

The Emerging SME Women Entrepreneurs in Dhaka City

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***Abstract:** This is an empirical study, based mainly on primary data. It is about the women entrepreneurs of Dhaka city. The article discusses that the women entrepreneurs of Dhaka city have the potentialities to start their own business. Their socio-economic status is high. The urban educated women are quite capable of taking financial and administrative responsibilities. They seem to be more creative, resourceful and challenging. At the same time, they are more educated, enlightened, modernized and westernized. Despite many impediments, women entrepreneurs have turned successful as manufactures, exporters, importers, orders suppliers, business agents, product designers etc. by taking up challenging tasks.*

Introduction:

The women entrepreneurs in SME has emerged as a new class both in the urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. Though some studies were conducted on entrepreneurship development in Bangladesh, no significant research study was done on the performance of women entrepreneurs either in rural or urban areas of Bangladesh.

As a matter of fact, women entrepreneurship or women in business is considered as a very recent phenomenon in Bangladesh. Although women are undertaking to entrepreneurship in many challenging fields but their activities in Bangladesh are not very high. In spite of fewer opportunities, women succeeded in business but they are very small in number. In the recent past, it is observed that there has been an unprecedented growing interest of women entrepreneurship in small business in Bangladesh.

Different categories of academicians like economists, sociologists, political scientists, and historians and also the government and non-government institutions have recognized entrepreneurship in small business as an important input influencing the economic growth of a country.

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This paper makes an attempt to high-light the activities of women in small and medium enterprises (SME), particularly in the urban areas like Dhaka Metropolitan city. The paper also discusses the entrepreneurial qualities of women in Dhaka city and their socio-economic status to understand whether these facilitate or constrain women to emerge as successful entrepreneurs. Keeping the objectives in mind, questions were asked to extract information from randomly selected entrepreneurs. Data collected through field work have been carefully processed, analyzed and presented in the form of table with statistical interpretation.

Theoretical Perspectives of the study:

Currently, many theoretical approaches are being used to study women's position in society. These approaches are (i) structural- functional approach, (ii) Marxist approach, (iii) Feminist approach, (iv) Liberal Leminism (v) Radical Feminism, (vi) Socialist Feminism, (vii) Women in Development (WID) (viii) Gender and Development (GAD).

Of all the above approaches, I consider Women in Development (WID) approach is relevant to discuss and analyze my present research topic- "The Emerging Women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city".

It has been admitted not only by the government but also the development economists that there is no alternative to economic growth and sustaining industrial development in the country without encouraging women entrepreneurs in SME. In Bangladesh, there are a good number of Line Ministries, Agencies and NGOs implementing WID related programs.

In recognition of the strategic importance of the development of SMEs in promoting economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction. The SME sector has been declared as a priority sector in the governments Industrial Policy of 2005 and various measures have been adopted to maximize the SME growth potential. The SME women entrepreneurs in both the urban and rural areas of Bangladesh are deeply involved in economic activities to bring about prosperity and national development.

Review of Literature:

A brief review of literature regarding SME women entrepreneurs is presented in this section.

Ahmed (1987) in his article "Entrepreneurship Development with some reference to Bangladesh" stressed the fact that entrepreneurs are indispensable for the development of our country. The entrepreneurs who produce goods and services within the country save

foreign currency. He strongly refuted the prevailing myth that the people of Bangladesh are neither innovators nor risk-takers. He argued that our national policy has failed to attract the people with positive attitude to emerge as entrepreneurs. He further says that our social attitude should be changed. However, he holds the view that our social environment is undergoing rapid change and quite large number of educated men and women are coming forward to take up business as a career.

Momen and Rahman (1990) made a study on the entrepreneurs operating in the industrial unit within the radius of 35Kms around Dhaka city. The sample population was the owners of firms. The authors tried to highlight the major factors hindering the entrepreneurs development in Bangladesh. They also tried to measure the success of entrepreneurs and examined whether any correlation exists between various factors like age, education, experience and investment size and the selection of projects. They found negative correlation between investment and level of success. They observed that no correlation was found between age and success, education and success, experience and success.

Ahmed (1991) prepared a Report “On Women Enterprise Management, Training Outreach program (WEMTOP): Sector Survey and Training Needs Assessment”, for World Bank, Dhaka. The main objective of the Report was to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to deliver management training to landless and marginal women in rural and urban areas.

Khondkar (1992) in her article “Entrepreneurship Development and Economic Growth: The Bangladesh Case” argues that entrepreneurship is the most essential factor for economic development of a country. She says that entrepreneurship development in Bangladesh is at its initial stage. No serious efforts have been made so far. Little amount of money has been spent on entrepreneurship development in this country. However, situation has been changed. National Bank and other non government institutions are undertaking schemes and training programs to encourage entrepreneurship in the small scale business enterprises. These efforts are, no doubt, praiseworthy, but inadequate compared to the needs of the country. So, she recommended to implement some measures to promote entrepreneurship for socio economic development of the country.

Kanti and Nahar (1993) in their article “ Women Entrepreneurs of Rural Industries in Some Selected Areas” made an attempt to identify (i) the factors responsible for emergence of rural women as entrepreneurs (ii) assess the socio-economic impact of entrepreneurship on their lives and living. (iii) assess the problems faced by the women in their business.

The authors of the article selected 43 crafts women engaged in different crafts on the basis of random sampling drawn from Comilla Sadar, Lakshimpur and Barura thana of Comilla District and Begumganj thana of Noakhali district.

Moyen and Haq (1994) in their article “ A Preliminary Investigation of the Urban Female Enterprise: A study of Female Entrepreneurs of Dhaka Metropolitan Area” wanted to analyzed various problems faced by the urban female entrepreneurs of the Dhaka Metropolitan Area. They studied 51 female entrepreneurs, their nature of business management skills, level of education, occupational influence, and demographic information.

Saleh (1995) in his article “A Profile of the Women entrepreneurship in Bangladesh” wanted to know the motivation of women entrepreneurs for entering into business and assessed the entrepreneurial skills of the women entrepreneurs. He also tried to evaluate the performance of the women entrepreneurs in their business. Keeping view of the above objectives, randomly he selected 20 women entrepreneurs. The findings of his study show that most of the entrepreneurs ie, 95% was married 75% of them belonged to the age group 30-45 years. The average age of the women was 40 years while started their business. The educational background of women entrepreneurs were more than average .75% of them were graduates and master degree holders.

Begum (2002) in her article “Entrepreneurial Performance of Women Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh” argues that changing sociological factors encourage women to enter into the labor markets, motivated in part by their felt need for financial independence and self sufficiency. She also says that family environment encourages the creation of entrepreneurial enterprises. Important factors include the occupation of the entrepreneurs spouse, family and friends.

Chowdhury (2002) in her article “The Emerging Role of Women as entrepreneurs in Bangladesh” made an attempt to identify some of the factors that led to the adoption of women entrepreneurship. She also discussed the problems faced by the women entrepreneurs in their business enterprises. In the article, she suggested that the governmental and non- governmental organizations have major responsibility to promote entrepreneurship development for women.

The objectives of the study:

- (a) To enquire into the personal, socio-economic and psychological traits of the women entrepreneurs of Dhaka city.
- (b) To examine their motivations and aspirations.

- (c) To examine women entrepreneurs access to the existing resources.
- (d) To examine the impact of their business on the level of income, living standard and the life-style and well-being of their family members.
- (e) Difficulties faced by them in their business.
- (f) Types and characteristics of enterprises they own in Dhaka City.
- (g) The role they play in the national economy.

The Methodology of the study:

I have consulted both the primary and secondary sources of

information for writing this paper. This is an empirical study, based mainly on the primary data. Keeping in view the above objectives, a written questionnaire was administered on 60 randomly selected respondents purposively from Dhaka City. The second SME National Conference held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka, February 13, 2008 provided me an opportunity to meet a large number of delegates from the different parts of the country, including Dhaka City. I personally interviewed them and collected relevant information, keeping in view of the objectives of the study.

Methods of Data Collection:

Primary Source:

To extract data through field-work, a written questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was both an open-ended and closed. This was designed so as to assess (a) the personal traits of the women entrepreneurs, their social, psychological and business culture, (b) the impact of the above traits on their entrepreneurial performance, (c) access of the women entrepreneurs to the existing resource system, (d) general characteristics of the women entrepreneurs and their enterprise. The types of enterprise owned and operated by them, (e) the impact of entrepreneurship on the income, standard of living and the socio-economic well-being of the women entrepreneurs and the members of their family.

Secondary Source:

Secondary Source of information/data were collected from published materials such as annual reports of different Organizations, books, Journals, Magazines, News papers etc. Information was also collected from selected case studies of women engaged in SME.

Techniques of Data Collection:

Data collection instrument/ questionnaire was prepared keeping in view that research questions to be addressed and specific objectives to be achieved. For field work, a semi-structured questionnaire was used. Infact, the following methodology was used for data collection.

Data Collection:

- (a) Review of secondary source;
- (b) Information collected by a structured questionnaire;
- (c) Ideas gathered from case studies and literature review;

Techniques of Data Analysis:

The data collected through the above methods i.e. both from the primary and secondary sources have been carefully processed and presented in the form of table and analyzed with the help of statistical tools.

Limitations of the Study:

The flowing are the limitations of the study:-

- (1) Data collection is a time consuming matter. The respondents sometimes were non-co-operative with the interviewers.
- (2) Extracting information from some of the women entrepreneurs was sometimes very difficult. They do not give enough time to the interviewer.
- (3) It was also found that the women entrepreneurs have a tendency to disclose lower income and higher expenses.
- (4) The information gathering stage was a time consuming and frustrating effort.
- (5) The size of the sample being a small one, may not reflect the total picture of Bangladesh.
- (6) Due to time and resource constraints, conducting a comprehensive study in terms of depth and width was not possible.

Women Entrepreneurs and their Development in Bangladesh:

In a country with scarce resources and over population like Bangladesh where almost half of the populations are women. But society is highly stratified, access to service and

opportunities are determined by gender, class and location. Development of women entrepreneurship offers tremendous potential for utilizing a vast pool of human resources for broader socio-economic progress. Development of women entrepreneurship can indeed, lead to greater economic autonomy and gender balance, increase women self-esteem and confidence, ensure greater say in business decision making in the family, in the community and thus empower them economically and socially. Prof. Mubina Khondkar (1992) in her article “Entrepreneurship Development and Economic growth: The Bangladesh Case” argues that entrepreneurship is the most essential factor for economic development of a country. In one critical research study (2009) she says that “women in Bangladesh are by nature enterprising and possess the entrepreneurial attributes, therefore what they need is institutional and policy driven assistance” from the government and non-government organizations to facilitate women entrepreneurship in Bangladesh.

An entrepreneur by establishing a small enterprise provides employment for others. That is why; the policymakers and planners are emphasizing the promotion of self-employment opportunities through entrepreneur development as an alternative to wage employment (Rashid, 1993). This discussion leads to substantiate the view that the most valuable 100 people to save a deteriorating society would not be economists, politicians, engineers but rather 100 entrepreneurs (Maslow, 1968).

In the Industrial Policy of 2005, the government has emphasized the participation of women in different industrial sectors. There is increasing evidence that more and more women entrepreneurs are becoming interested to start small business. In fact, women entrepreneurs are facing multi-dimensional problems in their business activities. In spite of the difficulties, women entrepreneurs from the rural and urban areas increasingly involved in running their own business. This trend is clearly visible from the fact that over three hundred women entrepreneurs gathered from around the country at Sonargaon Hotel in 2006. It was the “First SME Women Entrepreneurs Conference”. A second National Conference on the same agenda was held in February 13, 2008 at Sonargaon Hotel only to reassure the women entrepreneurial community about their indispensable role in the development process of the country.

Government and non-government organizations expressed their willingness to provide necessary facilities to develop women entrepreneurship in the country to integrate them with the main stream of country’s development process.

Entrepreneurial Qualities of Women in Dhaka City:

Before we discuss the entrepreneurial qualities of women in Dhaka city, we must have clear conception about the qualities a successful entrepreneur should possess. These

qualities are knowledge, skill, drive, initiative and ambition. Besides, the following qualities are also needed such as:

- (1) Self confidence, leadership, independence and commitment;
- (2) People oriented, flexible and responsive to suggestion;
- (3) Task oriented, and hard working;
- (4) Risk oriented and challenging;
- (5) Future oriented, fore-sight and concerned for improvement;
- (6) Ability to mobilize the resources;
- (7) Managerial ability to generate profits.

All the above qualities may not be found in an individual. Some of the qualities are inherited by birth and some can be acquired through training and education. The emergence of entrepreneurship of a society depends to a great extent on the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors prevailing in the society. The cultural and living conditions are obstacles to the growth of entrepreneurship in Bangladesh. However, recently a change in social environment is observed. Structural changes are also gradually taking place in Bangladesh. This provides new opportunities for Bangladeshi women.

The educated urban based women of Bangladesh are increasingly starting and running their own business such as ready-made garment, textiles, boutique, screen prints, embroidery, handicrafts etc. as well as export oriented enterprises.

The study on women entrepreneurs (ibid, 2002) of Dhaka city also reveals the fact that the women have the potentialities of starting their own business. Urban educated women entrepreneurs are quite capable of taking financial and administrative responsibilities and participate in the firms day to day activities (Begum, 2001).

The entrepreneurial activities of women in Dhaka city have become diversified. They are not confined only to those activities mentioned above. The women entrepreneurs of Dhaka city have extended their business activities in areas like interior decoration, jewelry- making, catering services, poultry farming, beauty parlor. Women doctors operate their own clinics, teachers their own schools. Women managers are holding administrative and managerial positions. They also work in areas like health management, public service, bank, media, science and technology, airlines etc.

The women entrepreneurs of the Metropolitan city like Dhaka have relatively more advantages in managing their SME than their counterpart in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Women entrepreneurs of the Dhaka city seem to be more creative, resourceful and challenging. Dhaka provides great opportunity for women entrepreneurs in terms of necessary facilities offered by many government and non-government

organizations. Consequently, the women have emerged as successful manufactures, exporters, business agents and order suppliers.

Socio-Economic Status of women Entrepreneurs of Dhaka City:

The status of women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city is much higher than their counterpart in the rural areas of Bangladesh. The women entrepreneurs of the Dhaka City belong to the middle and upper-middle class families. They are more educated, enlightened, modernized and westernized. Many of them are free from social and religions prejudices.

The major source of women entrepreneurs are the college and university graduates. Many women entrepreneurs admitted that motivation for most of the entrepreneurship drive came from their family and close ones with whom they work. Working experience of relatives also inspire them to become entrepreneurs. Some women expressed their view that they choose to be entrepreneurs simply to become their own boss.

The finding of my interview revealed that most of the women entrepreneur s level of education is above SSC.

Some are graduates and some are post-graduate degree holders. Their average monthly income is more than TK. 20,000/- (Twenty Thousand). Most of them own their houses in Dhaka City. The women entrepreneurs received financial support to startup their business either from their husbands or from their own families or friends. The average age of women entrepreneurs is 32 in urban areas like Dhaka City. There are more women entrepreneurs in Dhaka city than the male entrepreneurs with higher education.

Moyeen and Haq (1994) in their study found that the mean age of women entrepreneurs of the urban areas is 35 years and the majority belonged to the age group of 25 to 40. 70% of them were married and had children. 73% of women entrepreneurs were brought up in an upper-middle to upper class environment. A majority of them had business background and 20% of them were actively assisted by their husbands. Their study also revealed that over 90% of the women started business in the service sector, only 3% was engaged in manufacturing and 55% of the enterprises were proprietorship type, while 45% were sole proprietorship type.

Types of Enterprises Owned and Operated:

There are various types of enterprises and entrepreneurial activities the women entrepreneurs own and operate throughout Bangladesh. These activities vary in the urban and rural areas. The urban educated women entrepreneurs are engaged in sectors such as ready made garments, textiles, boutique, screen prints, embroidery, handicrafts, house-

hold liner etc. as well as in export oriented enterprises. Urban women own small enterprises or micro-enterprises and operate their business with the help of hired workers for productions. Many women working as skilled laborer have ventured to start their own business.

Many urban woman entrepreneurs have become partners or share-holders in business firms and industrial units. Some have entered the family business operations. Many women entrepreneurs of Dhaka city have become owners of medium or large industrial units either through inheritance or through private initiative. Many of these women are the owners of teagardens, trading centers and advertisement firms.

The women entrepreneurs proved themselves efficient in producing and supplying quality goods that are in demand both home and abroad. They receive the orders for supplying or exporting their products in national and international trade fairs organized by the government/non-government bodies. The items they sell or export include the following: cane and bamboo products, screen print, food products, fan-making with bamboo and palm leaves, artificial flower-making, production of straw caps and hats, stuffed toys, decorative costume jewellery, artificial pearl making, pearl jewellery etc. Besides these, a variety of plastic products they produce, both for the urban and rural markets.

Data presentation and Analysis:

Here I have tried to present my data in the form of tables collected from the women entrepreneurs of the Dhaka Metropolitan Area. Keeping in view of the objectives of the study, relevant questions were asked to extract information from them.

Table-1
Women entrepreneurs by age

Age	No	Percentage
16-25	02	3.33
26-35	12	20.00
36-45	20	33.33
46-55	18	30.00
56-65	8	13.34
Total	60	100

Source: Field-work

Table-I shows that out of 60 respondents, most of the women entrepreneurs belong to the age group between 26-35 to 46-55. The percentage being 20, 33.33 and 30 respectively.

Table-2
Marital status of women entrepreneurs

Marital status	No	Percentage
Unmarried	5	8.33
Married	40	66.67
Widow	8	13.33
Separated	7	11.67
Total	60	100

Source: Field-work

Table-2 shows that out of 60 respondents, 40 were married and 5 were Unmarried. The percentage being 66.67 and 8.33 respectively. It needs to be mentioned that factors like the family support the entrepreneurs get, the time they can spend in their work depend to a large extent on the marital status of women.

Table-3
Respondent s level of education

Education	No	Percentage
Illiterate	00	00.00
Up to Class-V	10	16.67
Class VI-SSC	20	33.33
HSC	5	8.33
Graduate and above	25	41.67
Total	60	100

Source: Field-work

It should be mentioned that education, entrepreneurship and development are interrelated. Education is known to be the best means of developing a person's capabilities that encompass different dimensions of entrepreneurship. Formal education is always important for a career. Educated persons can acquire easily skills necessary for development of entrepreneurship. Table-3 shows that out of 60 respondents, 25 was graduates and above 5 was H.S.C and 20 were in between class VI-SSC. The percentage being 41.67, 8.33 and 33.33 respectively.

Table-4
Family patterns of women respondents

Type of family	No	Percentage
Nuclear	50	83.33
Joint Family	10	16.67
Total	60	100

Source: Field-work

Table-4 shows that out of 60 respondents, 50 women entrepreneurs belongs to nuclear family while 10 live in joint family. The percentage being 83.33 and 16.67 respectively.

Table-5
Types of enterprises owned

Type of Business	No	Percentage
Manufacturing	15	25.00
Processing	8	13.33
Repair	02	3.33
Supplier	15	25.00
Business	20	33.34
Total	60	100

Source: Field-work

Table-5 shows that among 60 respondents, a large number (33.33%) of enterprises are business enterprises and both the percentage of manufacturing and supplier enterprises are 25%

Table-6
Source of capital to start business

Source	No	Percentage
Own Capital	35	58.34
Bank Loan	5	8.33
Relatives	6	10.00
Friends	2	3.33
Parents	6	10.00
Husbands	4	6.67
NGO	2	3.33
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Of the 60 respondents, 35 women entrepreneurs (58.34%) invested money from the own source, (8.33%) took bank loan and (10.00%) borrowed money from their own parent, (6.67%) took money from their husbands.

Table-7
Economic status of women entrepreneurs

Starting Capital	No	Percentage
Less Than TK. 20,000/-	30	50.00
20,000/--40,000/-	10	16.67
40,000/--50,000/-	7	11.67
50,000/--60,000/-	5	8.33
60,000/--70,000/-	6	10.00
70,000/--above	2	3.33
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Among the 60 respondents, 30 (50%) had their primary capital up to 20,000/-, 10 (16.67%) had invested from TK. 20,000/- to TK. 40,000/-, 7 (11.67%) had invested from TK. 40,000/- TK. 50,000/-, 5 (8.33%) had invested from TK. 50,000/- to TK. 60,000/-, 6 (10.00%) TK. 60,000/- to TK. 70,000/- and only 2 (3.33%) had invested more than TK. 70,000/-.

Table-8
Who takes decision in family affairs?

Decision Making	No	Percentage
Myself alone	7	11.67
Always my husband	12	26.00
Always myself after discussing with my husband	36	60
In some cases myself	5	8.33
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Decision making is an important matter to understand women position in the family as well as in society. Among the 60 women respondents, only (11.67%) along takes decision in family affairs. While (60%) of the respondents admitted that they take decision in family matter jointly with their husbands, (20%) of the sample said that their husbands along takes decision in the family affairs.

Table-9
Why you have chosen to become entrepreneurs?

Motivational Factors	No	Percentage
To create something new	20	33.33
To earn extra money	12	20.00
Business tradition	8	13.34
Want to become own boss	5	8.33
To use leisure time	10	16.67
To increase status	5	8.33
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Among the 60 women respondents, 20 (33.33%) said that they want to create something new. 12 (20%) have engaged in business to earn extra money for the family. 8 (13.34%) women wanted to become independent by involving in business activities. 10 (16.67%) admitted that they have entered in business to spend leisure time, 5 (8.3%) said that they want to increase their status by earning enough money from business.

Table-10
What types of business activities you run in Bangladesh?

Types of Business	No	Percentage
Manufacturing	27	45.00
Trading	13	21.67
Servicing	20	33.33
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Among the 60 women respondents, the majority of the sample i.e. (45%) are engaged in manufacturing activities. (33.33%) are engaged in service sector, while (21.67%) are involved in trading.

Table-11
Are you the sole owner/ partner of your business?

Form of Ownership	No	Percentage
Sole owner	22	36.67
Partnership	28	46.67
Joint Family	10	16.66
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Table-11 shows that out of 60 respondents, 28 (46.67%) women entrepreneurs have partnership business. 22 (36.67%) entrepreneurs are the sole owners of their business. Only 10 (16.67%) entrepreneurs have joint family ownership of their business.

Table-12
Socio-economic effects on women entrepreneurs

Effects on entrepreneurs	No	Percentage
Increased social status	6	10.00
Increased acceptance to husbands	12	20.00
Increased self-confidence	20	33.33
Improved Standard of living	22	36.67
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Most of the women entrepreneurs reported that SME had positive impact on them. 22 respondents (36.67%) said that their standard of living has improved significantly. 20 (33.33%) admitted that their business have increased their self-confidence. 12 (20%) said that their husband were satisfied with their performance in business.

Table-13
What types of constraints you face to expand your business?

Type of constraints	No	Percentage
Lack of capital	21	35.00
Lack of raw materials	15	25.00
Lack of skilled labor	5	8.33
Marketing problem	7	11.67
Transport problem	5	8.33
Excessive competition	7	11.67
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Out of the 60 respondents, the majority 21 (35%) said that they do not have enough capital to expand their business. Another 15 (25%) respondents reported that they find difficulties in procuring raw materials for their business expansion. 7 (11.67%) told me that they faced problems of marketing their products. Another 7 (11.67%) reported that they faced competition to sell their products in the markets.

Table-14
In your opinion, how SME can contribute towards socio-economic development of Bangladesh?

Description	No	Percentage
By generating employment opportunities	15	25.00
By reducing poverty	12	20.00
By increasing economic growth	9	15.00
By developing local infrastructure	7	11.67
By contributing to GDP-GNP	3	5.00
By making women empowered	14	23.33
Total	60	100.00

Source: Field-work

Of the 60 respondents, 15 (25%) held the view that the SME can contribute towards socio-economic development by generating employment and there by reducing poverty in the Country. 14 (23.33%) respondents expressed their view that it empowers women by making them economically independent. 9 (15%) respondents said that SME contributes to economic Growth.

CONCLUSION:

Reviewing the foregoing discussion, I would like to make some comments on the women entrepreneurs of the Dhaka City. Woman entrepreneurs of the Dhaka City consider business as an important source of income. This extra-income has considerably improved their standard of living, social status and life-style. They spend this money for better education of their children, health-care etc. They are playing a crucial role in national development. But they are yet to assume a dominant role in the main stream of economic activities in Bangladesh.

Woman entrepreneurs are contributing towards socio-economic development in many ways. They generate new employment opportunities and trying to reduce poverty significantly. The SME sector also can contribute to GDP and GNP. SME's contribution is about 80% of the total industrial production of Bangladesh (Prothom Alo, 2008).

The nature of ownerships of business and the position of women entrepreneurs in business as found in the study of SME Foundation shows that the highest number of women have sole ownership of business. Majority of women belonged to the small enterprise sector and they are proprietors of their own business. The highest numbers of proprietorship enterprises were found to be from Dhaka. Some in the medium enterprises sector had family ownership, partnership business or were share-holders in companies.

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