

The Role of Family Support and Work Life Balance of Women Entrepreneurs in Jaffna District

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Abstract : Women entrepreneurs are the key players in the society and their contributions is highly highlighted to enhance economic stability in the country. In Sri Lanka, especially in North and East provinces people badly affected by war. Most of them are widows and women headed families. Due to this changing environment, Educational opportunities, and the support of NGO's Most of the women have started their business and become entrepreneurs. Even though existing family setup and social setup entrepreneurial women are overburdened and difficult to balance their business and family roles. The research has been conducted on the experiences of women entrepreneurs with the family role support and work-life balance within the small and micro- enterprise sector in Jaffna, Srilanka. This study aims to identify that what extent the role of family support will be the tool to balancing work and life effectively and, secondly, the main challenges they face in achieving work-life balance. This is done by drawing on literatures including those on work-life balance, small-and micro enterprises, and entrepreneurship theories. To find out this objective, the data were collected from 50 entrepreneurs among the members of Jaffna women chamber in each GS division basis (cluster random sampling). A qualitative methodological technique and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data for the case study on these entrepreneurs. The results indicate that the majority of entrepreneurs do not enjoy a sense of work-life balance because most of them are women headed family and they need to work hard to generate financial profit for the benefit of family. The motivation for them to work in this way is to provide basic needs. Results confirmed for others that support of husbands is very important. Mostly, emotional support (belief and empowerment) is exposed; however, getting financial contribution seems to be highly appreciated. More responsibilities which spouses were ready to take over regarding the home responsibilities (that is, childcare) should also not be neglected in the system of support to their entrepreneurial wives. Although, more important for all, women with children appreciated other members and spouses help and assistance to a higher extent. Results showed that majority of women who started their own business feel that in the first year of ope-ration the emotional support of family members was more important.

Keywords : family support, work life balance, women entrepreneurs, Jaffna District, Sri Lanka

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