

Abstract

The outcomes of women's access to entrepreneurial resources and opportunities can be very different from those of men. This study aimed to analyse the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jamshoro, Pakistan which includes policy, finance, institutions, human capital, culture, and markets through a gender lens, assess women entrepreneurs' access to it, and examine the effectiveness of its elements.

The study adopts qualitative research methodology. Data were drawn from desk research, 30 in-depth, semi-structured interviews and one focus group discussion with 10 women entrepreneurs in rural Jamshoro, Pakistan. The data were analysed using Atlas.ti software and coding was done using thematic analysis.

The findings show that women entrepreneurs have partial access to the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jamshoro. Furthermore, there is lack of awareness and knowledge among women entrepreneurs about available financial resources, lack of knowledge about laws and policies, an absence of familial, cultural, and societal support for women in accessing the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the absence of quality business training and unavailability of physical and technological infrastructure in rural areas, presence of stereotypical attitude towards women entrepreneurs, and limited access to markets and business networks.

The existing entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jamshoro can be improved through coordinated multi-stakeholder initiatives, adopting a gender-inclusive approach, interventions aimed at increasing awareness about the resources, promoting an understanding about the laws and regulations, making institutions more effective in providing services, establishing public-private partnerships, and providing the women entrepreneurs easy access to market and financial resources.