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## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM

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### Abstract

*Tourism has been recognized as a key driver of economic growth and development in both developing and developed countries. In recent years, there has been growing interest in promoting women's entrepreneurship in tourism, as a means of fostering gender equality and women's economic empowerment. This study examines tourism policies aimed at promoting women entrepreneurship in the tourism industry in developing and developed countries. It will compare the tourism policies regarding women entrepreneurship of developing countries like India, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Indonesia, and Turkey to developed countries like the U.S.A, Japan, Germany, Canada, and Australia. The study aims to identify and analyze the similarities and differences in policies between these two groups of countries. This proposes that there is no significant relevance in tourism policies of developing and developed countries. The paper reviews the literature on women's entrepreneurship in tourism, and analyzes the policies and strategies that have been implemented in different countries to support and promote women entrepreneurs. The study highlights the importance of women entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, and the role of tourism policies in supporting and promoting women's entrepreneurship. The study also provides recommendations for policymakers to enhance their policies and practices to support women entrepreneurship in the tourism industry. This study concludes, tourism policies that focus on women entrepreneurship can contribute to economic growth, social development, and sustainability in both developing and developed countries. These policies should be designed and implemented with the aim of promoting gender equality and inclusivity, and with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** Women entrepreneurship, Tourism policies, Challenges, Government.

### Introduction

Tourism is a significant industry for both developed and developing nations. Tourism's ability to boost women's entrepreneurship and economic independence has gained increased attention in recent years (Jones & Singh, 2020). Tourism has grown to be a substantial component of the worldwide

economy, and female entrepreneurs have become a significant force in the sector (Hjalager & Madsen, 2016). Lawmakers in both developing and developed nations have recognised the necessity of encouraging women's entrepreneurship in tourism via the implementation of various policies in recent years (Ali & Gursoy, 2020). The purpose of

this paper is to investigate tourist policies pertaining to female entrepreneurship in both developing and developed nations.

Women entrepreneurs in underdeveloped nations encounter several hurdles that impede their progress in the tourist business. These difficulties include a lack of money, a lack of training and expertise, and socio-cultural impediments. In response, officials have established laws to assist female tourist businesses. In Egypt, for example, the government developed the National Women's Empowerment Plan, which seeks to encourage gender equality and economic development for women in all areas, including tourism (Abd El-Aziz, 2017). Moreover, Tanzania's Ministry of Tourism has developed the Tanzania Women in Tourism (TWITA) platform, which serves as a supporting network for female entrepreneurs in the tourism business (WTTC, 2020).

Paramasivan and Subathra (2016) Women entrepreneurship has been developed all over the state because the efforts taken by various institutions and schemes of state and central government. Ministry of MSME has provided subsidy to entrepreneurs for promotion of entrepreneurship. It has been granted special benefits to women entrepreneurs for their upliftment, it increases the women enterprises.

Similarly, officials in affluent nations have realized the necessity of assisting female tourist businesses. The Women's Business Ownership Act was passed in the United States in 1988, with the goal of improving access to financing and training for female entrepreneurs in all sectors, including tourism (Small Business Administration). Furthermore, the European Union has put in place several measures to encourage women's entrepreneurship, such as the European Code of Best Practices for Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism (European Commission, 2014).

Finally, tourism policies pertaining to women entrepreneurs have emerged as a major topic of emphasis for policymakers in both developing and developed nations. Countries may foster equal opportunity and economic empowerment by implementing policies that encourage women entrepreneurs in the tourist industry, thereby contributing to the tourism sector's long-term development.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

- To review the current tourism policies for

women entrepreneurship of 5 developing and 5 developed countries.

- To compare these policies (developing and developed countries).
- To provide necessary recommendations for the growth of women entrepreneurs.

#### **Scope of Study**

Scope of the study covered overview of policies of 5 developed and 5 developing countries which lead to analyzing the secondary data.

#### **Research Methodology**

*Sampling:* The researcher has used purposive sampling method and selected policies of 5 developed and 5 developing countries as the sample.

*Data Collection:* This study is exploratory in nature. Hence, the majority of the data was collected through secondary sources such as journals, newspapers, government bulletins, websites, textbooks, WTTC reports, government websites, etc.

*Data Analysis:* Researcher has used secondary data analysis which is purely descriptive in nature.

#### **Literature Review**

Tourism involves a range of activities, including sightseeing, visiting cultural sites, participating in recreational activities, and experiencing new cultures. Tourism is an essential component of many economies worldwide and has significant social and economic impacts on both host communities and visitors. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals reached 1.5 billion in 2019, and tourism accounted for 10.4% of global GDP and 319 million jobs (UNWTO, 2021).

Entrepreneurship involves taking risks, innovating, and making decisions under uncertainty with the aim of generating profit and creating value for customers and society (Baron, 2008). Entrepreneurs are individuals who undertake entrepreneurial activities, including founding and managing new businesses, and they are characterized by their high levels of creativity, initiative, and resourcefulness (Barringer & Ireland, 2010). Entrepreneurship is the process of founding, launching, and operating a new business endeavour with the goal of profit or social benefit. It entails spotting opportunities, taking measured risks, and fosters the development in order to establish and manage a profitable

business. An entrepreneur is someone who goes through this process, generally with a novel concept or approach to solve a problem.

A women entrepreneur is defined as "a woman who has initiated a business venture, organizes, manages and assumes the risk of the business and is able to create value by identifying and exploiting opportunities in the market" (Kew & Stredwick, 2017, p. 2). Women entrepreneurs are distinguished by their ability to discover and capitalise on market possibilities, their openness to risk-taking, and their ability to manage and organize a commercial endeavor. Women entrepreneurs are making significant advances in the tourism industry, contributing to the sector's growth and development. Women make up a significant proportion of the tourism workforce, with an estimated 54% of employees being female (UNWTO, 2021).

#### **Scope of Women Entrepreneurship in Tourism**

Women's engagement in entrepreneurship is increasing internationally, and their representation in the tourist business has grown dramatically. Women-owned companies in tourism account for 54% of all small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the industry, according to the World Tourism Organization (2019), and this trend is likely to continue in the future years. Women are making their impact in a variety of industries, including hospitality, travel agencies, tour operators, event planning, and sustainable tourism. Women entrepreneurs have a lot of options in the tourist business. Women entrepreneurs may develop tourism goods and services that are one-of-a-kind and appeal to a specialized niche market, giving them a competitive position in the industry (Kizgin, Gursoy, & Nunkoo, 2021). They may also help to the long-term development of tourism by supporting responsible tourism and implementing eco-friendly practices. To summarize, women's entrepreneurship in tourism has tremendous potential and is projected to develop in the next years. Women entrepreneurs are implementing creative and sustainable tourist practices, catering to varied audiences, and helping the tourism sector flourish.

In India, for example, female-led start-ups such as The Wander Girls and The Pink Escapes have launched female-centric travel

packages aimed at single female travellers, which have proven successful (Kaur, 2021).

#### **Issues and Challenges faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism**

In recent years, women's engagement in tourist entrepreneurship has expanded dramatically, and their contributions have been acknowledged as a crucial driver of economic growth and progress. Yet, in the tourist business, women entrepreneurs encounter several hurdles that impede their sustainable growth:

- **Access to Funding:** One of the biggest problems that women entrepreneurs confront in tourism is access to funding. According to World Bank data, women entrepreneurs internationally receive only 2% of venture funding. Women's potential to expand their businesses, invest in new prospects, and compete with established businesses is hampered by a lack of access to finance (United Nations, 2018).
- **Restricted Market Access:** Due to the industry's dominance of male-owned enterprises, women entrepreneurs in tourism encounter difficulties in reaching markets. Women-owned businesses struggle to obtain mainline tourism markets and often depend on niche markets or informal groups to make sales of their products and services (World Tourism Organization, 2018).
- **Gender Biases and Stereotypes:** Gender biases and stereotypes impede women entrepreneurs in tourism's availability of resources, networks, and opportunities. Women entrepreneurs are frequently seen as less capable than males and face difficulties gaining industry respect (Elo & Freytag, 2019).
- **Work-Life Balance:** Due to the nature of the sector, women entrepreneurs in tourism frequently experience difficulties balancing professional and home life. Women entrepreneurs must balance business and family commitments, which inhibits their capacity to grow and engage with established enterprises (United Nations, 2018).
- **Restricted Networking Opportunities:** Due to a shortage of networking possibilities, female entrepreneurs in tourism encounter difficulties in accessing networks and collaborations. The business is dominated by male networks, making it difficult for

female entrepreneurs to interact and cooperate with other entrepreneurs (Elo & Freytag, 2019).

Overcoming these issues needs a united effort from governments, legislators, and industry partners to establish an enabling climate for women entrepreneurs in tourism. This might involve giving financial support, generating networking opportunities, and encouraging gender equality in the sector.

### **Policy Analysis**

### **Tourism Policies Regarding Women Entrepreneurship**

#### **Developed Countries**

#### *1) United States of America*

- **Women's Business Center (WBC) program:** It is managed by the Small Business Administration in the United States (SBA). The programme provides counselling, training, and other services to assist women in establishing and growing their own enterprises, notably those in the tourist industry (SBA, n.d.). According to the SBA, women-owned companies are increasing at a higher pace than the national average, and the WBC programme has assisted in the creation and retention of employment while producing economic growth (SBA, n.d.).
- **Small Business Administration's Office of Women's Business Ownership:** It gives women entrepreneurs information and support to help them establish and expand their tourism enterprises (Pena, 2016). The OWBO provides women-owned companies with training, counselling, and financial help, as well as advocating for legislation that promote their growth.

#### *2) Japan*

- **Tourism-Oriented Female Entrepreneurs:** The Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) introduced it in 2016. The JTA supports female entrepreneurs in a variety of ways, including financial aid, education and training, and networking events. The initiative also seeks to raise the profile of female entrepreneurs in the tourist industry, with the objective of encouraging more women to establish their own enterprises (Hirai, 2017).
- **One Village, One Product (OVOP):** The OVOP movement, which began in the early 2000s, seeks to boost regional tourism and economic growth by promoting the creation and sale of one-of-a-kind, locally

manufactured items (Yokoyama, 2020). The movement has been especially effective in encouraging women's entrepreneurship in rural regions, where many women have launched their own enterprises selling locally-made items to visitors (Yokoyama, 2020).

#### *3) Germany*

- **Tourismus Digital:** This initiative began in 2016 with the goal of providing financial assistance and training to small and medium-sized tourist enterprises, especially those run by women. The initiative is designed to assist these firms in improving their digital capabilities and competitiveness in the rapidly evolving tourist sector (German National Tourist Board, 2021).
- **Entrepreneurial Letter:** The Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) offers it in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ) (BMWi, n.d.). This programme offers focused assistance and counselling to female entrepreneurs in a variety of industries, including tourism (BMWi, n.d.).

#### *4) Canada*

- **Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES):** The Canadian government introduced it in 2018. The plan intends to empower women entrepreneurs in various industries, including tourism, by providing money, coaching, and tools to help them establish and build their firms (Government of Canada, 2021).
- **Women in Tourism and Hospitality (WITH):** This programme, which was established in 2020, intends to boost the participation of women in executive roles in the tourism and hospitality industries by offering mentorship and networking opportunities to women in the business (Destination Canada, 2021).

#### *5) Australia*

- **Boosting Female Founders Initiative (BFF):** It was introduced by the Australian government in 2020 (Australian Government, 2020). The project offers funding and assistance to female-led companies, particularly those in the tourist industry, with the goal of assisting them in growing and expanding their enterprises.
- **Australian Women in Tourism (AWT):** The "Australian Women in Tourism (AWT)"

project is another strategy that encourages female entrepreneurship in Australia's tourism industry (Australian Government, 2019). AWT is a networking and mentorship initiative for women in the tourist industry, with the goal of fostering gender equality and professional growth.

### Developing Countries

#### 1) India

- **Stand Up India:** The Indian government has taken the "Stand Up India" programme, which grants loans ranging from INR 10 lakh to INR 1 crore to women and underprivileged populations in order for them to launch their own enterprises, including tourism-related activities (Government of India, n.d.).
- **Hunar Se Rozgar Tak (HSRT):** In 2009-10, the Ministry of Tourism established a unique project called Hunar Se Rozgar Tak (HSRT) to develop employable skills among 8th pass teenagers especially women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The Ministry of Tourism is totally funding the initiative (Ministry of Tourism, 2016).

#### 2) Zimbabwe

- **Zimbabwe National Tourism Policy (2019-2023):** One of the top focuses is to encourage female entrepreneurs in the tourist business (Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, 2019). This policy acknowledges the tremendous accomplishments that women can offer to the tourist industry and intends to foster an atmosphere that encourages women to engage and prosper in the business. The policy offers different ways to encourage women's entrepreneurship in tourism, such as providing women with training and capacity-building programmes, expanding access to finance and credit, and supporting gender-sensitive policies and practises in the tourist sector (Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, 2019).
- **Women's Tourism Initiative in Zimbabwe (WTIZ):** In the wake of the national strategy, there are various programmes at the municipal level targeted at assisting female tourist businesses. The Women's Tourism Initiative in Zimbabwe (WTIZ), for example, is a non-profit organisation dedicated to strengthening women in the

tourist industry via training, mentoring, and networking opportunities (WTIZ, n.d.).

#### 3) Brazil

- **Women's Tourism Entrepreneurship Program:** The Brazilian Ministry of Tourism introduced it in 2020. This initiative intends to give technical and financial assistance to women who work in tourism or want to start a business in the industry through training courses, credit, and mentorship possibilities (Ministério do Turismo, 2020). This project was designed to overcome the gender gap in the tourist business, where women are generally underrepresented and face hurdles such as restricted utilization of assets and networks (Ministério do Turismo, 2020).
- **Women's Entrepreneurship in Tourism (WET):** Another initiative that encourages women's enterprise in Brazil is the Women's Entrepreneurship in Tourism (WET) programme, which was created in 2018 by the UNWTO in collaboration with the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism. The program's goal is to empower women entrepreneurs in the tourist sector by providing training, networking events, and access to funding.

#### 4) Indonesia

- **Women's Empowerment Program:** The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism introduced it in 2021. This initiative intends to give training, mentorship, and financial assistance to female tourist entrepreneurs, particularly in rural regions. The Women's Empowerment Initiative, as stated by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism, seeks to assist at least 500 female businesses by 2024. (Ministry of Tourism, 2021). The initiative also aims to boost the competitiveness of female-led tourist firms, as well as their marketplace access and funding.
- **Women's Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Program (WEE):** It was launched in conjunction with the Indonesian government by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This initiative intends to give corporate development services as well as monetary assistance to female tourist entrepreneurs, particularly those from underserved regions (USAID).

## 5) Turkey

- Supporting Women's Entrepreneurship in Tourism: In 2018, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism started the programme in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (UNDP Turkey, 2021). The initiative seeks to boost female tourist sector engagement by offering financial and technical assistance to female entrepreneurs, as well as easing their chances of finding markets and networking events. It also aims to create a better understanding of gender equality in the tourist industry and to encourage women's participation in decision-making procedures (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019).
- Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan: This strategy aims to encourage gender equality in all aspects of society, including tourism. The action plan includes steps to encourage women's entrepreneurship, such as giving assistance to female entrepreneurs, expanding access to capital, and encouraging women's involvement in decision-making procedures (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

**Findings and Suggestions**

Developed countries, including the United States, Japan, Germany, Canada, and Australia, are actively encouraging female entrepreneurship in the tourist industry through financial assistance, education and training, networking opportunities, and digital tools, according to the statistics. These measures have a positive impact on the growth and success of women-owned enterprises, as well as on economic growth and area tourism. To maintain their efficacy, it is critical to continually monitoring their development and collecting data.

Findings showed that, developing countries, like India, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Indonesia, and Turkey, pursued efforts in the tourist industry to develop entrepreneurship and employable skills among poor populations, particularly women. They offered training, access to money and credit, and assistance for gender-sensitive practises. These efforts attempted to make it possible for women to engage and thrive in business. Frequent assessment and monitoring assisted in identifying obstacles and areas for development and ensured that these initiatives continue to meet the requirements of female

tourist entrepreneurs. Overall, these initiatives showed a commitment to advanced gender equality in the tourist sector, which had the potential to promote significant economic and social change.

The developed and developing countries both highlight the significance of encouraging women's entrepreneurship in the tourism sector through a variety of initiatives and measures such as financial aid, gender equality, education and training, networking opportunities, and digital technologies. Moreover, both emphasise the need of monitoring and reviewing the progress of these efforts in order to identify impediments and areas for improvement, ensuring that these programmes continue to satisfy the needs of women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, tourism regulations have a substantial influence on women entrepreneurs' engagement in the tourism business in both developed and developing nations. Gender-responsive policies and initiatives can help to empower women entrepreneurs, boost their opportunities and resources, and raise their commitment to the tourist industry. Developing countries can learn from developed countries' best practises and implement related policy to encourage gender equality in the tourism industry.

Furthermore, it is critical to address the issues that women entrepreneurs confront, such as access to money, training, and technology. Governments, private sector organisations, and civil society should collaborate to aid and create an environment conducive to the success of female entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. In this way, the tourism industry can become more inclusive and sustainable, profiting not only women entrepreneurs but also the larger community and the economy as a whole.

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