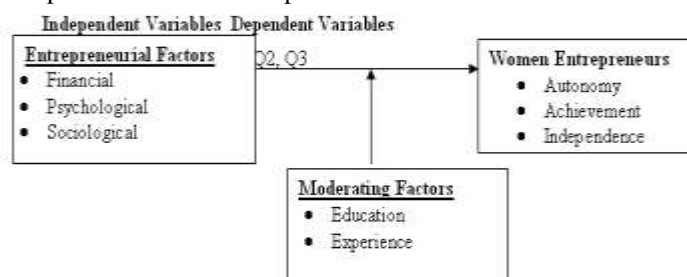


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the study

Source: Author (2012)

In the figure 1, the researcher considered; independent, dependent and moderating variables and formulated the conceptual model. The model depicts three entrepreneurial factors; financial, psychological and sociological which together, constitute independent variables. Women entrepreneurs factors (autonomy, independence, and satisfaction) is the dependent variable. These variables are moderated by education and experience which are extraneous variables and not part of dependent or independent variables, however can adversely influence the outcome of the dependent variable and therefore need to be catered for in the study. The direction of arrows shows how the variables are related to each other. Through questions Q1, Q2, and Q3, the verdict of objective 1, 2 and 3 was realized and whilst through questions Q4 and Q5, the verdict of objective 4 and 5 was realized.

### Research Design

The study is a survey and involved use of both descriptive and inferential statistics in the process of addressing the set

study's objectives. The survey method of investigation provided an opportunity to conduct an in-depth exploration of the ways in which businesses owned by women entrepreneurs in Eldoret municipality bear. Quantitative survey design gives researchers the opportunity to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that would be prohibitively expensive to study (Holton & Burnett, 1997).

An inventory survey was done and a sample of 184 women entrepreneurs (respondents) out of the total target population of 424 registered women enterprises in Eldoret municipal records. The data was collected through open and closed ended questionnaires designed to address the social, financial and psychological issues of women entrepreneurial variables.

### Population of the Study

The population of the study was all the registered women micro, small and medium enterprises held in Eldoret Municipality (EM) registry as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011. By this date the registered businesses owned by women where 424 out of which 321 were active by February 2012.

This study equally took cognizance of the fact that there may be many of these enterprises not actually registered and uncaptured in our frame. The researcher adopted deliberate simple random systematic sampling method in selecting the population sample in the area of coverage.

### Sample Size Determination

The Sample size of this study was determined from the population using sample size formula 'return sample size method' for categorical data as propounded by Bertlett, Kotrilik and Higgins, (2001) and emphasized by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where: n = the desired sample size.

Z = the standard normal deviation at the required confidence level.

P = the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured

d = the level of statistical significance set.

1 = a unitary

This study adopted two tailed test (0.025 = 1.96) at 95% confidence level. The targeted population to the study was 424, thus the required and appropriate sample size of at least 30% of the population deemed fit as recommended by Fisher et al.

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 3.7}{(0.05)^2} = 322.6 \approx 323$$

However since the target population to the study (424) was less than 10,000, the final sample size estimate could be adjusted as recommended by Mugenda (2003).

$$n_f = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n}{N}} = \frac{323}{1 + \frac{323}{424}} = \frac{323}{1.76} = 183.5 \approx 184$$

Where; n<sub>f</sub> = the desired sample size when the population is less than 10,000

n = the desired sample size when the population is more than 10,000

N = the estimate of population size

This was appropriate for this study because the information involved was to do with Quantitative survey design. Quantitative survey design gives researchers the opportunity to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that

would be prohibitively expensive to study (Holton & Burnett, 1997).

### Sampling Techniques and Procedures

In this study, sampling frame consisted of women MSMEs involved in entrepreneurial activities in all economic sectors and registered businesses within Eldoret Municipality. The municipality areas that were used as the sample frame for this study was purposively selected based on the issue of proximity to the researcher's contact point, for effective management of the respondents and costs efficiency.

Stratified random sampling method was used at the first stage to categorize the target sample by size. This involved categorizing businesses in Eldoret Municipality Central Business District (CBD) into Micro, Small and Medium enterprises. Thereafter, proportionate simple sampling was used to select the representation of each group. The respondents from each group were selected using simple random method to get women entrepreneurs as respondents at the final stage.

Stratified sampling method was helpful in grouping the population whilst proportionate sampling method helped in getting representative information from each strata according to each group. Random sampling method on the other hand was helpful in using the principles of randomization which is a procedure of giving every respondent in the study population an equal chance of appearing in the selection (Asika, 2000).

Out of the target sample size of 184 the proportionate sample size for each was; 40%(74) Micro, 30%(55) Small, and 30%(55) Medium respondents.

### Research Instruments

The primary data was obtained mainly through the instruments of questionnaire and interviews. Questionnaires were administered to 184 focused entrepreneurs of the study. The primary data was complemented by secondary data from the records of the respondents.

Two types of research instruments were used in carrying out this study; questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were designed to collect information on the financial, psychological and sociological factors and they relate to women entrepreneurs factors. Questionnaire as an instrument for data collection was chosen because it is effective in assisting the respondents to be objective and more precise in responding to the research questions.

The design of the questionnaire was simple and respondent-friendly. These questions were made up of structured and unstructured questions. A five-point Likert-scale which ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (5 = 'Strongly Agree', 4 = 'Agree', 3 = 'Undecided', 2 = 'Disagree' and 1 = 'Strongly Disagree') was used to reflect the agreement of the respondents. Likert scales are widely used in most research in business and other related courses in social science literature (Carland, and Carland, 2005). To elicit the cooperation of the respondents, the nature and purpose of the research was made known to the respondents and anonymity was assured.

Interview according to Orodho (2004) is also necessary in order to purify and improve the quality of the research questionnaire. The researcher conducted one-on-one interview using a structured interview guide. Though the guide provided a format, the researcher in several occasions expanded the questions so as to get more detailed information from the respondents. A total of 184 questionnaires were administered to randomly selected respondents. However, due to lack of location and verification of some of these enterprises, wrong addresses

and change of business 156 responded representing 85% response rate.

### Results

Examining the effects of financial factors on women entrepreneurs

In order to examine the effects of financial factors on women entrepreneurs, the study had set the following research question;

To achieve the objective, a five-point Likert-scale question type were used. Respondents were asked questions relating to finance which could have encouraged them to be in business. These includes availability of capital, tax incentives, regulations policy favoring small firms, financial and business plans experience among others. The responses were coded and tallied as shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Response distribution frequencies on financial factors**

Likert-type scale	Responses per Question						Average score	Percentage %
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6		
Strongly agree	67	79	51	92	60	40	65	42%
Agree	79	45	43	61	48	38	52	34%
Neutral	1	27	25	3	31	28	19	12%
Disagree	3	4	21	0	8	25	10	6%
Strongly disagree	6	1	16	0	9	25	10	6%
Totals	156	156	156	156	156	156	156	100%

From the above table 1, majority of the respondents on average, did strongly agree 65(42%) with the questions on financial aspects posed to them. Closely followed by those who did agree 52(34%), while the undecided (neutral) scored 19(12%). However, those who disagreed were 10(6%), and similarly to those strongly disagreed 10 (6%).

Table 1 show how skewed the results of the respondents were on average. The skewness favored the question posed to the respondents and implying that of significance in women entrepreneurs is financial factors, perhaps from any source. Analytically, more than a half 117(76%) of the respondents favored the questions asked. This implies that the variable in question, financial as a factor influencing women entrepreneurs is significant across the board, that is micro, small and medium entrepreneurs in Eldoret Municipality.

These results were expected by the researcher and supports the research question as set. Majority that is more than a half in all questions asked, showed that financial factors are a major determinants for women entrepreneurs in Eldoret municipality. Further, the correlation analysis show that, there is a strong significant positive linear relationship between financial factors ( $r = .7791$ ) and women entrepreneurs.

These results support the findings of Mansor (2005) who reported financial factors as the factors that could either encourage or discourage women entrepreneurship. Further, he reported that entrepreneurs are challenged by financial factors, which may include lack of adequate finance, disincentives of tax system, inhibiting effects of red tape and regulations, failure in implementation of the policy that discriminate in favour of small firms, lack of previous experience in the financial arena, lack of self-confidence in presenting business plans among other things. The results further matches the conclusions of Bartol and Martin, (1998), Parboteeah, (2000), who found that access to financial resources as a capital requirement to start a new business is vital for women entrepreneurs in the world.

Therefore, from the analysis and discussion, financial factors come out clearly as major determinants for entrepreneurs in Eldoret municipality and thus can be inferred that financial factors influences women entrepreneurs in Kenya. Establishing the influence of psychological factors on women entrepreneurs

In order to examine the influence of psychological factors on women entrepreneurs, the study had set the following research question;

To realize the objective, a five-point Likert-scale type questions were used to capture the response from women respondents. This ranged from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The variables used in measuring psychological factors include; risk-taking propensity, internal locus of control, need for achievement, tolerance of ambiguity, self-esteem, and pro-activeness. All the questions from 7 to 18 were guided by these variables. The results from respondents are hereby provided below in table 2.

**Table 2: Summary response of psychological factors**

Variables			
Likert-type question score	Average response	Percentage	
Strongly agree	46	29%	
Agree	43	28%	
Neutral	34	22%	
Disagree	19	12%	
Strongly disagree	14	9%	
Totals	156	100%	

From the summary of the tabulated interview responses as shown above in table 4.8, on average, majority of the respondents did strongly agree 46(29%) with the question posed to them and closely followed by those who did agree 43(28%), while neutral scored 34 (22%). However on average, 19(12%) did disagree and 14 (9%) did strongly disagree . Critically, more than a half (57%) of the respondents did favor the questions asked.

Results from correlation analysis show that, there is a strong significant positive linear relationship between psychological factors (  $r = .8861$ ) and women entrepreneurs. This implies that the variables in question, psychological factors influence women entrepreneurs significantly.

The analysis matches other scholarly reports as propounded by theories of entrepreneurship that utilize psychology and innovative processing concepts (Schumpeter, 1934; McClelland, 1961; Knight, 1978; Johnson, 1990 and Reynolds, 1991) at the individual level possess numerous advantages over those that do not. It is pertinent therefore to note that psychological factors play important role in women entrepreneurial development.

These test results were expected because psychological factors guide the inner part of an individual and the passion of doing something. The results from this research work clearly indicate and opine that psychological factors may well be linked with the reasons why women venture into entrepreneurial activities, especially in micro, small and medium enterprises in most emerging economies. Thus, psychological factors in Kenya significantly influences women entrepreneurship.

Determining the effects of sociological factors on women entrepreneurs

In order to determine the effects of sociological factors on women entrepreneurs, the study had set the following research question;

To determine the influence of sociological factors, a five-point Likert-scale was used. This ranged from ‘strongly

agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’ ,and ‘strongly disagree’ on scale of 1,2, 3, 4 & 5. The vvariables used in measuring sociological factors includes; family obligation and influence, limited opportunities in work place and advancement, role model, and the role of women in society. Therefore all the questions from 19 to 28 were guided by these variables and the results are presented below in table 3;

**Table 3: Respondents’ distribution scores on sociological variables**

Likert-type question	Response score	Percentages
Strongly agree	40	26%
Agree	35	23%
Neutral	40	26%
Disagree	21	14%
Strongly disagree	20	13%
Totals	156	100%

From table 3 above the results show that on average, majority of the respondents did strongly agree 40(26%) with the questions posed to them and closely followed by those who did agree 35(23%), while neutral scored 40 (26%). However on average, 21(14%) did disagree and 20(13%) did strongly disagree. It can be observed that, a half (49%) of the respondents did favor the questions asked. Further the correlation analysis as shown in table 4.13 page 48, shows that there exists a significant positive linear relationship( $r=.779$ ) between sociological factors and women entrepreneur. These tests show that those respondents who did agree are about a half of the sampled. This skewness justifies that majority did favour the posed questions in regard to sociological factors variables as influential factor to women entrepreneurs. This results are in agreement with that of other scholars such as Hagen, (2004), Heidrick and Johnson,( 2002), Markku, (1996), Gakure, (1995), Reynods, (1991) and Akeredolu-Ale, (1975), who in their findings , confirmed sociological factors as mojour influencer in regard to women entrepreneurship as postulated by sociological theories. This implies that sociological factors influence women entrepreneurs significantly in Eldoret Municipality and thus in Kenya.

### Conclusion

The study was concerned with determining the influence of financial factors. The results showed that access to financial resources and availability of the required capital to start the new enterprise is essential for entrepreneurs perhaps from any source. Financial factors, which may include lack of adequate finance, disincentives of tax system, inhibiting effects of red tape and regulations, failure in implementation of the policy that discriminate in favour of small firms, lack of previous experience in the financial arena, lack of self-confidence in presenting business plans. Analytically, financial as a factor influencing women entrepreneurs is significant across the board; micro, small and medium entrepreneurs and therefore financial factors are major determinants for women entrepreneurs.

The second objective aimed at establishing the influence of psychological factors on women entrepreneurs in Kenya. Psychological factors include ability and propensity to risk into enterprise, internal locus of control, need for achievement, pro-activeness and others. The test results show that psychological factors influences greatly women entrepreneurs. This results were expected because psychological factors given, guides on the inner part of an individual and the passion of doing something. The results from this research work clearly indicate and opine that psychological factors may well be linked with the reasons why women venture into entrepreneurial activities, especially in small and medium enterprises in most emerging

economies. It is pertinent therefore to note that psychological factors play important role in women entrepreneurial development.

The research objective three test results show that those respondents who did agree are about a half of the sampled. This skewness justifies that majority did favour the posed questions in regard to sociological factors variables as influential factor to women entrepreneurs. This implies that sociological factors influence women entrepreneurs significantly in Eldoret municipality and thus in Kenya.

### Recommendations

Based on the above, the following important recommendations are made;

Empowerment programmes should be recognized as an innovative approach to poverty alleviation and be organized by the government, private sector and NGOs that are geared towards encouraging more women to start their own businesses. This would enable them to make more contribution to the nation's economic development in terms of poverty alleviation, job creation, wealth creation and economic vitality.

Women should understand that they play important role in nation building, they should therefore be prepared to start up entrepreneurial initiatives whether they are supported or not. This would help in building up their self- confidence and self-esteem which are important factors in taking the risks involved in starting and growing entrepreneurial ventures.

Programmes for the development of women entrepreneurship should recognize the traditional gendered role of women that contributes to the double burden of responsibilities. Governments are encouraged to ensure that capacity building in entrepreneurship is complemented by access to social programmes to relieve the burden.

Women entrepreneurs should learn to take advantage of their environment whether favorable or unfavorable. Environment has the potential of pulling or pushing women into entrepreneurship. Women potential entrepreneurs should take out time to consider the challenges other women in business are facing and find out how best those challenges could be tackled before taking the decision of going into business. If women entrepreneurs were more aware of the challenges they might face, they could better prepare mentally and strategically for their new life style.

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