

BARRIERS TOWARDS WOMAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP DURING BUSINESS STARTUP STAGE IN SRI LANKA: WITH EVIDENCE FROM WESTERN PROVINCE

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Despite increased attention is being given towards women entrepreneurship, still there are certain barriers faced by women entrepreneurs specially in startup stage which inhibit them from getting their hands on entrepreneurial initiatives. The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the barriers towards women entrepreneurs during startup stage in Sri Lanka with evidence from Western Province. The core objective of the study is to analyze how the barriers impact on the venture initiation for women entrepreneurs and to suggest recommendations on how to improve and facilitate more entrepreneurial intentions in women. This study was conducted using qualitative research method. The study employed non-probability convenience sampling technique. The primary data was gathered from eight women entrepreneurs in Western Province, using semi-structured in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed using the thematic analysis. Findings of this study showed that the impact of family background, level of education, availability of financial resources and influence of personal attitudes can affect during the business start-up stage. The limitations experienced during the study are in the areas of sample selection because inclusion of all women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka is irrational. Therefore, the population has been limited to the Western Province. All interviewees were female entrepreneurs who were running their own business for at least two years since initiation. The study only focuses on the start-up stage of the business and the barriers confronted during the initiating process.

Keywords: *Women entrepreneurship; Barriers; Startup stage*
