A Comprehensive Review of Challenges and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in the field of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh

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Abstract:

The article offers a comprehensive analysis of the potential and difficulties encountered by female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's rapidly developing travel and tourism sector. Women's underrepresentation in entrepreneurial activities within the tourism sector and the growing recognition of their critical role in economic growth are the driving forces behind this research. This study highlights the various obstacles preventing women from entering and succeeding as entrepreneurs in the tourist sector through a thorough examination of the literature and empirical data. These difficulties include gender stereotypes, sociocultural impediments, financial resource access, and limited educational options. The study highlights the encouraging prospects for female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's travel and tourism industry. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to create a welcoming environment that caters to the unique requirements of female entrepreneurs in the travel and tourism industry. A series of recommendations is provided at the end of the report to help policymakers, industry stakeholders, and women themselves overcome the obstacles and seize the potential. Through the promotion of gender-inclusive legislation, improved education and financial accessibility, and an entrepreneurial culture, Bangladesh may enable women to fully realize their potential in spearheading sustainable economic growth via the tourist sector.

Keywords: Tourism, Entrepreneurs, Opportunities, Challenges, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Bangladesh offers a wide variety of attractions, such as historical sites, natural landscapes, and cultural heritage sites, and has been progressively becoming more popular as a travel destination (Van Schendel, 2020). With UNESCO World Heritage Sites like the Sundarbans, the world's biggest mangrove forest, the Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat, and the Ruins of the Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur, Bangladesh boasts a rich cultural legacy. The nation is home to a variety of scenery, such as verdant farmland, picturesque rivers, and picturesque hills. One of the longest beaches in the world, Cox's Bazar draws visitors from all over the world (Rahman, Sahera, Farzana, 2023). Bangladesh's tourist sector has grown to become a major economic force in the country, creating jobs and generating
foreign exchange profits. The role of female entrepreneurs has grown in this vibrant industry, although their participation rate is still disproportionately low. This in-depth analysis seeks to explore the potential and difficulties encountered by female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's rapidly developing tourism sector (Rizvi et al., 2023). The study was motivated by the need to acknowledge the transformative potential of women in economic development and the ongoing obstacles that impede their attempts to start their own businesses. The need to address gender inequality and create an atmosphere that is welcoming to women entrepreneurs is growing more pressing as Bangladesh's tourism sector develops (Hassan, & Ramkissoon, 2023). Using a multifaceted approach, this review integrates findings from in-depth surveys of the literature, empirical investigations, and interviews with important industry players.

A thorough analysis is conducted of the various obstacles that face female entrepreneurs, encompassing both institutional and sociocultural hurdles, such as restricted access to financial resources and educational opportunities. Comprehending these obstacles is essential to developing focused interventions that can open the door to increased gender parity in the industry. The review aims to highlight the unexplored prospects for female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's tourist industry at the same time. The nation is proud of its rich history, varied cultures, and breathtaking scenery (Avi, 2023). Within the tourist sector, women entrepreneurs have opportunities to not only succeed but also make significant contributions to the industry's overall growth through niche markets and creative business strategies. This assessment seeks to educate legislators, industry stakeholders, and would-be business owners alike by offering a thorough examination of the difficulties and opportunities faced by female entrepreneurs in the travel agency sector. In-depth discussions of gender dynamics in Bangladesh's tourism sector will be provided in the sections that follow, along with suggestions and analysis to support an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that maximizes the contribution of female entrepreneurs to the industry's future development (Karanja, 2023).

For female entrepreneurs working in the tourism industry, this effort may look into and pinpoint ways to improve capacity building and put focused training programs into place. In summary, this research might identify gaps in the literature and indicate future research directions about the relationship between women's entrepreneurship and tourism development in Bangladesh.

Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs are those who voluntarily take on the risks and responsibilities that come with starting and running businesses in order to make money and have a positive impact on the economy (Zaidi, et al., 2023). The process of methodically identifying and pursuing opportunities in order to launch and manage a new business venture that often includes elements of creativity and risk-taking is known as entrepreneurship. The process of generating, creating, and growing new concepts or businesses is referred to as "entrepreneurship". Entrepreneurship is the deliberate evaluation and taking of measured risks to achieve economic, social, or individual goals. Entrepreneurs identify gaps in the market, needs from customers, or new ideas (Neck, Neck, & Murray, 2023). Sarasvathy's concept of productive thinking places emphasis on the first step. In order to foster optimism, the individuals in question skillfully manage market conditions and efficiently mitigate risk. Entrepreneurs create detailed company plans that include their goals, tactics, and projected financials. They also take on the crucial duty of securing capital, human resources, and other essential assets. In this setting, venture capitalists and angel investors are often observed to be involved.

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Entrepreneurs create detailed company plans that include their goals, tactics, and projected financials. They also take on the crucial duty of securing capital, human resources, and other essential assets. In this setting, venture capitalists and angel investors are often observed to be involved. The idea that entrepreneurship positively affects GDP growth and the generation of job opportunities is supported by data found in academic research. In addition, there is evidence that entrepreneurship can help bring about constructive changes in society, such as reducing poverty and addressing environmental issues. Schumpeter's theory of creative destruction, which highlights the role of innovation in advancing society, is consistent with these facts (McClure, Snow, & Thomas, 2023).

Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism

There has been an increasing awareness of the role that women entrepreneurs play in Bangladesh's tourist sector. The industry is significantly shaped by women entrepreneurs, who also contribute to economic growth (Rahman, et al., 2023). Nonetheless, they frequently deal with particular difficulties that are influenced by sociocultural settings. Like many other nations, Bangladesh has gender roles that are still in place, which may have an impact on women's involvement in entrepreneurship. Women's participation in specific business ventures or tourism-related activities may be impeded by societal standards and expectations. Bangladeshi women entrepreneurs may encounter difficulties obtaining funding to launch or grow their travel-related enterprises (ESCAP, 2023). Women may also face obstacles in their attempts to move about, network, and interact with stakeholders as a result of societal norms and traditional gender roles. Women's ability to succeed in the tourism industry may be limited by unequal access to chances for education and training.

Within the tourism industry, women entrepreneurs can investigate specialized sectors like eco-tourism, cultural tourism, or community-based tourism. Women can operate companies that involve creating and marketing regional crafts to visitors in a nation that is rich in traditional arts and crafts. By starting eateries, guesthouses, or cultural events, women can make a positive impact in the hospitality sector (Vila-Vázquez, Castro-Casal, & Carballo-Penela, 2023). The Bangladeshi government has expressed interest in encouraging female entrepreneurs and has launched initiatives to assist them in a number of industries, including travel and tourism. Policies have been put into place with the goal of enhancing women's access to capital, offering training, and fostering a more encouraging business climate. Networks and support groups dedicated to women entrepreneurs have been striving to enable and help women overcome obstacles in launching and expanding their enterprises in the travel and tourist industry.

Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism

A variety of obstacles that are influenced by sociocultural, institutional, and economic reasons face female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's tourism sector. Developing skills, promoting a more inclusive and encouraging business climate for women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's tourist sector, and implementing regulatory interventions are all necessary components of a multipronged strategy to tackle these issues (Gerged, Tran, & Beddewela, 2023). Socio-Cultural Barriers

Women are frequently restricted to particular roles by well ingrained societal norms, which hinders their capacity to participate in entrepreneurial activities in the tourism sector. Establishing and operating enterprises can be more difficult for women who choose to pursue non-traditional careers due to potential social backlash or resistance (Lee, Yi, & Kang, 2023). Limited Access to Financial Resources

Because of requirements for collateral or gender bias, women entrepreneurs may have trouble obtaining loans or credit facilities. Insufficient knowledge about finance could make it more difficult for women to handle money wisely,
which would affect the long-term viability of their companies (Bancoro, 2023).

**Education and Skill Gaps**

Inequalities in educational opportunities may give rise to a skills gap, thereby impeding women's competitiveness in the tourism industry. Inadequate training programs tailored to the tourism sector may make it more difficult for female entrepreneurs to acquire the skills they need (Bagheri, et al., 2023).

**Work-Life Balance**

It can be difficult for women to juggle traditional gender roles at home with their entrepreneurial duties, which affects their work-life balance. Inadequate support systems, including daycare centers, might make it difficult for women to concentrate on and grow their enterprises.

**Limited Networking Opportunities**

Gender-based networking obstacles could prevent women from obtaining important economic alliances and connections. Obtaining attention and recognition in the male-dominated tourist industry may provide challenges for female entrepreneurs.

**Access to Markets**

Women may have less access to consumers and commercial prospects in markets where discrimination persists. Making educated business decisions might be hampered for female entrepreneurs by a lack of knowledge about market trends and opportunities. Certain restrictions may unintentionally harm female entrepreneurs, adding more challenges to running a business.

**Infrastructure and Technology**

It may be difficult for female entrepreneurs to use digital tools for marketing and company administration if they do not have proper access to technology. A region’s ability to attract tourists and retain visitors can be hampered by inadequate infrastructure. Unintentionally harming female entrepreneurs, certain rules may increase obstacles to running a firm.

**Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism**

Despite the difficulties, Bangladesh’s tourist sector offers a number of chances for female entrepreneurs. The nation's varied landscapes, rich cultural legacy, and growing popularity among domestic and foreign travelers present these options. These prospects fit well with Bangladesh’s tourism industry’s colorful and varied offers (Nazifa, 2022). Women business owners have a significant opportunity to showcase the nation's distinctive natural and cultural assets while also advancing the industry's growth. Support structures, such as governmental programs and neighborhood associations, must acknowledge and promote these chances for women in the travel and tourism sector.

**Cultural Tourism**

Indigenous handicrafts, fabrics, and mementos that highlight Bangladesh’s cultural legacy can be produced and sold by female entrepreneurs (Ahmad, & Jan, 2023).

**Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Initiatives**

Creating ecologically friendly homestays, resorts, or guesthouses to appeal to travelers who care about the environment. Providing guided tours that highlight the exploration of Bangladesh's many ecosystems, fauna, and scenic beauties (Akhter, & Haque, 2023).

**Hospitality and Catering Services**

In order to meet the growing need for individualized and locally-focused experiences, women entrepreneurs can open bed and breakfasts or small lodging facilities. Managing cafés, restaurants, or catering services that promote regional food and culinary customs (Kalenjuk Pivarski, et al., 2023).

**Community-Based Tourism**

Establishing homestays in communities that provide visitors a taste of local culture and way of life while generating extra cash for the area. Putting on performances, workshops, and cultural activities to highlight regional cultures...
and traditions (Eriksen, Isaksen, & Rypestøl, 2023).

**Tour Guiding Services**

Insights into historical locations and landmarks can be gained by women entrepreneurs who pursue careers as tour guides, specialized in cultural and heritage trips. Providing excursions with guides for adventure sports like river rafting, hiking, and trekking (Del Barrio-Tellado, Gómez-Vega, & Herrero-Prieto, 2023).

**Travel Agencies and Tour Operations**

Launching tour companies or travel agencies to serve particular niche markets, such as luxury travel, solo travel, or family travel. Creating and supplying travel packages designed especially for female tourists (Del Barrio-Tellado, Gómez-Vega, & Herrero-Prieto, 2023).

**Digital Marketing and Online Platforms**

Carrying out online travel agency activities, such as making reservations, organizing trips, and giving advice on nearby attractions. Using social media channels to advertise travel-related activities and enterprises in order to attract a larger audience (Syarifuddin, et al., 2023).

**Educational and Cultural Programs**

Providing training courses on topics like customer service, language skills, and business management to women working in the tourism sector. Coordinating cultural exchange initiatives that unite visitors and locals for mutual educational opportunities (Wu, et al., 2023).

**Discussion**

The thorough analysis of the obstacles and prospects facing female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's tourist sector illuminates important factors influencing the involvement of women in this field (Almathami, & Mair, 2023). In the framework of the nation's tourism industry, the conversation covers the complex dynamics of gender-specific issues as well as possible paths toward empowerment. Sociocultural obstacles are a persistent challenge, as the review correctly notes. Women's advancement in the tourism industry's entrepreneurial sector can be severely hindered by societal norms and traditional gender roles (Hillman, & Radel, 2023). One significant barrier that prevents women-led tourist firms from starting and expanding is their limited access to loans and credit facilities. The review accurately highlights how women's competitiveness in the tourism industry is impacted by unequal educational options (Je, Khoo, & Yang, 2023). Closing this gap will be essential to providing women entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. The topic of work-life balance is explored in detail, with a focus on the extra duties that women have at home. According to the analysis, women entrepreneurs could find success in niche niches within the tourism industry. This is in line with Bangladesh's diverse cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, offering special business potential (Deliormanli, 2023). This maintains and advances cultural heritage in addition to promoting economic empowerment. Recognizing the value of creating an inclusive business ecosystem, the discussion serves as a foundation for policy proposals. This includes financial assistance systems, educational programs, and gender-inclusive policies (Bagheri, et al., 2023). The review duly draws attention to the gendered aspect of networking issues. The topic of technology and infrastructure's significance in women's entrepreneurship is discussed. To ensure that women entrepreneurs can use technology to expand their businesses, it is critical to acknowledge the need for digital inclusion. The assessment notes that community-based tourism projects have potential (Almathami, & Mair, 2023). In addition to giving female entrepreneurs financial opportunity, this also advances the general well-being of nearby communities. Academics, decision-makers, and industry stakeholders can all benefit from the thorough review. This debate lays the groundwork for well-informed decision-making and focused interventions by outlining the unique possibilities and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's tourist industry (Gutierrez, & Vafadari, 2023). The review's insights, which highlight the significance of
fostering an environment that allows women to flourish in Bangladesh's dynamic tourism entrepreneurship scene, add to the continuing conversation on gender equality and economic empowerment.

Conclusion

The thorough analysis of the opportunities and difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's tourism sector sheds light on the complex environment that these women must traverse while pursuing their entrepreneurial endeavors in the rapidly developing tourism industry of their nation. This analysis has yielded insightful information about the many obstacles that female entrepreneurs must overcome while also pointing to encouraging paths toward advancement and empowerment. In order to establish an enabling climate as Bangladesh's tourist sector develops further, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and support organizations must work together. This entails developing a culture of gender equality, offering focused financial aid, increasing access to education, and creating support systems that enable the rise of female business owners in the travel and tourism sector. A thorough review acts as a spur for action in addition to being a knowledge base. Bangladesh has the ability to unleash women's full entrepreneurial potential and develop a more inclusive and sustainable tourism sector that benefits people, communities, and the country as a whole by tackling the issues and taking advantage of the opportunities this report highlights.

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Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest.

References


