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From Limitations to Opportunities: Elicit Factors Shaping Women's Choice towards Entrepreneurship in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurship matters not only for individuals but for communities and countries. However, the socio-cultural construct of Pakistan presents a restrictive environment for women particularly its province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Women in KP are significantly embedded in the informal norms of society. Besides limitations, entrepreneurship is rapidly increasing in Pakistan where a huge number of women are opening up their small home-based entrepreneurial ventures. The current research study attempts to explore the elicit factors that shape the choice of socio-culturally embedded women in KP towards entrepreneurship. With a qualitative methodology and an interpretivist approach, the results of the study revealed that women's embeddedness in informal norms is actually the "primary cause" of their preference for entrepreneurship over paid employment. Women tend to choose those jobs that give them enough space to cater their gendered responsibilities along work within the boundaries set by the Pukhtun society for them. The contribution of the study lays in the contextual analysis of women entrepreneurs in KP. The research provides a deeper understanding of how women navigate these informal norms of society and familial roles into resilience and successful home-based ventures. The context specific pull and push factors guide the local government and policy makers in making more impactful policy initiatives for women entrepreneurs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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Keywords: *Informal Norms, Women Entrepreneurship, Pukhtun Society, Pull and Push Factors, Qualitative*

INTRODUCTION

The legislation of Pakistan follows the Islamic principles. However, the society still has an influence of pre-Islamic tribal trends that promote patriarchal culture (Zaib et al., 2025). A gender bias is since ever embedded in Pakistani society that is further embedded in the cultural norms of Pakistan (Roomi et al., 2018). Thereby, ensuring women are structurally subordinate to men. Women share almost 50 % of the total population still Pakistan has a man dominated society. Man is usually considered to control women's lives and liable for the economic control and headship of the households thus gender forms an organizing principle of Pakistani society (Haram

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et al., 2021). In the traditional society of Pakistan women are considered as "House Makers" while men are the "Bread Winners" and are not supposed to share the responsibility of managing household and domestic activities (Rehman and Roomi, 2012). These informal norms sometimes labeled as normative institutions have strong and deep roots in the society and are reflected through social norms that determine rules of the game in any society. The social norms further assign different roles to social actors based on their gender and associate various responsibilities to each role (Khan and Turuk, 2024).

Though, technological advancements over time are changing the world gradually. However, certain norms and values in societies are practiced over years and taking centuries to change. The cultural construct of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa is a composite of Pukhtun traditions, gendered attitudes and familial norms and values. These traditions, familial norms and gendered attitudes are transmitted from generations to generations and have greater effect on women as compared to men (Yunis et al., 2019). It is a dilemma of Pukhtun society that it always encourages women to remain within the boundaries of homes. On the other side women crossing boundaries of their homes to work, often face resistance from their own family members. Many of the family members resist in fear of the society's perceptions towards working women particularly in rural KP (Jamal, 2016).

Though transitions occurred over time however, certain norms and traditions are inseparable part of Pukhtun culture (Alam, 2012). Still majority of families in Pukhtun society do not allow women to work outside their homes. These families still practice their conservative family culture and deny even women's right to education. Further these social norms determine the appropriate behavior and identities for both the genders within that society thereby affecting the desirability of entrepreneurship for women, its nature and extent (Welter et al., 2014). Besides all the limitations, literature witnessed entrepreneurship is rapidly increasing in Pakistan where a huge number of women are opening their small home-based entrepreneurial ventures. (Rehman and Roomi, 2012; Nazam et al., 2025). Simultaneously literature also misses the contextual analysis of women entrepreneurs. It mostly considers women entrepreneurship as an independent phenomenon. The study attempts to advance the existing literature by analyzing women entrepreneurship as a multifaceted phenomenon that is strongly associated with the socio-cultural environment around the women entrepreneurs particularly in Pukhtun society. The study further advocates that this association not only influence their choice towards entrepreneurship but also influence their entrepreneurial attitudes, behaviors, motives of venture creations and obstacles they face in establishing and carrying on the businesses (Yunis et al., 2019).

Objectives of the Research Study

i. The current research study attempts to explore the elicit factors that motivate the socially and culturally embedded women in KP to opt for entrepreneurship.

ii. The study also aims to discover the role of gender biased and patriarchal norms in making up their choice towards entrepreneurship.

Contributions of the Research Study

The research study emphasizes on the contextual analysis of women entrepreneurs in KP. Women in this province are strongly influenced by the traditional norms of the society. Their decisions for startups cannot be seen as a separate entity but interplay of the norms, familial roles and business responsibilities. The research provides a deeper understanding of how women navigate these norms and familial roles into resilience and successful home-based ventures. Moreover, the context specific pull and push factors can better guide the local government and policy makers in making more impactful policy initiatives for women entrepreneurs in KP. The research study also suggests government that better education, business awareness, skill development training programs and financial literacy are crucial to enhance the contributions of women through entrepreneurship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section aims to study a relevant body of literature in order to form a strong foundation for the findings of the research study to be built upon.

Women in Pakhtun Culture of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The research aims to highlight the elicit factors shaping women's choice towards entrepreneurship while considering the strong influence of patriarchal norms of pukhtun society of KP, thereby it is vital to have a fair enough understanding of the cultural and social construct of the province.

Pukhtuns, originally the natives of Afghanistan, reside in the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province in Pakistan (Qayoom, 2025). The province has a highly patriarchal culture that strongly influence the societal structure and shapes the lives of Pukhtun women. Women in traditional society of KP are considered as home makers and custodians of family's honor (Gohar et al., 2011). Like all over Pakistani society, Men in KP are considered to earn while women's responsibilities are confined to child responsibilities and domestic chores (Yunis et al., 2019). Mostly in rural parts of the Pukhtun province, gendered discrimination starts before birth, as a girl child is never a wanted child. Once born, men play the decisive role in most of issues in her life, ranging from education to marriage. The control is transferred to husband after marriage who decides for the number of children, her role in community and her limits for further education and employment.

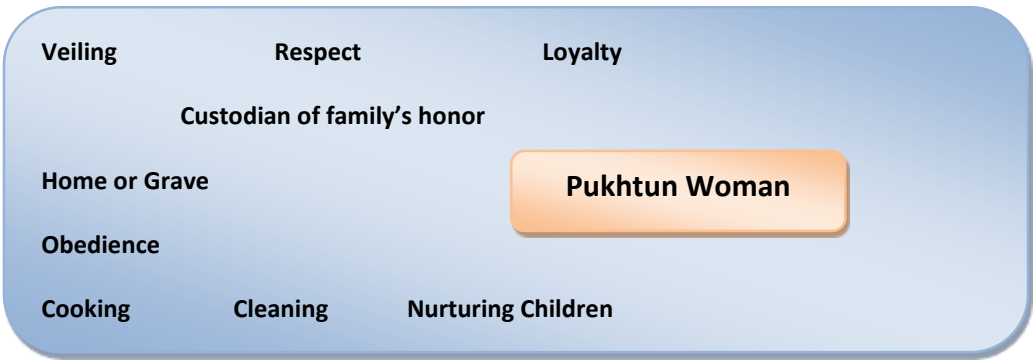
Pukhtun society is very much sensitive regarding women's image and identity (Qayoom, 2025). In many parts of the province, men do not take their daughters and wives to hospitals as other men can see them and it can spoil their pardah (veiling). Similarly, men do not take names of their women publically. Women in Pukhtun society are the first to awake in morning and the last to sleep in the night. Thus, the word *woman* in Pukhtun society is synonymous with "obedience" and "loyalty. Her life is confined to her home and revolves around the home making, cooking food, taking care of family members and child bearing. Many in Pukhtun society still consider either kor (home) or gor (grave) as women's place in universe (Ali, 2021). Thus the

cultural code of "Pukhtunwali" results in a male dominated society. According to code of Pukhtunwali, man's honor and the dignity of family and clan supersede many other priorities (Jamal, 2016).

Among the Pukhtun tribes, the cultural norms are of utmost importance and are clearly visible. They are reluctant to allow women for education, employment and interact with men (Khan et al., 2020).

Figure 1

Informal Institutions Determining the Status and Role of Women in Pukhtun Society



Source: Compiled from literature

For the past few years the traditional society of KP is gradually transforming to "Gendered modernity" where women are trying to crumble down the patriarchal social practices (Yunis et al., 2019). Many parents are moving towards urban parts to educate their daughters (Jamali, 2016). However, conservativeness still dominantly prevails in society hindering way of women for employment (Haram et al., 2025), thereby compelling many of the women to opt for an entrepreneurial way of life while fully obeying the patriarchal rules of game (Yunis et al., 2019). However, a number of obstacles exist for these women opening up their entrepreneurial ventures (Rizvi et al., 2024).

Obstacles in Way of Women Entrepreneurs

The recent studies have shown that a growing number of women are entering the field of entrepreneurship (Khan and Turuk, 2024; Nazam et al., 2025). Women entrepreneurship matters not only for individuals but for communities and countries (Minniti and Naude, 2009). However, the socio-cultural construct of Pakistan presents a restrictive environment for women entrepreneurs (Nazam et al., 2025). There are a number of hindrances in the way of women entrepreneurs including lack of finance and market place facilities (Sharma et al., 2012; Rasheed et al., 2025). Lockyer (2012) identified lack of training and financial risk as the major obstacles

in way of women entrepreneurs. Some other major hurdles are illiteracy of women entrepreneurs in rural areas, lack of risk bearing capability, infrastructural facilities and lack of awareness (Sharma et al., 2012). Though the financial problems are also confronted by men entrepreneurs very often however these are not always the biggest problems for them (Brush and cooper, 2012). On the other side despite of the high level of qualification, expertise and personal abilities, investors and finance providers still hesitate to provide funds to women entrepreneurs. Thus, the lack of financial capital deprived many potential ventures from being opening up (Gohar et al., 2018; Moriss and Tucker, 2023). Policy makers in the developed countries recognized the potential of women entrepreneurs and working to reduce barriers and obstacles that women entrepreneurs faced while starting up and carrying out their entrepreneurial ventures (Nazam et al., 2025). On the other side in developing countries like Pakistan though lots of researches are carried out on the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs but still not much practical steps have been taken by governments and policy makers. It is therefore important to initiate different programs to reduce barriers for women entrepreneurs.

After going through a variety of studies it has been found that the existing literature mostly focuses on highlighting the barriers women face in entrepreneurship while mostly emphasizing on access to finance and education. The literature considers the informal norms as an obstacle for women to enter in an entrepreneurial life (Huq and Arenius, 2025; Shastri et al., 2022). The research de-colonializes the existing literature by presenting how patriarchy shapes the choice of women towards entrepreneurship. It further explores how women navigate the informal norms and familial roles into resilience and successful home-based ventures. The research tries to reframe entrepreneurship as a gendered and socially ingrained phenomenon.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the objective of this research, a qualitative research methodology with an interpretivist approach seems the most appropriate choice. Interpretivists believe that reality is multifaceted and is consisted of individual's subjective experiences in the world hence reality is socially constructed (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). This led us to the choice of qualitative methodology which asserts that the best way to understand a phenomenon is to understand it within its context (Babbie, 2013).

Research Sample and Data Collection

A diverse and rich data is collected via face to face in-depth interviews (45-90 minutes) with 19 home-based women entrepreneurs from various districts of KP province. A combination of purposive and snow ball sampling strategies was used to get to the information rich participants via informed consent. Moreover, the identities of the respondents are kept confidential as per their willingness.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through Reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA) designed by Clarke and Braun (Byrne, 2022). This qualitative data analysis approach provides an inductive process to construct meaningful patterns from the data set essential for data interpretation. It enabled us to

understand women entrepreneurship within the context in which it occurs in KP, and the push and pull factors for their entrepreneurial careers as well as their gendered experiences.

Respondents	**Business Activity**	**Business Place**	**Age of Business in Years**	**District**	**Marital Status**
1	Beauty Parlor	Home-based	10	Peshawar	Married
2	Beauty Parlor	Home-based	4	Bannu	Married
3	Fashion Designing	Home-based	10	Peshawar	Unmarried
4	Cooking and Baking	Home-based	12	Nowshehra	Married
5	Baking	Home-based	12	Mardan	Married
6	Paintings	Home-based	5	Mardan	Unmarried
7	knitting	Home-based	6	Peshawar	Married
8	Fruits jams	Home-based	3	Charsadda	Unmarried
9	Cooked and frozen food	Home-based	7	Nowshehra	Married
10	Beauty Parlors	Home-based	9	Karak	Married
11	Jams and Pickles	Home-based	4	Peshawar	Married
12	Pickles and home grown organic herbs	Home-based	13	Bannu	Married
13	Beauty Parlor	Home-based	19	Karak	Married
14	Fabric painting	Home-based	14	Nowshehra	Unmarried
15	Henna application	Home-based	15	Charsadda	Unmarried
16	Cooked food	Home-based	3	Karak	Unmarried
17	Beauty Parlor	Home-based	11	Mardan	Married
18	Knitting	Home-based	3	Charsadda	Married
19	Knitting	Home-based	4	Bannu	Unmarried

The Data analysis started with translation of the interviews to English language as all the interviews were taken in participant's mother tongue "pukhtu". The translation and transcription of the interviews was done simultaneously by the researcher. A huge number of initial codes were generated followed by merged codes and themes manually by the researcher herself.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The informal norms of the society shape the career choices of women (Khandelwal and Sehgal, 2018). It has already been discussed that the primary and fundamental responsibility of women in KP is their family and household (Tabassum et al., 2016). Very interestingly the data revealed that this primary responsibility is the "primary cause" of women's preference towards entrepreneurship over paid employment. Majority of participants during their interviews revealed that they opt for entrepreneurship because they find it easier to cope up with their familial responsibilities along entrepreneurship as compared to paid employment.

> *"My home is my utmost priority. I know If I do a job, my home will be neglected which I can afford on no cost. No matter I am earning in lakhs but what if I am not giving time to my children. I cannot tolerate seeing my domestic chores undone and everything around untidy"* (Interviewee: 2)

It is also observed during the interviews that few of entrepreneurs have very supportive family members. Their father, brothers or husbands (Heads of family) though do not restrict them from organizing and carrying on their entrepreneurial endeavors however, they restrict them to home only. In a Pukhtun society a woman sitting in commercial area for her business is against the norms (Alam, 2012). In Pukhtun society, after marriage, husband and in laws become the decision making bodies for women (Daraz et al., 2014), regarding education, employment, community role and number of children etc. and have authority to restrict her actions (Jamal, 2014). Thereby, women in Pukhtun society have to seek permission of their father or husband for education as well as employment. Though, many of the women are restricted by the families however, a majority of them accept and follow certain norms willingly. One of the reasons that women their selves do not attempt to move out of the boundaries of their homes is Pardah (veiling) that is a symbol of the honor, dignity and security for women in the Pukhtun culture (Ali, 2021). Women in a Pukhtun society have to be in Pardah while going outside their homes and are not allowed to interact with men other than the family as a religious obligation (Alam, 2012; Daraz et al., 2014).

> *"Yes it is necessary and I do complete pardah. I think there is no work which cannot be done with pardah. One should not avail that opportunity if she has to unveil herself. Yes and even the person can do another work in which she can do her proper Pardah. It is not necessary to go for such works where you cannot do Pardah. She should even work inside her house and she will get success"* (Interviewee: 4)

The notion of Pardah (veiling) has such strong and deep roots in KP, that majority of women never attempts to violate this norm (Roomi et al., 2018). Many of them willingly carry on their entrepreneurial activities at home. These women have the guts to face the stereotypical

attitudes of the society towards their business (Yunis et al., 2019). However, they their selves follow the rule of Pardah as a religious obligation upon them (Roomi et al., 2018).

Despite that, an increasing number of women are entering in the field of entrepreneurship for the past few decades (Haram et al., 2025). Literature identifies two types of entrepreneurs based on their start-up motivation. One is Opportunity-Driven entrepreneur while the other is Necessity-Driven entrepreneur. An Opportunity-Driven entrepreneur is the one who recognize opportunity in the form of business idea (Udimal et al., 2020), and exploit it for the sake of recognition, financial independence and sense of achievement. On the other side a Necessity-Driven entrepreneur is the one who is driven by circumstances like lack of job opportunities and financial needs (Kobia, and Sikalieh, 2009; Udimal, et al., 2020). The data in this research study revealed the presence of both kinds of women entrepreneurs in KP.

As a result of the worldwide economic crises during the past few decades necessity entrepreneurship has been increased substantially (Block et al., 2015), reporting that more than half of the total number of entrepreneurs in developing countries are necessity entrepreneurs (Nikiforou et al., 2019). In addition to this, the stereotypical culture and gendered norms of the society are found as key push factors to propagate more necessity driven women entrepreneurs (Adom and Anambane, 2019).

Women's intentions towards entrepreneurship are affected by gendered dimension of the stereotypical society as women mostly tend to start beauty salons, cooking and baking services and handy crafts etc. that are highly feminine in nature (Adom and Anambane, 2019).

Most of the entrepreneurs in Pakistan are also necessity driven entrepreneurs as this remain the only suitable option when there are lesser employment option (O'Donnell et al., 2020; Nikiforou et al., 2019).

The data revealed women entrepreneurs in KP are sometime only and other times supplementary source of income for the family. In case of only source of income, a better life style, extreme financial crises with in the household, husband's unemployment, sickness or death leave them with no option other than self-employment (Acs, 2006; Nikiforou et al., 2019).

"Definitely women should earn. There may be women who work just for the sake of enjoyment but what will a woman like me do? If there is no one to earns for her children. My husband is sick and not able to earn. He was mentally abnormal before our marriage however, we were not aware about that. I am the only source of income for my family. My sons are not well established yet, they are still studying" (Interviewee: 12)

Interviewee 12 belongs to a rural area of KP where women crossing boundaries of home is perceived very negatively. Her husband is mentally unsound and is not able to work and earn a living. Thus, the need to earn livelihood pushed her into entrepreneurship.

"He is sick. He was a good labor but caught with severe muscular problems. He is unable to work now. When I saw that no one in his family was supporting us and we had

our three little children with us. We cannot spend our lives depending upon borrowings from others and thus I had to start my own work and earn for my husband and children" (Interviewee: 7)

Many of the women entrepreneurs who were earlier financially dependent on their male counterparts become the sole earner after husband's unemployment (Mayoux, 2001). However, all the necessity driven women entrepreneurs are not the sole earners. Some bring supplementary sources of income to their families.

"Well I started my work because of my necessity. I told you my husband does glass fitting but after having kids, our expenditures increased therefore it became very difficult to meet them. Thus I decided to help my husband in earning" (Interviewee: 18)

Interviewee 18 is another less educated entrepreneur in knitting as a business. She is pushed into entrepreneurship to financially assist her husband. These necessity women entrepreneurs though belong to the stereotypical society, however, have the guts to start their entrepreneurial endeavors despite of fewer resources, lesser education and lesser or sometimes no experience in order to meet their household expenditures (Block et al., 2015).

"He was in no way permitting me to open my own parlor. Actually He is Pathan. I first asked for a job somewhere in a parlor. But for that he strictly refused. After some time, his business went in to lose and we went through severe financial crises these days. Our financial position was getting weaker day by day. Then I somehow convinced him to let me start my own business and I now for the last 10 years I am having my own beauty salon" (Interviewee: 1)

For the past few decades, inflation is increasing every day in Pakistan, making it difficult for the lower income groups to meet their basic needs including their children's health and education expenditures with men's income only. Interviewee 1's account reveals that men in stereotypical societies are once convinced that their women are able to cater their financial needs and also to cater their household responsibilities along their entrepreneurial activities, put lesser or no pressure on them (Adom and Anambane, 2019).

However, not all the entrepreneurial motives are necessity based, some are also the voluntarily based and are called the opportunity-driven entrepreneurs (Acs, 2006). As provided by Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring (GEM), not all the entrepreneurs are involved in entrepreneurship because they have no other option, some are also involved as they have recognized an opportunity to start a business. (Fairlie and Fossen, 2018). Where, opportunity recognition refers to the attempt of how individuals sense the signals in the surroundings and develop suitable measures to grab the opportunity (Fischer, 2011).

The research study discovered that about 40% of the interviewed samples of entrepreneurs in KP are opportunity entrepreneurs. These women are pulled towards entrepreneurship in need of self-satisfaction, realization of self-potential and sometimes recognition of an opportunity to transform their skills into business. It is because when at one side due to cultural limitations, lack

of education, childcare and household responsibilities women are not allowed to go for jobs and pushed into entrepreneurship, on the other side sometimes factors like inner motivations, self-realization, skills and talent pull women towards entrepreneurship (Adom and Anambane, 2019).

> *"I am very thankful to a friend of mine. She had the same business as mine. Once she participated in an exhibition organized by chambers of commerce. She asked me to join her in the stall. I brought my stuff to the stall and people liked that very much. Everything was sold out. After few days I displayed my own stall under the banner of sarhad chambers of commerce. I again got a very good response from people. Then I took a membership of Sarhard chambers and kept on displaying my stalls. Now I have my own business and i arrange such exhibitions and earn enough"* (Interviewee: 14)

Interviewee 14 is a highly educated retired government school teacher. She is unmarried and living with her brother's family. She did fabric painting as her hobby. While accompanying a colleague in her business stall, she got her own business idea and grabbed the opportunity to start her own business while converting her hobby/ skill into venture. (Krizner, 1973), identified search for opportunity, as important to an opportunity recognition that further lead to trigger an entrepreneurial activity. Interviewee 14's account depicts her prior knowledge of the business (as a hobby) as well as her alertness to recognize the entrepreneurial opportunity. Literature shows when prior knowledge of the business activity is accompanied with high alertness, there remain no need of search for the opportunity and vice versa (Fischer, 2011).

Entrepreneurial opportunities are manifested in a variety of ways (Eckhardt and Shane, 2003). Sometimes this is a hobby to make an individual vigilant to grab the entrepreneurial opportunity (Kadile and Biraglia, 2020), while sometimes it is the need to realize the self-potential that pull individuals towards entrepreneurship (Cassar, 2007).

> *"I am not working for the sake of earning only but for realizing my potential and recognition in the society. I have a huge social circle including very honorable people. This gives me satisfaction. My father in law blames me as a 3rd class women but I do not care about my in law's attitude, because I know how much respect I am getting in the society. There negative attitude even raise my courage. I am working even more now and realizing and accomplishing my potential"* (Interviewee: 9).

Interviewee 9 belongs to an upper class family. Her husband is a property dealer and have enough amount of family income however, Interviewee 9 account clearly depicts that she has the guts to face the traditional attitudes of her in laws and continuing her business not only for the sake of income but to realize her creativity and potential. Literature shows many of women entrepreneurs choose entrepreneurship to get recognized and realize their potential (Yunis et al., 2019). The need for realizing self-potential further enables individuals to accept the challenges in their surroundings (Cassar, 2007), as Interviewee 9 did along the conservative attitude of her in laws.

The data in this research study also revealed entrepreneurs who transform their hobby or skills into their entrepreneurial endeavors to realize their childhood dream.

> *Yes it was already in my mind. When I was a kid and someone used to ask me what you will become when you grow up. I always answered; I will either become a fashion designer. I have all my memories when I watched Fashion shows on TV. My mother used to read fashion magazines like "She" and other Pakistani Fashion magazines but I had far more interest in these magazines. When I got my degree in Fashion designing, I definitely wanted to start my own business.* (Interviewee: 3)

The above quotation highlights that, women while meeting their household responsibilities they develop their hobbies or interests into their own entrepreneurial venture and realize their childhood dream (Kimbo and Ngoasong, 2016). Entrepreneurship is sometimes a passion for such women where passion is defined as "a strong inclination toward an activity that people like and that they find important to invest time and energy" (Alhothali, 2020). Passion to start a business is an attribute that assists women to achieve their goals (Arshad et al., 2018), ie; realizing self-potential and recognition (Goheer, 2003; Sharmila, 2020).

> *"Well my business is my passion. It is my craze. I can never leave my business" (*Interviewee: 19)

Interviewee 5 started baking as a business not because she needed money but because baking is a passion for her. She is an expert in the art of baking. Her account clearly depicts her love for baking as a business.

> *"You know Baking is not my interest but my passion. I always say there may be no meal cooked at my home but a cake must be baked. When I have a single day even, with no order for cake, I become sad. Baking is my passion. I love it to no limits".* (Interviewee: 5)

The researcher came across many opportunity driven women entrepreneurs in KP, for whom their business is their passion. Passion to get recognized for the talent they have. These women opted for self-employment to realize their self-potential, get satisfaction of being recognized and use their skills, knowledge and talent in a productive way.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study present a clear picture of how the women entrepreneurs in KP are embedded in the informal norms of the society. How cultural values and social perceptions about women affect them and their choice towards entrepreneurship. It is clearly evident that the utmost priority of women entrepreneurs is their family and children. While being in entrepreneurship they cannot put their domestic responsibilities on side. This makes the women entrepreneurs as multi-taskers while simultaneously coping up with their household responsibilities including child care, taking care of other family members, cleaning, washing and moping etc. as well as their entrepreneurial endeavor.

These women entrepreneurs are sometimes pushed into entrepreneurship for sake of meeting financial needs of the household while sometimes pulled into entrepreneurship for sake

of recognition and realization of self-potential. However, Women entrepreneurs in Pukhtun society of KP often known as the custodians of family's honor mostly carry on their entrepreneurial activities within the limits set by the society for them. Therefore, the phenomenon of entrepreneurship particularly experiences of women entrepreneurs in a pukhtun society cannot be understood until taking the informal norms of this society into account. Women are blessed with the abilities to handle numerous affairs simultaneously. A failure in the management of these tasks may lead to disturbance in both their family and work life.

Therefore, women tend to choose those jobs that give them enough space to cater their household responsibilities along work within the boundaries set by pukhtun society for them (Agarwal and Lenka, 2015; Alhothali, 2020). Thus, Women owned businesses are not viewed as a separate economic entity for women but an integrated system with their personal and social lives (Khandelwal and Sehgal, 2018). The family life and business of women entrepreneurs in pukhtun society are strongly interwoven (Kadir and Ismail, 2020). Therefore, for women, entrepreneurship is the way to earn incomes simultaneously with catering household responsibilities that is bringing women out of the single term "home maker" to "bread winner" as well (Naseem et al., 2020). The study hence attempts to advance the existing literature by analyzing women entrepreneurship as a multifaceted phenomenon that is strongly associated with the socio-cultural environment around the women entrepreneurs particularly in Pukhtun society. The research study emphasizes on the contextual analysis of women entrepreneurs in KP. The research provides a deeper understanding of how women navigate these norms and familial roles into resilience and successful home-based ventures. Moreover, the context specific pull and push factors guide the local government and policy makers in making more impactful policy initiatives for women entrepreneurs in KP. The research study suggests government that better education, business awareness, skill development training programs and financial literacy are crucial to enhance the contributions of women through entrepreneurship.

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