



# STAKEHOLDERS CONCLAVE

## PARTNERING FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Hashoo Foundation (HF) is a knowledge-based, impact oriented organization that plays an eminent role in advocacy and policy formation. HF promotes development through its various domains including Economic Growth Programs EGP, Climate Action Program, Skill Development, Health and Nutrition.

Entrepreneurship under EGP is one of the main components for the provision of self sustainable opportunities

as cross-cutting theme of its projects. HF while emphasizing and promoting women equality in all its thematic domains focuses on women's empowerment through entrepreneurship where it has enabled hundreds of women led micro and nano businesses.

Thus, while ensuring the promotion of women entrepreneurs HF partnered with Change Mechanics and organized a stakeholder's conclave. The main objective was to unpack the knowledge and expertise of the stakeholders and collaborate to unify and strengthen the efforts towards women economic empowerment. The conclave consisted of focus group discussions on the World Café theme and an online and inperson survey to collect feedback from the participants on creating effective policies. The consultative session encompassed best practices, case studies, challenges and success stories focused on enabling the next generation of women entrepreneurs.

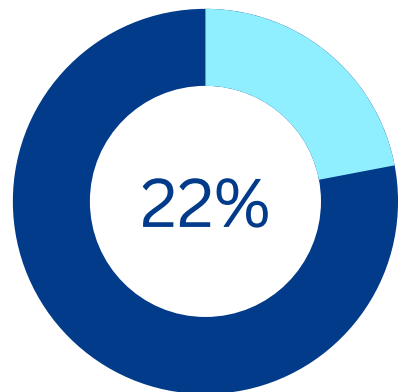


The Stakeholder's Conclave is Hashoo Foundation's endeavour towards more inclusive development, greater outreach and meaningful impact to further the Foundation's vision of an ethical, equitable and inclusive society in which people live with dignity and have power over their own lives.

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# FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP LANDSCAPE OF PAKISTAN

Women Entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of a country as it fosters economic activities and generates employment. In Pakistan, 22% of the labour force is made up of women, a statistic far too low in comparison to its male counterparts i.e. 78%.



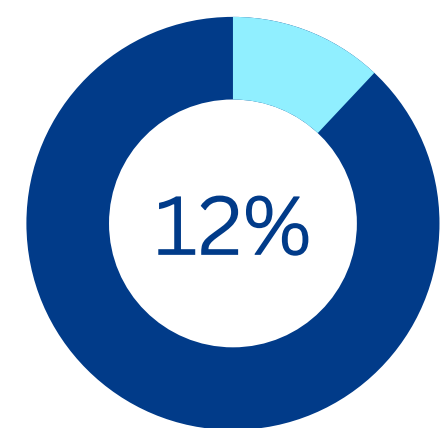
Pakistan's labour force comprises of **22%** of female participation and **78.08%** male participation

**145**  
**146**

Pakistan has been ranked the second-worst country in terms of gender parity placed **145th** out of **146th** states

**1%**

The percentage of female entrepreneurs in Pakistan is only **1%**, compared to **21%** of male entrepreneurs



Only **12%** of firms have female owners. The global ratio is **34%**

The difference reflects an alarming situation. Women are lagging behind as a result of challenges i.e. cultural constraints, mobility, and the, lack of relevant trainings and technical tools etc. There is a dire need to develop sound policies that mitigate these challenges and cater to the evolving issues that bound and exclude women from participating in the labour force. Pakistan has been ranked the second-worst country in terms of gender parity, placed 145th out of 146th states according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022. The U.N Sustainable Development Goal#5 also emphasises the significance of women empowerment and achieving gender equality.

National policies can influence and support women to participate and contribute to economic growth and national development. A nation cannot progress in real terms without involving women in economic and cultural activities. Promoting entrepreneurship can play a key solution that can resolve the unemployment situation in our country and provide job opportunities for women and the youth. Despite making significant contributions to GDP and poverty reduction, women business owners in developing nations have received comparatively little attention. The success of businesses operated by women is heavily influenced by government policies and access to resources. Women are an integral component of entrepreneurial ecosystem of Pakistan. Through their ingenuity, they bring with them economic growth, innovation, creativity, and productivity. They also inspire other women to become self sustainable. The percentage of Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan is only 1% and only 12% of firms have female owners as compared to men, which needs to be bridged to take full advantage of the youth workforce.

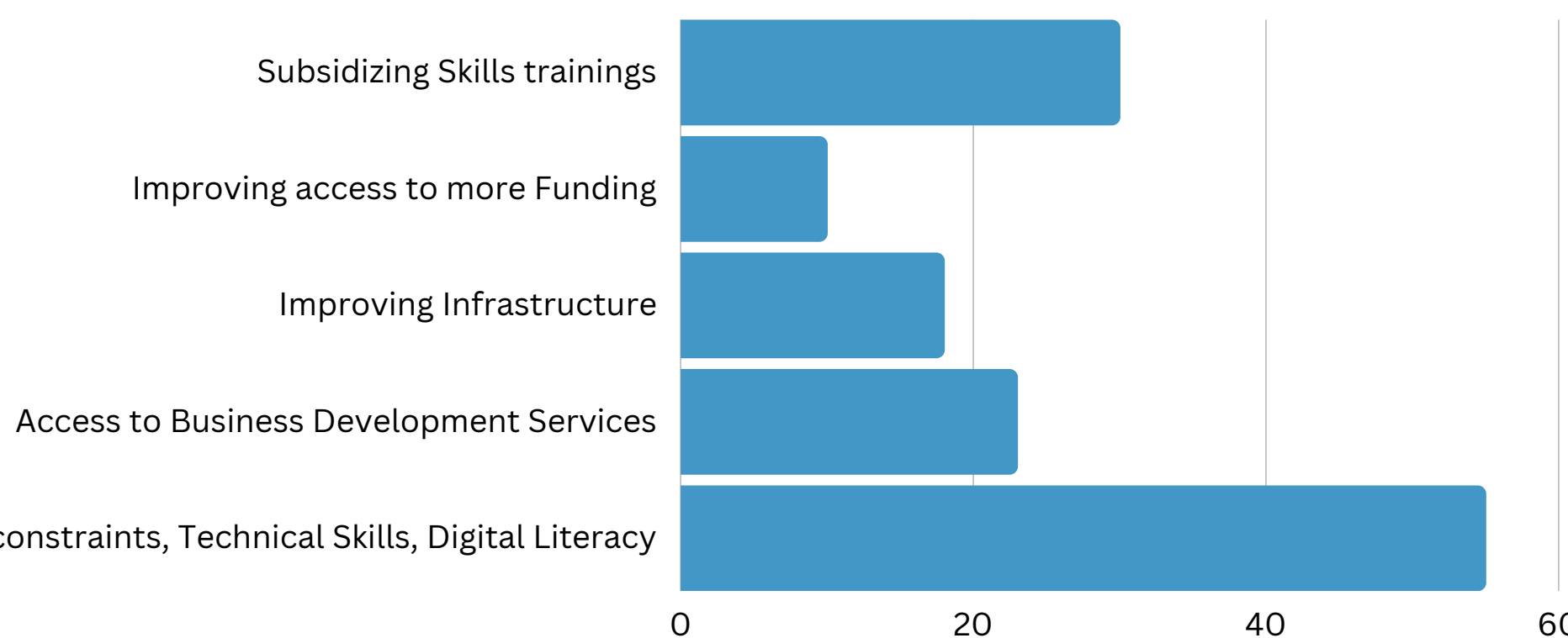


# CONCLAVE OUTCOMES

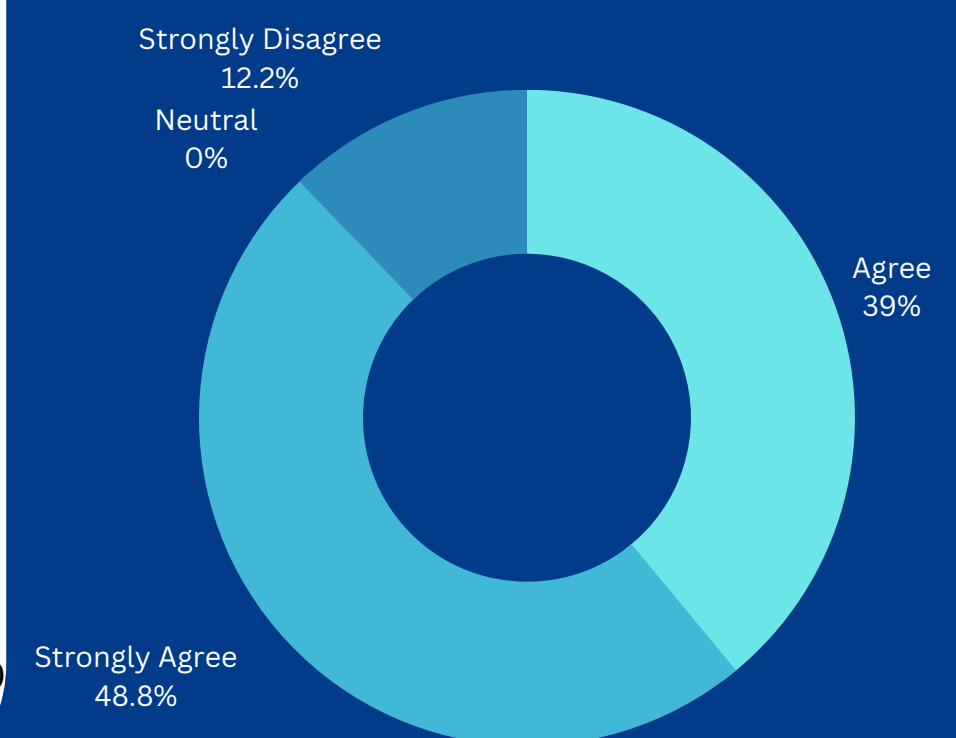
This event was Hashoo Foundation's endeavour towards a more enabling policy environment for women entrepreneurship. The overall café discussion and suggestions for developing future policy and advocacy campaigns is summarised below.

**Survey Impact:** Contribution to policy decisions regarding women entrepreneurs' long-term sustainability and success

## HOW CAN POLICY CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

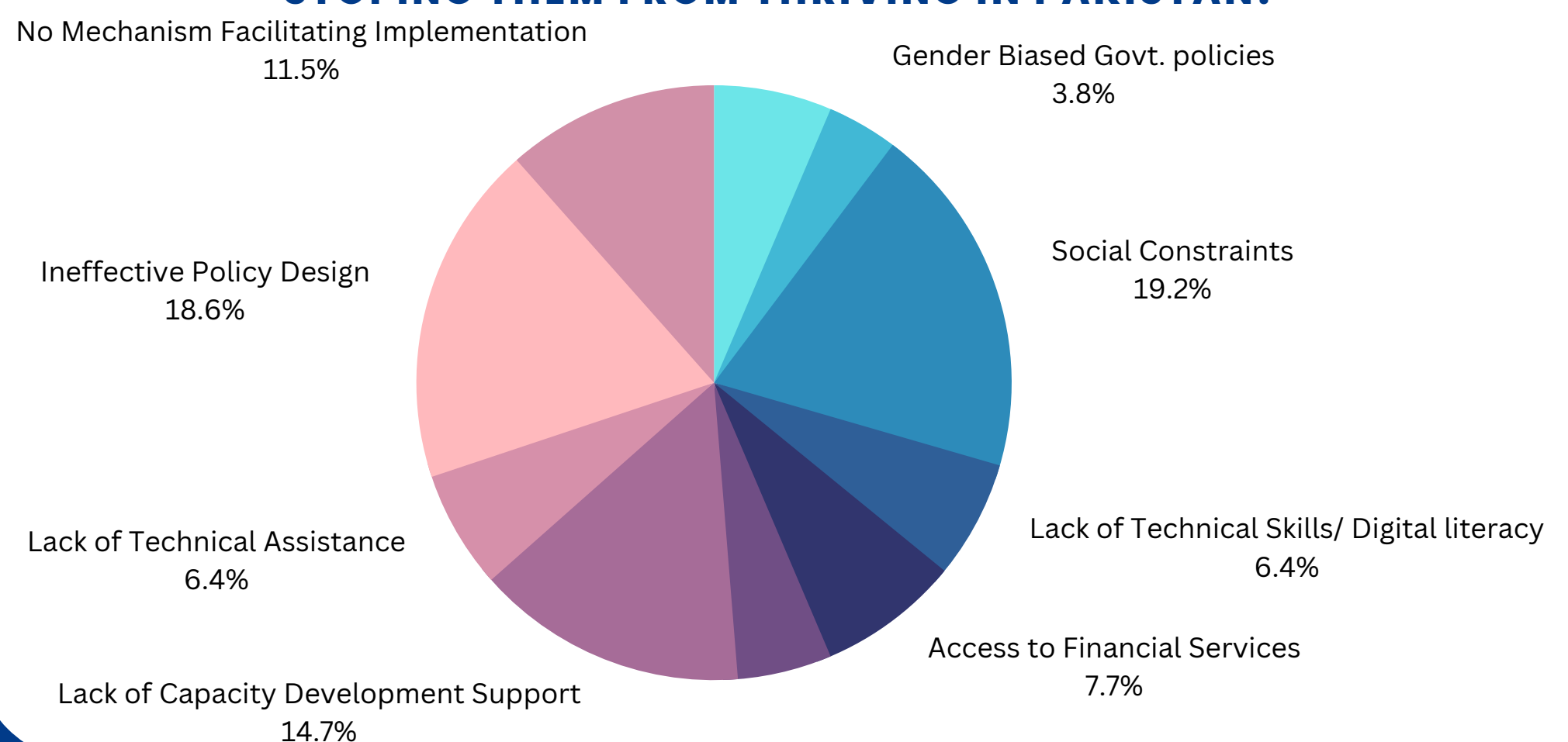


## DO YOU BELIEVE THAT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAN BE IMPROVED THROUGH POLICY INTERVENTIONS?

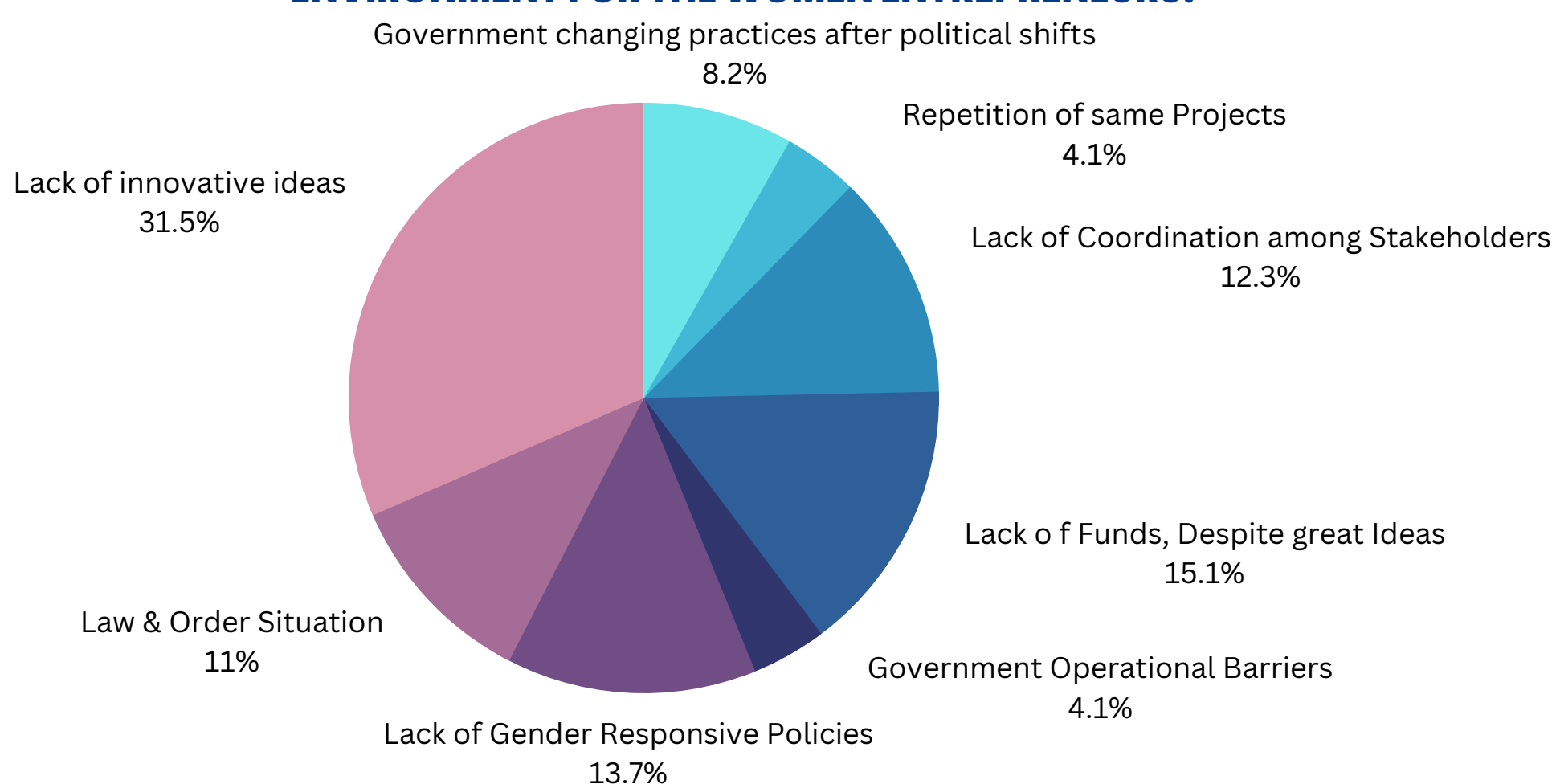


The purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics that affect the success of women business owners, and to collect and process data that will facilitate other stakeholders in their efforts to support women entrepreneurs, and create a more nurturing environment for their success.

## WHAT ARE THE BARRIER FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS STOPPING THEM FROM THRIVING IN PAKISTAN?



## WHY ARE STAKEHOLDERS UNABLE TO CREATE AN EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS?



# #1

The largest proportion of respondents stated **Social Constraints** as their biggest obstacle

## RESPONDENTS RANKING OF KEY PROBLEMS WHERE INTERVENTION CAN BOOST FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

1

Social Constraints



2

Subsidised Skills Training



3

Improving Infrastructure



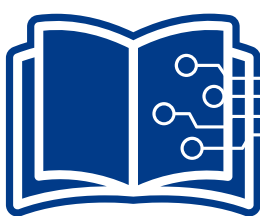
4

Access to more Funding



5

Lack of Technical Skills and Digital Literacy



6

Access to Business Development Services



7

Gender-biased Govt Policies



8

Access to Financial Services



9

Lack of Financial Products Catering to Unique Circumstances



## Group Discussion Key-points

Several issues and difficulties women faced were identified and discussed, as experiences can lead to learning and creating effective policies.

### Culture

It was identified that major challenges faced by women in the market are due to the restrictive culture and family dynamics. Additionally, because of our culture women are not taken seriously at businesses considered men-centric. Furthermore due to their life paths, women usually lack links to help them succeed. These issues caused by culture vary from place to place, and to understand this variation problems should be studied from grass root levels.

### Education and Knowledge

Women face various barriers restricting them from becoming entrepreneurs due to lack of education and knowledge. There is a prevalence of language barriers as English is not understood by all. Women have no access to technology information. They have no knowledge about entrepreneurial programs and lack financial literacy. All these factors lead to a low confidence, discouraging them from taking risks. There is also a lack of platforms existing where female entrepreneurs can share their experiences and success stories for others to learn from. Commissions of women should be built at the District level to research and implement the best approach to empower and educate women by keeping in mind that both men and women absorb information in different ways.

### Lack of Access to Finance

Women face financial and funding issues for reasons such as being unable to get loans from banks in Pakistan without a male guarantor.

### Lack of Infrastructure

Stakeholders should provide women with more suitable and acceptable work environments such as the provision of nurseries, daycares, maternity leaves, and so on. Furthermore, women working from remote areas are not recognised due to the lack of CNICs, plans need to be set in motion to provide them with necessary provisions as such.

### Policies

The policies for women are usually made by men with almost no woman in the policy-formulation process. Women's presence on the decision making tables should be ensured.