

## **Staying in Business During Crisis: Response from Northern Women Entrepreneurs**

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The objective of the study is to identify how women entrepreneurs survived during the Covid-19 and economic crisis. 30 years of continuous war, the Easter attack, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the economic crisis leads to creating more self-employment, especially among women as compared with other employment this is more suitable for their work-life balance. The research question is “Are there any factors/reasons that contributed to the persistent women entrepreneurship during the time of difficulty?” Comparatively, they are small and young, and even though there is more chance of failure, they can survive this pandemic and crisis. There is something to survive them, what is their model? Knowing these factors would be a lesson or motivation to others. A simple random sampling method was used to select the participants, 100 entrepreneurs from all five districts are interviewed. Most of them are married, 36-45 years, affected by war, have two children, below G.C.E O/L, have experience/training with family support, started between 2010-2019 with less than 500,000 capital, earn less than 50,000 monthly, very small of them earn 1mn and running with less than 10 labours. They mainly target the northern market and some export their products abroad. The main reason for starting it was to fulfill their economic necessity. It is identified that self-confidence, hard work, and maintaining quality products are the main factor for their success, and lack of finance, unskilled labours and marketing are issues faced. Participant’s advice to others to hard work and be sustainable. Hence, the entrepreneurs’ skills should be developed to formulate strategy in to avoid losses from natural calamities. Governmental organizations should be properly communicated, a strong Independent Guiding Body to guide, and support, and the Chamber of Commerce in the north should be strengthened by including manufacturers and other industries too. Reactivating business linkages, collaboration and creative thinking is the basic need to sustain these entrepreneurs. As women have the power to change the world, this study presents an important contribution of women’s entrepreneurship to reflect on current policies and outline future lines of investigation.

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