

# 1. Introduction

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The last century has seen phenomenal advances in women's societal position, both from an educational as well as an economic perspective. At the turn of the previous century, women's position was dominated by 'feminine' characteristics, which resulted in their being 'gendered' and primed in their roles as wives, mothers, caretakers – albeit women. These characteristics were displayed in various facets as housewives, unequal partners in a home setting and often as an unpaid employee, or as an under-rewarded partner if they assisted in the operation of a business alongside their husbands.

Since the 1900s, there have been a number of historical events that have reconfigured the landscape for women's position from a societal or labor market perspective. Specifically, the Depression Era of the 1930s and the follow-up World War II period forced women's initial entry into the labor market arena. In the former case, the purpose was to supplement the family's income and improve the chances of basic survival of the members. In the latter case, the purpose was to replace their male counterparts who were absent from the labor market because they were fighting a prolonged and extensive war. Later, revolutionary actions such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Labor Movement and the Women's Movement that were instigated in the United States, but whose influence mushroomed in other parts of the world, led to women engaging in mass numbers in the educational, political, societal and labor market arenas. This engagement has changed the positioning of women and their roles on a societal level.

In spite of the previously mentioned changes, women continue to occupy a differential space in relation to men worldwide. This differential occurs at different levels and is related to the quality of health, the level of education, the family gender roles, their position in the labor market and the overall sharing of power, resources and social positions in the wider society. From an in-depth perspective, a critical question that can be posed is: where do women stand in today's society? The rest of the chapter provides worldwide figures in critical statistics for women, detailing their mortality rates, life expectancy rates and health figures. The overall goal is highlighted in how this impacts and is impacted by women's involvement in the labor market. These figures are presented across several countries

and by industry. The reader is then provided with the framework to assess women's position in the world of entrepreneurship on a global level.

A retrospective article by MacRae (2005) several years ago identified the difficulties that women still struggle with in today's society. These issues include sub-par health, education and work options, including the glass ceiling and sexual harassment (MacRae, 2005). The author contends that entrepreneurship offers women an outlet from the disadvantages they face in the mainstream labor market, but concedes that they do face difficulties in this environment as well, including being the recipients of unpaid labor (MacRae, 2005). The author further points out that race, gender and socioeconomic status of women worldwide are factors that in turn determine their health status.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive look at women in today's environment from a social, political and economic perspective. To that end, the discussion starts from the conviction of women's current position in various sectors and openly questions the adequacy of the current actions on a national and international platform, highlighting their inefficiencies in moving women's position forward to a place of equality. Women are being increasingly recognized as legitimate income earners in today's society. However, the negative health, societal and political forces act as barriers to sustainable development for women's work-related efforts and have not always been addressed (Odutolu et al., 2003). The chapter is written from a constructive perspective, highlighting some good practices that have been instituted worldwide but questioning the legitimacy of others. One feature that is used to build much of the presentation in this chapter is statistical data. This data again takes a three-pronged approach – societal, political and economic – and details the current status of females worldwide from these perspectives.

The chapter also outlines the path that the rest of the book will follow, the structure of the chapters and what they will cover. The goal of this book is multi-layered. First, for women entrepreneurs it provides a picture of what is taking place with their counterparts in other sections of the world. Second, for government agencies and organizations that see women entrepreneurs as their customers, it provides a perspective of what some of their needs are, allowing such organizations to become attuned to what can be done to facilitate and address the concerns for women entrepreneurs. Third, for countries worldwide, the goal is to provide some documentation of the impact that women entrepreneurs are making on economies and the related multiplier effect that results from their participation in deriving an income. Fourth, for international organizations that strive to solve issues of gender inequality and women's disadvantaged position in various sectors of society, the hope is that they will see entre-

preneurship for women as a feasible and concrete solution that can solve these cross-cutting challenges. The solution is feasible and concrete since by its very nature, entrepreneurship can be built on an owner's natural talent, with limited initial funds, with heavy reliance on volunteer efforts to supplement and assist where needed. Fifth, with the feminine face that is often linked to poverty, the hope is that entrepreneurship by women, especially in mass numbers, will in turn solve other social ills that have long existed in society because of women's deteriorating position. This is possible since women entrepreneurs are more likely than others to employ day laborers or part-time workers who may be on the periphery of the mainstream labor market and less likely to work in this arena.

The attack on the feminine nature of poverty is important, since it is only by allowing women more access to productive resources such as land, credit, education, training, improved health and remunerated employment that this negative association with poverty can be halted and eventually reversed. Some agencies see poverty reduction as critical in arresting the other social, political and economic issues that plague women in most societies (UNECA, 2005; Riphenburg, 2004). They indicate that the main reason why some countries remain mired in poverty and underdevelopment while others progress, lies in the various positions that women occupy in that society (UNECA, 2005; Riphenburg, 2004). Specifically, Riphenburg (2004) explains that when women gain equal education and power in a society, birth rates have been shown to fall and food supplies increase, resulting in economic development and stability in that society. This education is particularly important at a secondary and tertiary level where it is more likely to increase one's wealth and standard of living (World Bank, 2007). Educational attainment is significant, since the level of schooling has been said to be linked to rates of labor market participation for women (Estudillo et al., 2005). In fact the vicious cycle between education and income shows that there is a positive correlation between levels of education and income earning. That is, higher levels of income open opportunities to higher levels of education and in turn, higher levels of education ultimately lead to higher income.

Women who are able to earn a paid living or gain economic improvements through the positioning of their labor contribution in the marketplace are in a better place to assist the economy in which they live. Through entrepreneurship there exists the possibility to arrest the burgeoning rate of poverty for women and thus their children. This is possible since entrepreneurship as an income-earning source offers women the opportunity and flexibility to earn an income while also performing child care and other household responsibilities. These responsibilities have been shown to be more likely to be attributed to women and seen as female work. For

females worldwide, acquiring their own wealth is critical to uplifting their stand-alone position in a society, since some societies are still more likely to have the fathers of households being the owners of wealth, wealth that is often passed on to their sons and not their daughters: this is sometimes done literally, with such sons taking over their fathers' businesses. In some Asian countries, women's labor market experience is treated in stark contrast to that of men's, with the two genders being exposed to two different tracks in the labor market with the women's movement through the labor market being known as the 'mommy track', based solely on their female status, regardless of whether or not they are married or intend to have children (Pakistan Women Lawyers' Association, 1996).

## CURRENT POSITION OF WOMEN IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT

In order to understand women's position from a global context, it is important to look at a number of statistics that provide a more complete picture of the challenges they face in today's environment. The following section begins by outlining a set of political, socioeconomic, labor market and health factors that have been shown historically to have a significant impact on gender inequality. This inequality affects and is affected by all of these aforementioned factors.

In terms of adolescent (15–19) fertility rates, the statistics show that East Asia and Pacific countries have the lowest rates, while Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (at 77 births per 1000), the Middle East and North Africa (at 30 births per 1000) and then Europe and Central Asia (at 29 births per 1000) (World Bank, 2007). Sub-Saharan Africa also holds the highest birth rate (at 39 births per 1000), followed by South Asia (at 25 births per 1000), the Middle East and North Africa (at 24 births per 1000), Latin America and the Caribbean (at 20 births per 1000) and a tie for the regions with the lowest birth rates (at 14 births per 1000), namely East Asia and Pacific and Europe and Central Asia (World Bank, 2007).

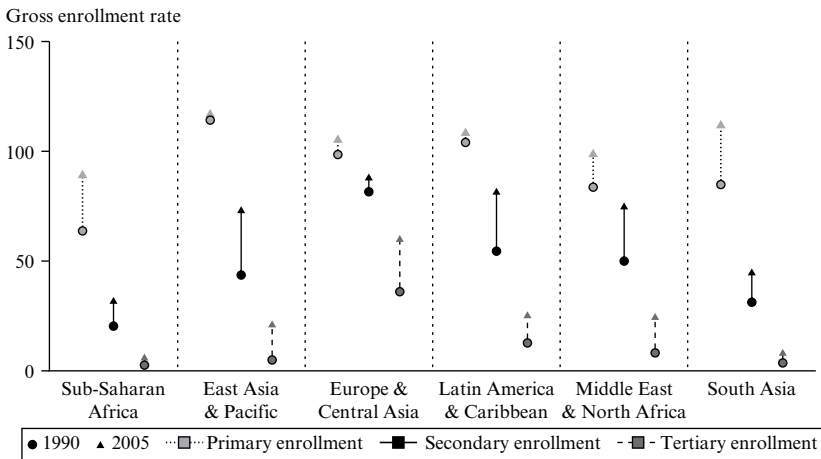
Even though the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the highest birth rates (including those for adolescents) they are also the regions with the lowest level of births attended by skilled health staff. In addition, the regions with the lowest birth rates (East Asia and Pacific) are also the regions with the highest contraceptive rates for adolescents (World Bank, 2007).

In terms of death rates (per 1000 people), the region with the highest rate is Sub-Saharan Africa (15 per 1000 people), followed by Europe and

Central Asia (12 per 1000), South Asia (8 per 1000 people), East Asia and Pacific and a tie for the lowest death rates of 6 deaths per 1000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa (World Bank, 2007).

## WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL POSITION

Education remains one of the key avenues to advance women's human capital potential (Riphenburg, 2004; Rosenberg, 2003; Schofer and Meyer, 2005) and thus their economic earning potential and ultimately their personal and financial independence from families, friends and spouses. Education is also shown to be directly linked to women's economic well-being (Riphenburg, 2004), as well as the well-being of their children (Copelon et al., 2005) and a critical step in minimizing or erasing the feminine cloak that poverty often wears. Overall, female enrollment in the education system, regardless of the grade level, rose significantly worldwide in the last decade (see Figure 1.1 and Table 1.1). While the figures are impressive for primary level enrollment of females, they drop off for secondary level enrollment and drop off significantly for tertiary



Source: Figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 are from 'Promoting gender-equality and women's empowerment', World Bank (2007), *Global Monitoring Report 2007: Millennium Development Goals, Confronting the Challenges of Gender Equality and Fragile States*, Washington, DC: World Bank, available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>, accessed 10 June 2010.

Figure 1.1 Female enrollment in the education system

*Table 1.1 Girls lag behind boys in education achievement*

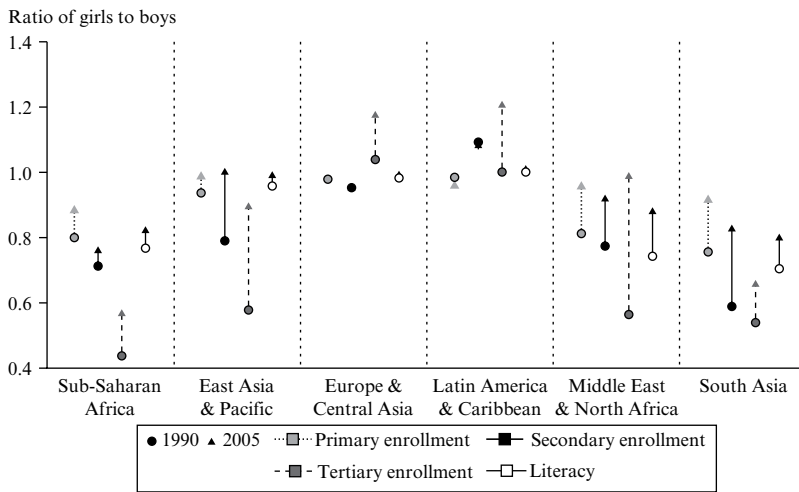
	Girls lag behind boys in primary school completion rates in most regions			
	Girls		Boys	
	1991	2004	1991	2004
Sub-Saharan Africa	47.1	56.9	62.3	67.3
East Asia and Pacific	92.3	96.3	92.3	95.8
Europe and Central Asia	92.9	92.6	94.3	96.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	88.4	101.1	83.0	99.4
Middle East and North Africa	73.3	89.0	87.8	92.9
South Asia	68.3	83.0	90.4	90.2
Total	78.6	84.0	93.4	89.4

level enrollments (World Bank, 2007). A critical point to address women's development is during the early/primary school years, versus the adolescent or secondary school years, since at the latter stage, it is too late to address basic principles that are not easily overcome.

The lowest primary level enrollment rates occur currently in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by the Middle East and North Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia and East Asia and Pacific. For secondary level enrollment, the order is slightly different, with Sub-Saharan Africa having the lowest levels, followed by South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe and Central Asia (World Bank, 2007). The tertiary level enrollment rates plummet for all regions, with again some shift in order, with Sub-Saharan Africa having the lowest levels, followed by South Asia, East Asia and Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and Caribbean and Europe and Central Asia (World Bank, 2007).

Some related statistical data can be viewed in Figure 1.2, where the female and male literacy ratios by region are in the order of (from lowest to highest): Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. UNESCO estimates that of the nearly 137 million illiterate young people in the world, 63 per cent were female (UNICEF, 2008).

In Table 1.2, the Sub-Saharan African countries are widely viewed as the area having the most countries that are off track or unlikely to achieve primary and secondary enrollment targets by 2015. Further, Table 1.1 showed that girls lag behind boys in primary school completion, with the worst offenders being the Sub-Saharan African region and the South Asian region.



*Note:* The regional averages are calculated using the earliest value between 1990 and 1995 and the latest value between 2000 and 2005 for each country. The averages are weighted by the country population size in 2005. In 2005 trend is shown for countries that were fragile states in the 2000–05 period. For fragile states, data are available for 25 countries for primary enrollment, 22 for secondary enrollment, 8 for tertiary enrollment, and 13 for literacy. For non-fragile comparator countries, corresponding sample sizes are 36, 31, 21, and 25.

*Source:* See Figure 1.1.

*Figure 1.2 Female and male literacy ratio by region*

*Table 1.2 Regional performance in attaining the primary and secondary enrollment target by 2015*

	Achieved target by 2005	On track to achieve target by 2015	Off track or unlikely to achieve target by 2015	No data	Total
Sub-Saharan Africa	10	1	16	21	48
East Asia and the Pacific	13	0	0	11	24
Europe and Central Asia	22	0	1	4	27
Latin America and the Caribbean	27	0	0	4	31
Middle East and North Africa	8	0	3	3	14
South Asia	3	0	2	3	8
Total	83	1	22	46	152
<i>Of which: Fragile States</i>	5	0	9	21	35

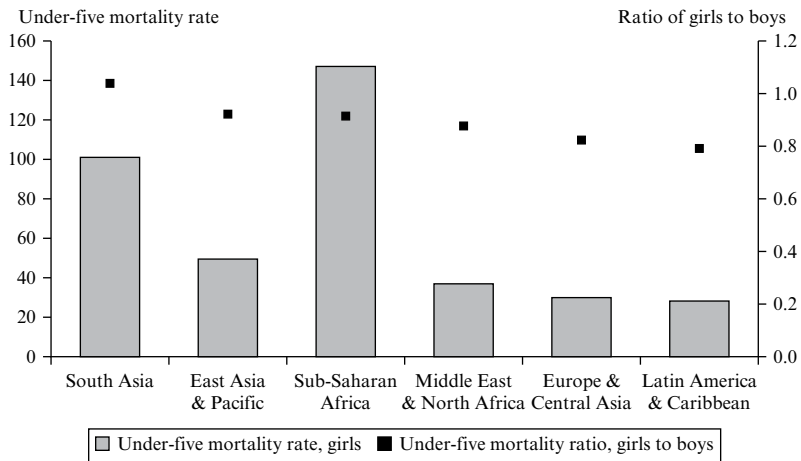
## WOMEN'S WORLD HEALTH POSITION (INFANT MORTALITY, LIFE SPAN AND DISEASES)

Several studies (Keane and Moffitt, 1998; Kaufman and Jing, 2002; Odutolu et al., 2003; Wang and Pillai, 2001; Correa-Velez et al., 2005; Copelon et al., 2005) speak loudly of the need to enact changes to health services for women worldwide, as women on an international level continue to experience sub-standard health services. They argue that to fully harness the potential of women, who are co-partners in the development of any nation, any negative health barriers, as well as social and economic barriers must be overcome in order to allow women's full potential to be maximized (Keane and Moffitt, 1998; Kaufman and Jing, 2002; Odutolu et al., 2003; Wang and Pillai, 2001; Correa-Velez et al., 2005; Copelon et al., 2005). The emphasis on world health and in particular women's health is seen as critical to an economy's overall well-being. Critical, since women are the bearers of children and thus the next generation of the labor force. Critical also, because women's health is said to impact and to be impacted by their level of economic independence (Kuumba, 1999).

Women's sexual exposure and the negative health consequences such as diseases or sub-standard health care have brought women to an acute state of vulnerability that is more acute than that of their male counterparts. Their health and their ability to produce the future generation in a context that does not undermine, but rather uplifts their overall well-being is of paramount importance to any futuristic look towards the next phase of world development. One could go further and state that the empowering of women from a health perspective is just one of several areas that need to be addressed in order to place women's issues on an appropriate level. Focusing on health as an initial area is key, since the other areas – education, economic sustainability and political and social influence – are also important but are secondary areas whose fulfillment will come after the initial, primary and key area of health has been addressed.

One statistic that speaks to the quality of life of females worldwide is the statistic on mortality rates (see also Figure 1.3). Females in East Asia and Pacific, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia face an obvious under-five mortality rate disadvantage when compared to their male counterparts. These ratios might be more exaggerated in East Asia and the Pacific Region, as well as in South Asia (but to a lesser extent), where prenatal sex selection is prevalent and where male fetuses are less likely to be aborted than females because of cultural practices. Other authors have shown that women from the poorest countries in the world are also more likely to be disadvantaged in terms of their health and more likely to be exposed to domestic violence (Kishor and Johnson, 2006). They point out





Source: See Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.3 World mortality rates

that families living in poverty are more likely to display higher levels of stress which are a strong predictor of violence (Kishor and Johnson, 2006). In more developing countries, issues of power and reproductive decision making, as well as women's sexual exposure are heavily determined by culturally based gender roles that reinforce male rights over those of females (Odutolu et al., 2003). There is no denying that such negative factors need to be overcome so that women can gain respect and operate effectively.

In terms of long-term health assessments, the disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) formulated by the Global Burden of Disease Project (a worldwide collaboration of over 100 researchers, sponsored by the World Health Organization and the World Bank), estimate the cost of individual causes of morbidity and mortality to healthy life. Table 1.3, which summarizes the results for the 15–29 age group, shows that young women are most likely to suffer from mental health related issues (8.05 per cent) and HIV/AIDS (12.76 per cent), while males' highest disease burdens are HIV/AIDS (9.03 per cent), road traffic accidents (7.73 per cent) and violence (7.58 per cent).

Women's reproductive health is one area that is critical to any assessment of women's long-term health and in turn, their ultimate income earning potential. Women's reproductive health is important, since this is one area where women experience the most vulnerability regarding their health. This area has social, health, political and economic implications for a society (Ginsburg and Rapp, 1991). Women's reproductive health has been defined as the ability of women to survive the reproductive years and beyond with

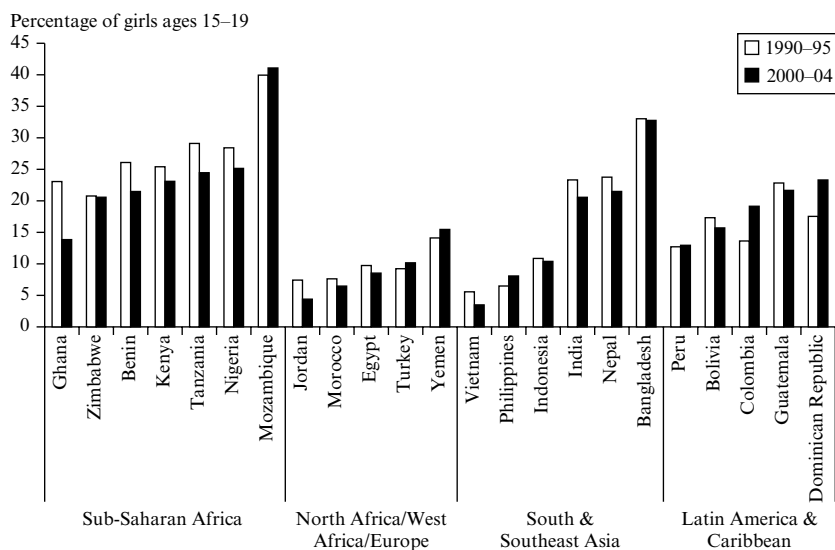
*Table 1.3 Sources of death and disability with largest gender differentials in disease burden for 15–29-year-olds, low- and middle-income countries*

Disease/Condition	Burden of disease (% of total) Females	Burden of disease (% of total) Males	Gender ratio (female/male)
<b>Females</b>			
Fires	2.13	0.9	2.34
Migraine	1.46	0.68	2.12
Panic disorders	2.49	1.24	2.0
HIV/AIDS	12.76	9.03	1.4
Unipolar depressive disorders	8.05	5.82	1.37
<b>Males</b>			
Other unintentional injuries	4.29	8.09	0.53
Road traffic accidents	2.24	7.73	0.29
Violence	1.24	7.58	0.16
Alcohol use disorders	0.68	4.12	0.16
War	0.13	2.68	0.05

reproductive choice, dignity and successful child-bearing and to be free of gynecological diseases and risk (Zurayk et al., 1994). An overall look at women's reproductive health can be expanded to include the quality of care at childbirth, births per thousand for women age 15–19, contraceptive prevalence, HIV rates, infant mortality rates and maternal mortality rates at childbirth (Wang and Pillai, 2001). In terms of teenage pregnancy rates/adolescent motherhood, the rates are shown to be highest (see Figure 1.4) in countries such as Mozambique (where high rates are typical across countries in that region) and Bangladesh (where high rates are concentrated in certain countries). In other regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, some countries show high adolescent motherhood rates (Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Columbia) whereas the regions of North and West Africa and Europe on average show lower teenage pregnancy rates.

## WOMEN'S POLITICAL POSITION IN THE WORLD TODAY

The underrepresentation of women in the political sphere can be seen at every level, including sub-national, national, regional or international



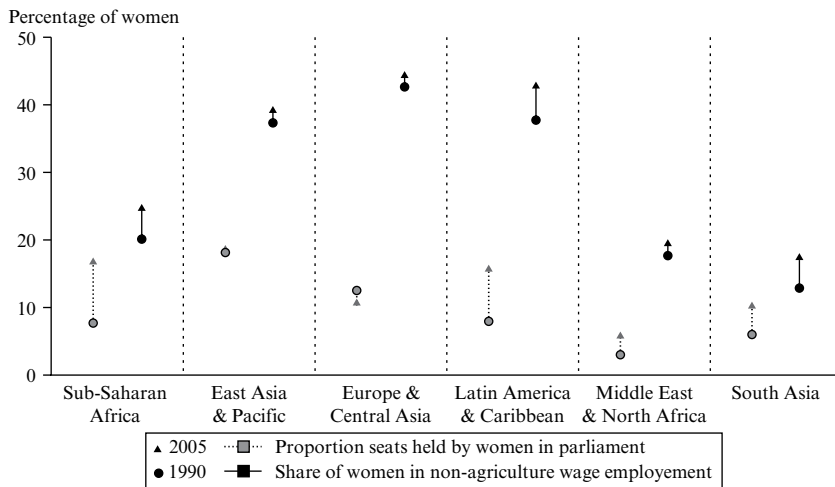
Note: Percentage of girls who are mothers or are pregnant.

Source: See Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.4 Trends in adolescent motherhood

(Sawer, 2000; Gamson, 1997; Tickner, 1999; Kenworthy and Malami, 1999). It continues to be pervasive in many sectors of society and remains one of the most pronounced genres for gender inequality, when compared to other sectors such as the educational system, the labor market and the health sector. The importance of women in the political system of any country is critical, since it is through these systems that laws, regulations, policies and procedures are enacted that impact women's influence and determine the overall treatment of women in various sectors of society – sectors such as health, education and general human rights and their legal and other positioning in the labor market. The erosion of women's rights, which has been said to be enforced by male-constructed and male-dominated societies, has diminished women's status, level of importance and probability to impact a society's political arena (Majid, 1998; Reynolds, 1999).

Although women in virtually all countries around the world have voting rights, statistical figures reveal that in only a handful of nations is the share of women's seats in the main legislative body greater than 30 per cent, which is commonly considered the critical mass necessary



*Note:* The regional averages are calculated using the earliest value between 1990 and 1995 and the latest value between 2000 and 2005 for each country. The averages are weighted by the country population size in 2005.

*Source:* See Figure 1.1.

*Figure 1.5 Women's non-agricultural wage employment and political rates*

for women to exert a substantial influence on politics (Kenworthy and Malami, 1999). Worldwide, the average is just around 10 per cent for most countries (Kenworthy and Malami, 1999). A number of previous research papers have declared that three key factors affect women's ability to be elected and thus be a political representative in a country's parliament (Kenworthy and Malami, 1999; Paxton et al., 2006). These factors are: their political influence, their socioeconomic status and their cultural environment (Kenworthy and Malami, 1999). It can thus be said that women's political influence is in congruence with other events related to women's positioning in any society.

In terms of women's participation in political office/parliamentary positions, where their influence can make or change policies that impact the direction their countries take, their influence is limited (see Figure 1.5). Regardless of the region analyzed, their average participation levels did not exceed 25 per cent, at either the beginning (1990) or at the end (2005) of the period analyzed. These low participation levels have been addressed in some countries with the introduction of quotas. However, more needs to be done in order to garner significant and long-standing

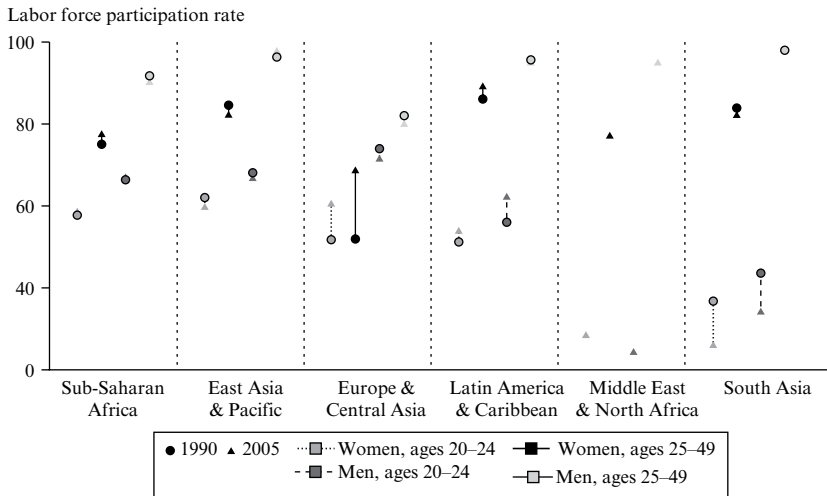
changes. Why then is it important to address the underrepresentation of women in the political arena? The answer lies in the need to have representation that can adequately address issues from a woman's perspective. This must come at both a participatory political level (in terms of voting) and representative political level (in terms of holding office). Women must have an equal role in policy making that will impact the women in the wider society and to counter the erosion of women's rights first from a political perspective.

## WOMEN IN THE LABOR MARKET: DISCRIMINATION, INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION AND THE GENDER GAP

Before one can address the importance and benefits of women entrepreneurship to the global marketplace, one has to address the current position of women in terms of their labor force participation levels, statistics and their health, education levels and mortality rates. Women worldwide still encounter structural barriers to their access to the labor market and still face vast discrimination that prevents them from realizing their full economic potential. Some cultures, religions and societies continue to see women in subservient roles that are outdated and undermining, with women having a limited or stunted presence in the labor market, often at the lower end of the wage-earning ladder (Adam, 2002; Westheimer and Kahne, 2004; Abramo and Valenzuela, 2005). One could argue that this perception needs to be reversed before women can occupy a place that is respectable, more prominent and more equitable, when compared to men.

This section begins that journey by evaluating women's labor force participation levels. The latest statistics are from the Global Monitoring Report 2007 (see Figure 1.6). The figure shows that the female labor participation rates are lowest in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, followed by South Asia and then Latin America and the Caribbean (World Bank, 2007). For the 20–24 age group in these regions, the average female labor force participation rate ranges from 37 per cent to 49 per cent – below the average of 55 per cent or higher for other regions. In addition, for the 25–49 age group in these regions, the average female participation rates are between 37 per cent and 60 per cent (which is seen as much lower than in other regions).

In the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, there are large differences in the male/female labor force participation levels, with male participation levels at rates between 1.5 to 2 times their female counterparts (World Bank, 2007). In other regions



*Notes:*

Computed from household surveys (1995–2005). Labor force participation rates for males and females aged 20–24 and 25–49. Population weighted regional averages for South Asia (5 countries), Latin America and the Caribbean (20 countries), Sub-Saharan Africa (10 countries), East Asia and Pacific (8 countries), and Europe and Central Asia (13 countries). For 5 countries in Middle East and North Africa, data are only available for 2000–05. The regional averages are calculated using the earliest value between 1990 and 1995 and the latest value between 2000 and 2005. The averages are weighted by the country population.

*Source:* See Figure 1.1.

*Figure 1.6 Women's labor force participation rates*

where the female participation rates for all age groups are high, women are said to be concentrated in low-paying, agricultural employment. These are mainly in the countries of the Sub-Saharan region, such as Benin, Guinea, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, where female participation is close to 80 per cent. However, these women remain concentrated in the agricultural sector (World Bank, 2007). In other regions such as Europe and Central Asia, East Asia and Pacific, where female participation levels in the labor force are as high as 60 per cent and where women also display high educational levels, women still receive lower wages when compared to their male counterparts (World Bank, 2007).

A look at women's labor force participation levels in employment (Figure 1.6) shows that the lowest levels of female participation occur in the Middle East and North Africa, followed by South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The overall statistics for women's labor force participation levels do not illuminate the complete picture for all women in those

countries. In fact, Indigenous and Afro-descendant women are likely to have fewer years of education than other women, and are also less likely to be employed in non-agricultural paid employment, and are often over-represented in low-paying and informal jobs (World Bank, 2007).

Gross gender inequalities in income, health and education are said to be rooted in the pervasive rates of poverty levels that exist for women/females worldwide (Villarreal and Yu, 2007; Browne, 1998). In turn, poverty or a lack of access to income and resources had led to females, more so than males, being denied equal access to education, health and lucrative opportunities. This entrenchment of women in such a disadvantaged position has led to the term 'feminization of poverty' being applied to the skewed overrepresentation of women who experience this perpetual ill. Both from a short-term and a long-term perspective (see Tables 1.4 and 1.5), the areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific are the top three areas worldwide that have the largest percentage of their population living below the international poverty line. Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa are regions that have the highest percentages of vulnerability.

## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CURRENT MARKETPLACE

In order to legitimately assess women entrepreneurs' position, one has to arc back and look at the core component of that which is the woman, whose gender has resulted in its own tangential elements. To this end, we cannot therefore look at women entrepreneurs without looking at women and in turn acknowledging that awareness of the related dimensions that impact women – health, education, political positioning, work and the legal components – which must be understood and addressed in order to assess women entrepreneurs on an appropriate level. On a broader level, some key challenges remain in addressing women's position worldwide; they include, but are not limited to the following:

- more focus on women's vulnerable health and health vulnerability status;
- the highly inequitable distribution;
- gender discrimination in employment practices;
- gender insensitivity of macroeconomic policies that do not address women's needs and vulnerable position;
- lack of opportunity and power for women to influence these macroeconomic policies;

*Table 1.4 Longer-term poverty outlook: people living below the international poverty line of \$1.25 a day (2005 PPP)*

	Number of people (millions)			% of population			Over/under	
	1990	2005	2015	1990	2005	2015	2015	MDG
East Asia & Pacific	873.3	316.2	103.6	54.7	16.8	5.1	5.1	22.3
East Asia & Pacific, excluding China	190.1	108.5	43.5	41.3	18.7	6.7	6.7	14.0
Europe & Central Asia	9.1	17.3	12.8	2.0	3.7	2.7	2.7	-1.7
Latin America & the Caribbean	49.6	45.1	33.4	11.3	8.2	5.4	5.4	0.3
Middle East & North Africa	9.7	11.0	6.7	4.3	3.6	1.8	1.8	0.4
South Asia	579.2	595.6	416.1	51.7	40.3	24.5	24.5	1.4
South Asia, excluding India	143.7	139.8	97.7	53.1	36.6	21.2	21.2	5.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	295.7	388.4	352.6	57.6	50.9	36.6	36.6	-7.8
Total	1816.6	1373.5	925.2	41.7	25.2	15.1	15.1	5.7
Total, excluding China	1133.5	1165.8	865.1	35.2	28.1	18.2	18.2	-0.6
Low-income countries	920.4	1032.9	789.3	52.8	43.5	28.0	28.0	-1.6
Middle-income countries	914.2	361.5	143.5	35.0	11.8	4.3	4.3	13.2



*Table 1.5 Short-term poverty outlook: people living below the international poverty line of \$1.25 a day (2005 PPP)*

	Number of people (millions)		Change in number of people (millions)		% of population		Change (percentage points)	
	2008	2009	2005–08	2009	2008	2009	2005–08	2009
East Asia and the Pacific	222.5	203.0	-31.2	-19.5	11.5	10.4	-1.8	-1.1
Europe and Central Asia	15.1	15.5	-0.7	0.4	3.2	3.3	-0.2	0.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	37.6	40.3	-2.5	2.7	6.6	7.0	-0.5	0.4
Middle East and North Africa	8.6	8.3	-0.8	-0.3	2.7	2.5	-0.3	-0.2
South Asia	536.3	530.6	-19.8	-5.7	34.8	33.9	-1.8	-0.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	382.7	385.9	-1.9	3.2	46.7	46.0	-1.4	-0.7
Total	1202.8	1183.6	-56.9	-19.2	21.3	20.7	-1.3	-0.6
Low-income countries	952.3	947.8	-26.9	-4.5	38.0	37.2	-1.8	-0.8
Middle-income countries	262.1	247.2	-33.1	-14.9	8.3	7.8	-1.2	-0.5

- lack of educational opportunities for women, especially at and above the secondary level;
- the lack of recognition of the contribution of the macroeconomy of the informal, household and rural subsistence economies (to a nation's economy) where women are often concentrated.

Women located in the poorest countries in the world are also most likely to suffer adverse effects in the above areas. Erhard et al. (2012) present an appropriate platform to look at women's issues from various perspectives and to study women entrepreneurs worldwide, with the hope of making recommendations that can assist women in overcoming other problems through first obtaining economic independence. The framework that I am suggesting draws on data from a number of countries in seven regions of the world. As we move through this current century, good citizenship demands that we address women's position of independence and in so doing address their future place in the world's society.

One body that has carried out significant and consistent work on women entrepreneurs worldwide is the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) organization, which publishes extensive and critical work on women entrepreneurs worldwide. GEM focuses on three main objectives: to measure differences in entrepreneurial attitudes, activity and aspirations among economies; to uncover factors determining the nature and level of national entrepreneurial activity; and to identify policy implications for enhancing entrepreneurship in an economy (Dunkle et al., 2008; see also Table 1.6). GEM speaks to three different development levels of entrepreneurial activity.

GEM has found that the level of women's participation is somewhat similar to TEA (Total Entrepreneur Activity) levels; that is, if TEA is very low in an economy, there are also fewer women entrepreneurs in an absolute sense (Dunkle et al., 2008). Women's participation in entrepreneurship relative to men ranges from a ratio of 20:100 in the Republic of Korea to 120:100 in Ghana (Dunkle et al., 2008). According to the WEF (World Economic Forum) classification, there are three different phases to entrepreneurial development in an economy. The factor-driven phase is dominated by subsistence agriculture and extraction businesses, with a heavy reliance on labor and natural resources (Kelley et al., 2011). In the efficiency-driven phase, further development is accompanied by industrialization and an increased reliance on economies of scale, with capital-intensive large organizations more dominant (Kelley et al., 2011). As development advances into the innovation-driven phase, businesses are more knowledge intensive, and the service sector expands (Kelley et al., 2011). Across the three development levels, the factor-driven and efficiency-driven groups are similar on average, but the innovation-driven group has a lower average proportion of women entrepreneurs (Dunkle et al., 2008; see also Table 1.7).

In the factor-driven economies, the lowest levels and ratios of women participation can be found in the MENA/South Asian countries, where for every woman entrepreneur, there are about two to four men (Kelley et al., 2011). The highest ratio can be seen in the Sub-Saharan African countries, where there are equal participation levels for women in the countries of Zambia and Ghana (see Table 1.7). In the efficiency-driven economies, Eastern European countries occupy the lower levels and ratios for women's participation, with the lowest exhibited in Turkey at a ratio of about 28 women for every 100 men (Kelley et al., 2011). An exception can be found in Russia, which has an 80 to 100 ratio. Latin American countries tend toward higher levels of participation, with Costa Rica and Mexico reporting almost equal participation by gender (Kelley et al., 2011). Uruguay is the only Latin American country with

*Table 1.6 Entrepreneurship participation levels: country group differences in opportunity to necessity early stage entrepreneurship by gender*

	Male opportunity entrepreneurship	Female opportunity entrepreneurship	Male necessity entrepreneurship	Female necessity entrepreneurship	Male opportunity to necessity ratio	Female opportunity to necessity ratio
Low/Middle-Income Countries Europe and Asia	7.35%	4.35%	4.50%	2.22%	1.63	1.96
Low/Middle-Income Countries Latin America and Caribbean	12.38%	7.51%	7.51%	5.33%	1.65	1.41
High-Income Countries	6.85%	3.56%	1.18%	0.83%	5.81	4.28

*Note:* Permission to use tables from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Global Report 2007 – Report on Women and Entrepreneurship, which appear here, has been granted by the copyright holders (see Allen et al., 2008). GEM is an international consortium and this report was produced from data collected in, and received from, 59 countries in 2010. Our thanks go to the authors, national teams, researchers, funding bodies and other contributors who have made this possible.

Table 1.7 GEM countries classified by economy and geography

	Factor-driven	Efficiency-driven	Innovation-driven
Sub-Saharan Africa	Angola*, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia	South Africa	
Middle East/North Africa (MENA) – South Asia	Egypt*, Iran*, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia*, West Bank and Gaza	Tunisia	Israel
Latin America and the Caribbean	Jamaica*, Guatemala*, Bolivia	Argentina, Brazil, Chile*, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago*, Uruguay*	
Eastern Europe		Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia*, Hungary*, Latvia*, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Turkey	Slovenia
Asia Pacific		Malaysia, China, Taiwan*	
United States and Western Europe			Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States

Notes:

\* In transition to next stage.

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lower than average female participation, with a 60 to 100 ratio (Kelley et al., 2011).

Looking at the Asia Pacific region, Australia shows the greatest number of women entrepreneurs among the innovation-driven economies, with men and women participating equally in this activity (Kelley et al., 2011). Malaysia has a low TEA but a very high relative level of female participation, with almost equal numbers of women and men entrepreneurs. Taiwan, on the other hand, ranks below average, with a 60 to 100 ratio (Kelley et al., 2011). Two other Asian countries in the innovation-driven group, the Republic of Korea and Japan, are among the lowest ranked for females (Kelley et al., 2011). The highest ratios of female participation in Western Europe are in Belgium and Switzerland, with ratios around 80 to 100 (Kelley et al., 2011). The United States also has many women entrepreneurs, with a ratio of about 85 to 100 (Kelley et al., 2011).

GEM measures several indicators of attitudes of entrepreneurship: these include perceived opportunities and capabilities, fear of failure, entrepreneurs as a good career choice, high status to successful entrepreneurs, media attention for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions. The GEM report states that it is important not only to have current entrepreneurs, but also to have other citizens of that country who can recognize the availability of other entrepreneurial opportunities. Table 1.8 looks at this and other indicators and shows the level of attitudes across approximately fifty countries across the seven attitudinal areas. In addition to other categories, GEM groups countries into three categories: low/middle income groups Europe/Asia, low/middle income Latin America/Caribbean and high-income groups. Table 1.8 also looks at various factors that are related to research on women entrepreneurs, such as factors influencing perceptions by gender and business stage; factors such as start-up opportunities as viewed by the women entrepreneurs; whether the women had felt they had the required opportunities to start a business; or if their fear of failure would prevent them from starting a business (Allen et al., 2008).

## PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

This book is a response to the current status of women entrepreneurs from a global perspective. It recognizes that women entrepreneurs need a platform from which to outline their contributions and importance from a multi-layered perspective. Gender equity and women's empowerment are said to be particularly important as an emphasis and catalyst for promoting and sustaining women's economic development and growth (Odutolu

*Table 1.8 Factors influencing the entrepreneurs' perceptions by gender and business stage*

Personally knows an entrepreneur who started a business in the past two years		No Entrepreneurial Activity (%)	Early Stage (%)	Established (%)
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	43.60	76.80	64.70
Europe and Asia	Female	36.50	54.20	52.20
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	46.80	68.20	55.60
Latin America and Caribbean	Female	34.10	56.90	46.40
High-Income Countries	Male	36.50	60.40	52.80
	Female	27.90	56.60	45.90
Sees good start-up opportunities in the next six months in his/her area		No Entrepreneurial Activity (%)	Early Stage (%)	Established (%)
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	33.70	57.40	47.70
Europe and Asia	Female	30.90	50.30	42.40
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	29.10	70.90	60.50
Latin America and Caribbean	Female	44.10	67.10	59.80
High-Income Countries	Male	35.40	64.60	52.20
	Female	33.50	59.70	45.00

Has the required knowledge and skills to start a business		No Entrepreneurial Activity (%)	Early Stage (%)	Established (%)
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	41.00	83.50	47.70
Europe and Asia	Female	30.20	76.50	42.40
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	68.80	92.10	60.50
Latin America and Caribbean	Female	54.80	86.40	59.80
High-Income Countries	Male	49.50	88.70	52.20
	Female	36.20	85.50	45.00
Fear of failure would prevent from starting a business				
		No Entrepreneurial Activity (%)	Early Stage (%)	Established (%)
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	33.70	23.90	30.50
Europe and Asia	Female	40.20	42.60	39.00
Low/Middle-Income Countries	Male	28.55	17.10	21.30
Latin America and Caribbean	Female	36.00	22.50	26.10
High-Income Countries	Male	38.20	26.10	23.90
	Female	43.40	27.10	27.10

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et al., 2003). Thus, in keeping with this goal, it is logical to write about women's position from various levels, including a social, political and economic perspective. It operates from the conviction that gender equality, the empowerment of women and their related economic independence are necessary for the long-term achievement of a country's sustainable development (Pardo-del-Val, 2010; Bahmani-Oskooee, 2012). The book provides a comprehensive review of the current literature on women entrepreneurs with a special emphasis on often under-reviewed literature on the said women entrepreneurs.

The book outlines the progress that has been made by women entrepreneurs in the last three decades, highlighting the factors that have led to their success. It thus highlights some good practices that have worked in various regions of the world, as well as illuminating the areas that remain unresolved. The book also focuses on the major challenges that must be addressed if women entrepreneurs are to improve their position adequately. It ends by detailing the steps that must be taken to improve women entrepreneurs worldwide and the underlying empowerment of women that would result from such economic independence.

The main purpose of this book is to address the concerns that overshadow or impede women's ability to advance from an entrepreneurial perspective in any country. It is true that while the information on women entrepreneurs worldwide has increased, it is fragmented and not consistent across areas. This book, through use of a consistent questionnaire, looks at various components of the area of women entrepreneurship and addresses some best practices that can be adopted to address these issues. The goal to undertake, research and write this book has been motivated by the desire to help women entrepreneurs worldwide, as well as the factions that cater to and are catered by the women entrepreneurs, to improve their current position and advance their standing in the world today. By detailing the facts presented in this book to a worldwide audience, this represents a first step and an important requirement for understanding and then building a systematic framework and set of recommendations to aid women entrepreneurs. This framework will need to be tailored and adjusted to match the resources or lack thereof in different regions of the world.

The book is thus intended for use by a wide audience pool. On one level, it can be seen as a primary source for recommendations for government agencies and legal practitioners who develop policies for women and women entrepreneurs. It also offers an agenda or roadmap for potential women entrepreneurs who dream of the possibility of owning their own business. Lastly, for academicians worldwide, this book is geared towards those who want to unravel the complicated process and procedures of



starting, sustaining and expanding a business for a sector of our society that often faces insurmountable difficulties from societal, economic and political perspectives. These perspectives often stymie women's advancement to a level of independence that can be offered through the ownership of one's own business.

Why then should we study women entrepreneurs, one might ask? Women entrepreneurs are said to contribute as much as 20 per cent to a nation's economy (Center for Women's Business Research, 2009). That contribution is buoyed by the fact that women are more likely to employ part-time workers, day laborers and individuals who are less likely to be employed in the mainstream labor market (Valenzuela, 2005). This in turn will increase the overall multiplier effect for an economy and result in more monies being turned over to improve the economic health of a nation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLES

The results of this study have been obtained from women entrepreneurs surveyed worldwide during the period August 2007 to August 2010. The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of a questionnaire used in a similar study in the United States in 2005 (see Smith-Hunter, 2006). The women entrepreneurs were contacted through a variety of sources, including entrepreneurship membership organizations and professors at the universities in their respective countries who work with women entrepreneurs. The surveys were then emailed to the women entrepreneurs who emailed them back on completion. The women entrepreneurs also had the option of completing the said survey online. The women entrepreneurs in the current sample indicated that they were at least part owners of a registered company in the various countries. Thus, this study does not include women in the informal sector of the economy.

Among other things, the study looked at the general characteristics of the women entrepreneurs, as well as general characteristics of their businesses. More specifically, the general characteristics of the women entrepreneurs included three key variables that have been said to be critical to the success of an entrepreneurial venture. They are:

1. *Human capital characteristics*: human capital has been defined as the propensity of a person or group to perform behavior that is valued from an income-earning perspective by an organization or a society. Human capital also refers to the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being. This definition of human

capital extends beyond those capital assets linked directly to productivity, to encompass factors that reflect the broader values associated with a well-educated population (Becker, 1993).

2. *Network structures*: network structures can be defined as the formal and informal connections of overlapping organizational, family and social memberships that account for our level of success and the resources we have available to us to satisfy our needs, obligations and expectations (Hogan, 2001; Easter, 1996; Aldrich et al., 1989; Coughlin and Thomas, 2002). It has been described as the 'hidden hand of influence' that impacts the development of business markets (Hogan, 2001; Choi and Hong, 2002; Chung and Gibbons, 1997).
3. *Financial capital*: while there are different ways to measure financial success for business owners (Begley and Boyd, 1987), possible sources of financial capital include, but are not limited to, the following: liquid assets (checking and saving accounts), credit lines, loans, capital leases (mortgages and motor vehicle loans), financial management services (transaction and cash management), owner loans, credit cards and trade credits (Bitler et al., 2001).

The general characteristics assessed of the women entrepreneurs included demographic factors such as their age, education, marital status, number of children and whether they operate the businesses as sole proprietors or with a partner. The general characteristics of the businesses included what industries they operated in, what assistance, if any, they received with their businesses, what problems they faced with the businesses and their level of financial success. Other questions looked at the amount of start-up capital, what motivated them to start a business and what factors led to their success.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Chapters 2 to 10 look at the countries of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ghana, Iceland, India, Jamaica, Sweden and the United States. Each chapter first provides an introduction to the country, followed by a look at the national statistical data related to women there. This latter focus is taken from various sources that provide an outlook on women in that country. This is followed by the literature review related to the country's women entrepreneurs and then the literature review on women entrepreneurs in surrounding countries. The main focus of each chapter is then presented: the original data collected via the survey on women entrepreneurs is presented in great detail. This includes a look at the general characteristics of

the women entrepreneurs and their businesses, followed by a look at three key factors: human capital, network structures and financial capital issues. This statistical data is then followed by looking at correlations between various variables, primarily the women entrepreneurs' financial status and what would have led to their particular financial position. The chapters end by reconnecting the findings on the women entrepreneurs in each country to the related literature.

The final chapter (Chapter 11) begins with discussions based on the studies' results from all the countries, applying theoretical perspectives to the findings of the nine samples and assessing the implications of these results. The chapter continues by looking at the critical issues encountered by women entrepreneurs, providing recommendations to promote a new agenda for this often ignored sample group. The chapter ends by making recommendations for future research and provides a final conclusion of how this study's findings relate to broader areas of research. All currency values shown in the tables throughout this book have been brought to the common denominator of US dollar values.

