

# The Growth and Challenges of Female Entrepreneurship in Oman, From Last Five Years Onward

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The Omani government has shown great interest in how to achieve a sustainable work environment for female entrepreneurship due to the great influence of women and their high participation in increasing the level of economic income. The growth rate of female entrepreneurship has increased dramatically in a short period of time, which has stimulated the Omani government to make more opportunities and services provided in female entrepreneurship. The research aims to find out the rate of growth of female entrepreneurship during the past five years in addition to the difficulties and challenges that Omani woman faced in the labour market. On the other hand, the solutions found to minimize these challenges were taken with recommendations to further increase the rate of growth of female entrepreneurship. The data were collected by distributing an online survey questionnaire to 378 Omani businesswomen who are practicing their own business in different places in Oman. In addition, four interviews were scheduled with Omani women entrepreneurs with a multi-business approach to discuss their journeys towards entrepreneurship. The study used two research methods, the qualitative and quantitative analysis. Based on the analysis, many challenges were summarized that had direct impact on the lack of growth of female entrepreneurship in the past five years. The lack of funding for women's projects came first, followed by the lack of women's skills and experiences in the labour market. Moreover, the lack of advertising marketing and Omani society's perception of women working in the field of entrepreneurship were also among the challenges.

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship has demonstrated its effectiveness through growth in the economy of any country. Some countries have looked at entrepreneurship as an important strategy for raising the level of youth in the economic field. The area of interest has increased in analysing and understanding the most important obstacles that women faced during their entrepreneurial career. The main purpose of conducting this study is to know and evaluate the obstacles and barriers in the growth and prosperity of female entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman from last five years onward. This paper seeks to know and clarify the challenges that women faced when starting the process of setting up their own business. It also explains how to strive to improve women's entrepreneurship in the country. This study will present the importance of knowing and identifying the obstacles and challenges faced by female entrepreneurship during their entrepreneurial journey; and to provide appropriate recommendations to increase its growth in entrepreneurship.

## **Research Problem**

Although there are many different programs that help and embrace Omani women's projects in the field of entrepreneurship, it still appears that the rate of growth in female entrepreneurship from last five years was relatively low. It would be good to know the interest of women in entrepreneurship and what are the difficulties and challenges that faced by female entrepreneurship in their entrepreneurship journey. These challenges are economic, social, and financial in nature. Challenges include obtaining financial for the business, the lack of experience and skills of the entrepreneurs, the difficulty of learning and making use of available local resources. Media and promotional media can be very weak in terms of promotion or social challenges within the borders of Omani families or the eastern community and how the community views the entrepreneur women, in addition to finding appropriate solutions and developing them to minimize the challenges that reduce the rate of high growth of female entrepreneurship, Searching for ways to

improve and encourage female entrepreneurship and to provide appropriate recommendations towards female entrepreneurship will be covered as well in this study. The study will attempt as well to find out and research the growth rate of women entrepreneurship over the last five years.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study will provide full picture of knowing the growth of entrepreneurship in Oman by studying the challenges that have hindered the growth of female entrepreneurship during the last five years. It will also provide a comprehensive understanding of the positive and negative consequences of female entrepreneurship, as well as the type of solutions, assistance and support provided to women in the field

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. Evaluate the support system from the country to Omani women entrepreneurs.
2. Investigate on the challenges that stand in the way of women's entrepreneurship.
3. Find solutions to the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and strive to reduce it.
4. Provide recommendations for continuous growth of entrepreneurship in the country.

### **Literature Review**

Entrepreneurship is a part of the economic and social development of many countries around the world if many ideas and concepts prove their importance in improving the economy in addition to the social and cultural benefits achieved through this field. The field of business is not limited to economic and social factors only but includes many other aspects that have a significant impact on entrepreneurship. Women's entrepreneurship is a much more important component of the economy in countries - especially developing countries - due to its ability to move the economic sphere and create new job opportunities for young people of both genders, women, and men. It is

also the dynamic advanced revolution in innovation and the continuous pursuit of female creativity through simple projects. In addition to the quality of the interdependent relationship between private businesses and the increase in economic growth in the country in terms of moving the wheel of business and establishing new projects and companies in the business market. This chapter will present the academic literature on entrepreneurship in general at the international level and in the Sultanate of Oman in particular. After that, the competence of female entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman will be presented, what has been the rate of growth of female entrepreneurship during the past years, and what are the most important obstacles that have formed obstacles to the emergence of female entrepreneurship.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The growth of women's businesses in a short period depends on several factors that underlie the success of these businesses, which are the amount of government support that the Omani state provides for female entrepreneurship, with the need to educate society about the importance of encouraging women to choose the field of private business. In addition to developing the self-confidence of Omani women and providing incentives to support the potential for innovation and creativity in the field of business. Cooperating with the competent authorities to reduce the obstacles that women face at work. It goes without saying that the changes that have taken place in the global economy have brought about a significant change in the position of women in the business market. It has created many new opportunities and challenges, and increased demand for knowledge and development of capabilities and skills that must be preserved by practicing them in the ever-changing business market. From this perspective, women's capabilities and leadership style were invaluable. Expectations of global female entrepreneurship are intertwined with the idea of the principle of entrepreneurship as a kind of women's liberation from social constraints and the ability to make economic decisions (Bastian et al. Al, 2019). Despite this, in the early 1990s, the literature increased that focused on examining the minimal effects of prejudice and preferring

males over females in activities and areas of entrepreneurship. Describing the female side in critical and theoretical reviews as the losing side (Ahl and Marlowe 2019). In the global South, for example, there has been much interest in female entrepreneurship to obtain the constraints of emancipation and patriarchy (Banihani 2020).

## **Definition of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is one of the necessary areas that helps to apply innovation and creativity in ideas as it contributes to developing individual and managerial skills in the individual leadership strategy for business. The term entrepreneurship has evolved from its basic French origin, which mean the ability of the individual to assume responsibility (Burns, 2016). And when the theory of the meaning of entrepreneurship was developed, the focus was on the basic meaning of defining an entrepreneur. After the spread of the theories, researchers became curious to present studies and research on entrepreneurship. The studies are since entrepreneurship can be viewed and described as the independent economic function that focuses on profit and achieving economic growth and through which entrepreneurial methods can be predicted (Galloway et al., 2015). Entrepreneurship has been linked and recognized in terms of an entrepreneur's background, example in terms of social and economic factors such as level of education, amount of experience, and family imitation in practicing the field of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is one of the areas that support economic growth in developed and developing countries (Dickes.et.al, 2017). Entrepreneurship (Morris, 2016) is a necessary factor in the development of the country. Many of the large and medium-sized companies on which the economy of the countries depends is a list of companies and small enterprises that have challenged their owners the difficulties and problems they faced before establishing these enterprises.

## **Growth in Women Entrepreneurship from Global Perspective- From Last Five Years**

Studies have shown that women's participation in entrepreneurship makes a difference in the economy (Welch et al., 2016). During these current economic conditions, it is important not to waste capabilities and to think about how to exploit and benefit from them. The two scholars (Lock and Lawton, 2016) discovered in their research on Kenya that female entrepreneurship faces far fewer barriers when starting a business compared to previous years. This was evidence of the success of entrepreneurship on a large scale in the country.

## **Growth in Women Entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman from Last Five Years**

Female entrepreneurship in general is not the first time that have a new topic to be broached. It was presented in several studies and research in the past to achieve equality between men and women, which was not addressed in many developing and developed countries. Where there was widespread gender discrimination in the social and professional societies and in the business market. However, it was concluded and emphasized that to achieve economic sustainability, equality must first be achieved, and women empowered to experience entrepreneurship. Many countries have generally made clear the importance of women entrepreneurship in business and helping them in raising the level of economic development. The Omani government has sought to increase its economic participation in entrepreneurship (Naguib and Jamali ,2015). The government has a view of expanding the field of entrepreneurship to benefit from the local product. Here he makes the government think directly about developing the private sphere of entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises. This sector includes specific strategies and factors. This illustrates the extent of the growth that has occurred in female entrepreneurship over the past years.

## **Best Practices in Achieving Sustainability from Female Entrepreneurship – Global and Local Perspectives.**

Entrepreneurship has an effective role in eradicating poverty because it is the better half of society (Venotheni, 2016). Before women owned their own businesses to avoid poverty and increase income levels in the twentieth century, female entrepreneurship was known by other concepts (Sathya and Vithyapriya, 2016). Pakistan is one of the countries dominated by a male-dominated society, however, Pakistan ranks 37th for female participation in female entrepreneurship out of 46 economically emerging countries in Asia and ranks 165th globally out of 191 countries. Oman ranks 35th in the world. Among the 46 Asian countries, there is a high growth rate of female entrepreneurship. During the past years, women have excelled by breaking social and cultural barriers and engaging in various types of private businesses that have shown through these entrepreneurial actions the extent of their entrepreneurial ability and intelligence.

## **Obstacles and Challenges Facing Women Entrepreneurship - Global and Local Perspectives**

Due to changing conditions over the past five years, (Matharu et al., 2016). Many people have come to acknowledge the importance of women in the field of entrepreneurship, although there are some exceptions made by some people. Female entrepreneurship, like any other field, faces several growth challenges. This may be due to many reasons that can be summarized to a few women possessing sufficient skills and abilities to practice entrepreneurship, in addition to the lack of education and experience. Sometimes it may also be due to government complications in completing transactions, or because of the fees imposed. These fees restricted the process of expanding private enterprises for women (Youngberg 2017). Despite the support provided by the Omani government to facilitate entrepreneurship, few women are aware of the facilities and

procedures required for this. The weakness of the social media and promotion could be one of the challenges as well.

## **Strategies that Resolved the Challenges in Women Entrepreneurship-**

### **Global and Local Perspectives**

Achieving the required knowledge of Omani women related to entrepreneurship, universities and educational and technical institutions have sought to achieve it hand in hand to develop and refine the skills of Omani women in entrepreneurship and that work on the success of women in the field of business. Awareness in business (Ali and Muturaman, 2017). The Omani government has also contributed to increasing and raising the highest level of knowledge and familiarity with financial resources related to business operation and that facilitate their participation in the business market (Muhammad et al., 2016) also continued support from the Omani society for women to take advantage of financial resources to participate in the entrepreneurial activity (Taqi, 2016). It also raised the level of financial funding for projects and eased restrictions and fees imposed on women entrepreneurs.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology includes an accurate description of the study, the plan used in it, and how it is designed and implemented to support and solve the problem of the proposed study. The methodology contains basic information about the study, the study community, the tools used in data collection, the types of methodologies, the method for selecting and taking samples, what are the limitations of the study and the methods of analyzing this information.

### **Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

This study will include both quantitative and qualitative research methods: where (the quantitative research method) : will be used through the data that will be collected from the survey



questionnaire. The survey questionnaire will be conducted and distributed through a program from the Internet - Survey Monkey, targeting only the women entrepreneurs in Oman. There will be discussion as well on the challenges that women entrepreneurs faced at the beginning of the project and describes the most important reasons that helped their business succeed. As for the qualitative research method) : an interview will be conducted with Omani women entrepreneurs to take some of their experiences on female entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman.

### **Primary and Secondary Data**

The data will use two types of data, the primary data, and secondary data. Primary data is the original basic information that can be obtained from documented sources; and it has the advantage of quick and direct analysis, as it does not need to be sure of the data and information obtained. This data can be obtained from discussions, questionnaires, and interviews as well. This data will be deduced from the survey questionnaires that will be distributed to Omani women entrepreneurs, to arrive at the basic of the problem of this study.

Where secondary data will include data to be collected from studies, research, and opinion polls that were concluded before other people conducted them and emerged with these results. This data will be collected from the Internet and books to use it to reach a fair amount of information that is interested in this study and to show some of the desired goals. This data will be used to provide strong information on the subject in general. The electronic sources in electronic libraries will be the sources. This includes resources from Middle East College Library (electronic library), research and topics from ResearchGate and E-Book and journals from Science Direct.

### **Data Analysis Process**

The data will be analyzed after collecting it from the questionnaires that were distributed to Omani women entrepreneurs. There will be interview with 4 Omani entrepreneur woman that will be helping to making comparisons of the information from last 5 years. The Interview will be

discussing the challenges facing of the female entrepreneurship field at the start of the project. What is the financial, promotional or media support that the government has provided in the field of growth of Omani entrepreneurship and the increase in encouragement for local production? It will be explained what the appropriate solutions are to solve these challenges, whether they are social or economic, and provides recommendations in a decisive framework. Then this information will be analyzed using SPSS program and graphic representation method.

## **Qualitative Research, Presentation and Analysis**

### **Interviews**

The interviews conducted with a selected sample of 4 to 3 women entrepreneurs from several interests and projects in the field of entrepreneurship in the cosmetic field, the organizing field for conferences and training courses, the sports field, and those interested in increasing the growth of private women's business in Amman have been summarized, and one apologized due to special health conditions.

## **Quantitative Data Presentation and Analysis**

### **Survey Questionnaire**

The aim of the research study was to measure the growth in women's businesses over the past five years, to explore the rate of government support available to women, and to investigate the challenges that hinder businesswomen in starting private enterprises, considering the provision of solutions to address women's business problems and take recommendations to work on Increase women's business growth. To obtain the reliable facts of the research study, the poll included the distribution of questionnaires to 378 Omani businesswomen in the Sultanate of Oman who have great experience and passion in the field of entrepreneurship and the job market in various fields of small enterprises, home projects and simple craft projects.

## **Conclusions**

Women entrepreneurship is a phenomenon and a commercial field that is not without challenges that may stand in the way of business as long as appropriate solutions are not found to achieve growth in business. This study focused on the amount of growth in female businesses during the past 5 years in all regions of the Sultanate of Oman. The analysis and verification of the obstacles and challenges that limit female entrepreneurship, which centered on the challenges of training, education, society and culture, government, economic and financial support, all have a relationship to affecting women's private businesses.

The lack of government support for businesses affects the imposition of difficult and long procedures that force women to always move between government agencies, mix and take a long period of time to clear the established transactions. The difficulty of providing financial support from the competent authorities occurs due to the many and difficult guarantees. The limited number of training courses and workshops, and the lack of knowledge of women about administrative and technical bodies, and incubators that are interested in emerging businesses.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made considering the responses of the above-mentioned respondents:

The interest in providing initial capital for private projects was the main subject and goal of more than one respondent, and thus it is possible to work to provide the amount required to establish the project while imposing and punishing those who delay payment and granting insolvent parties an appropriate time limit that guarantees the right of both the business owner and the competent financial authorities. Paying attention to women's projects by appointing governmental supervisory bodies to supervise the assisting competent authorities that provide basic services to emerging women's projects. Providing incubators that incubate women's private businesses in all

regions of the Sultanate, and which provide all administrative and technical services in areas where there are few female jobs. Establishing an integrated technical system in cooperation between government agencies and linking entities with each other to facilitate the process of government procedures followed in business. Developing women's capabilities in the field of business, overcoming governmental obstacles, and holding free training courses and workshops that are part of business content in various commercial fields. The amount of support provided by the Omani government to find appropriate solutions for business did not satisfy the businesswomen, and therefore the government should increase attention and intensify the investigation into appropriate solutions. Businesswomen support that sustainability can be achieved through women's business, and therefore attention must be paid to this area with the need to increase encouragement for private businesses.

### **Future Researchers**

This study helps researchers and future entrepreneurs know how much growth has occurred in entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman over the last five years; and what are the reasons that made this growth appear late. There will be some results expected from the study for future researchers:

1- An evaluation of the government's support for Omani entrepreneurship. When the government supports them with training and skills enhancement, this will help expand their horizons of knowledge on how to introduce new resources into the labour market through which they can work and add modern resources that will contribute to growth.

2- An investigation into the challenges facing women entrepreneurs to be avoided in the future by entrepreneurs and build expertise on these challenges. These obstacles will be summarized according to these categories as follows: lack of experience and skills in education and access to

entrepreneurship, and social barriers facing the family and society. Challenges may relate to how to provide seed capital and banking facilities on loans and loan guarantees.

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