



## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND KERALA ECONOMY

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### Abstract

Women entrepreneurs play an important role in the development of an economy. Likewise women entrepreneurship is an indispensable ingredient in the economic development of a country over a long period. Very high rate of women literacy rate in Kerala reflects a most congenial atmosphere for the emergence and development of women entrepreneurship. Proper education, liberal financial assistance, marketing and training assistance provided by the state government are the motivating factors for women in Kerala to enter into business. The result is more and more women in Kerala are entering into entrepreneurship in this new era. Women entrepreneurship is a purposeful activity aimed at profit. It generates adequate income and self-confidence among women. But still they are overburdened with the household chores. So some measures should be introduced to reduce their household burden. The main theme of this paper is to study the role of women entrepreneurs, to identify the difficulties and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala and to give suggestions for improving the status of women entrepreneurs.

**Key Words:** Women Entrepreneurs, Economy, Gender Discrimination, Household Burden, Financial Assistance.

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs are essential initiators for undertaking economic activities or organizers of new enterprises, this result in the wide distribution of resources, active economic equalities and a balanced growth of different regions and sectors. Entrepreneurship provides opportunities for members of the society, economic and commercial progress of their nation. Women represent half the human resources and half the potential in all the societies. So empowerment of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status are essential for the achievement of sustainable development in all areas of life. Women participation in economic activities is tremendously increasing and also an increase in women entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs proved that those women who are plunging into industry are running their enterprises successfully. They create jobs for them- selves and others; also provide new solutions to the management, organization and business problems in the society. Women entrepreneurs engaged in economic activities aim to empower women by bringing them into main stream of development, to improve their economic status, to provide new employment opportunities through self-employment and entrepreneurship development, and to contribute overall development of the nation. Women entrepreneurship gives due importance to feminine values. It enables them to put their best effort to attain higher standard of living for themselves without depending on or exploiting others. According to the words of **Jawaharlal Nehru**, **"You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women."** Whatever be the form of economic and political set up of a country, women entrepreneurship is essential for economic development.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women in Kerala are well educated and are highly encouraged to do their business independently. They are prepared to face any challenge. It is said that this is the outcome of high women literacy rate in Kerala. There was a time when women used to take up entrepreneurship as a result of compulsion but now they are becoming entrepreneurs because of their own interest. Women entrepreneurs in Kerala constitute a significant position in the development of our economy. In the present study there an attempt to study the extent of growth of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the economy of Kerala.

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

To reduce unemployment rate among women, it is essential to develop women entrepreneurship. Development of women entrepreneurship leads to employment and profit generation avenues. To speed up the economic development of a country, it is essential that the available work force should be optimally utilized. Hence it is necessary to remove constraints and difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs and motivate them to attain rapid economic development of Kerala. In this context scope of the study is limited to the Kerala state economy.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the role of women entrepreneurs in Kerala
- To identify the difficulties and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala
- To provide suggestions for improving the status of women entrepreneurs.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many studies on Women Entrepreneurship, Women entrepreneur in Kerala and like that. A few available reviews of earlier studies have been presented in chronological order as follows;

Lakshmi and Ganesan (2013) conducted a study on problems and prospects of women entrepreneurship. They concluded that women entrepreneurs have become a strong driving force in today's corporate world. Not only are they able to equalize their duties of both motherhood and entrepreneurship but they also comprise of almost half of all business owned today. Their views pointed out that Indian woman even after facing many obstacles is now becoming an educated and economically independent. What women need for enterprises little training, some financial support and motivation at all levels- home, the society and the Government.

Saud (2012) analyzed the socio economic constraints of women entrepreneurs in India. The study suggested that the entrepreneurship is very important criteria for economic development and the role of women entrepreneurs cannot be ignored in this process. There is a significant contribution of women entrepreneurs in the growth of developed nation. He also observed that development of women entrepreneurship is low in India, especially in rural areas. Women entrepreneurs face lot of problems right from the beginning till the enterprise functions.

Kumbhar and Maruthi (2012) examined the critical issues of women entrepreneurship in Rural India. Their work paper concluded that women are considered an important human resource of the nation and every state should try to utilize them as mediators of economic growth and development. Encouragement of women entrepreneurship is one of the ways for that. But unfortunately the traditional mind set of the society and negligence of the state and respective authorities is an important obstacle for the women entrepreneurship development in India. Therefore, there is a need of continuous attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate women entrepreneurs, awareness programs should be conducted on a mass scale with the intention of creating awareness among women about the various areas to conduct business.

Kumar and Nivedita (2011) emphasized a study on women- empowerment through women entrepreneurship. This study was an attempt to analyze the contribution by women- entrepreneurs in economic development of nation and to find out the current problems, which they facing in their businesses.

Embran (2003) has made an effort to study on the women entrepreneurship in Kerala. Main objectives of the study are to assess the effects of socio- economic environment on the development of women entrepreneurship in the State, to assess the impact of new economic policy on women entrepreneurial sector and the development of entrepreneurship among women in Kerala.

## METHODOLOGY

Study is mainly based on secondary data collected from various sources like PhD thesis, Books, Journals, Research articles and Internet websites.

## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women enterprise/ women entrepreneurs' definitions have changed with the time and need of the society. Government of India has defined women enterprises: "An enterprise owned and controlled by a woman and having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women". In April 2, 1991, the new Industrial policy state that: "Women entrepreneurs will receive support through training programs. Definition of women's enterprise will be simplified. The present stipulation regarding employment of majority of women workers would be dispensed with and units in which women entrepreneurs have majority share holding and management control would be defined as women's enterprises". In short, women entrepreneurs are those who have initiative and decision making power, conceive business ideas, positive attitudes towards his goals and achievements, initiate a business enterprise to put that idea into practice, leadership qualities, self discipline, industrious and hard working, dealing should be sincere, integrity, dignity and undertake risk and economic uncertainties in business. Nonetheless an entrepreneur would certainly be different from non- entrepreneur and entrepreneurship seems to be ideal for women seeking participation in the country's economic development.

## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KERALA

Women in Kerala have marked their presence in every walk of life. Women literacy rate in Kerala is highest in India, which provides more opportunity to women in choosing entrepreneurship. State government made vigorous attempt to promote women entrepreneurs by providing concessions and incentives to them through special programs. Prime Minister's Rozgar

Yojana(PMRY), MSE Cluster Development Programme, Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) by Ministry of MSME, Credit Guarantee fund scheme for micro and small enterprises etc are some of the schemes provided by Government to women entrepreneurs. The Government of Kerala assists women entrepreneurs through different agencies such as Kerala State Finance Co-operation (KFC), Kerala Industry Trading Consultation Organization (KITCO), District Industrial Centres (DIC), Small Industrial Service Institution (SISI) etc in preparing project reports, meeting the cost of machinery, building and also training and hiring of managerial personnel. However proper education and access to capital, motivated women entrepreneurs of Kerala, they also had been encouraged by husbands, relatives and Mahila Samajams, this leads to the overall development to the State.

### **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The government of India has taken numerous measures and making honest endeavors to hoist the status of women and establish gender equality. Contribution of women is duly acknowledged. Now in every civilized society women are recognized with in equal statuses. With the world wide acceptance of the role of women in economic development, planners and policy makers are giving equal trust to women participation in development process. Women entrepreneurs are of vital necessity, to achieve a rapid, all round balanced economic growth. Women entrepreneurship refers to the socio-economic and political upliftment of women- folk making them equal to their men counterparts in all respects. Empowerment of women is made easy by entrepreneurship and it helps the women to eradicate poverty, dowry death, and low recognition in society, unemployment and excessive dependence on male members. Hence economic participation of women has been recognized as an essential input of economic development.

### **PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KERALA**

The major difficulties and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala are as follows:

- Inadequate financial resources and working capital
- Unaffordable high rate of interest for funds
- Difficulties in getting funds and raw materials
- Exploitation by middle men
- Stiff competition from organized industries and male entrepreneurs
- Humiliating attitude of officials towards women entrepreneurs
- High cost of production
- Lack of knowledge about the facilities available to women entrepreneurs
- Women entrepreneurs mobility is restricted or difficult to travel from place to place
- Difficulty in marketing the products
- Obstacles from family responsibility
- Social attitude and constrains in the society
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of education and unawareness of technology developments, marketing knowledge etc

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Solution for removing constrains and difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala are discussed below:

- Special financial cells for women entrepreneurs
- Make priority to women entrepreneurs to avail funds and raw materials
- Provide assistance to women's for setting up co-operatives
- Training programs for women to improve the potential and the will to establish and manage enterprises of their own
- Educate to change the negative attitudes towards women
- Government should assist in the form of grants and subsidies
- Without hesitation provide accommodation and travelling facilities to women entrepreneur
- Women entrepreneurs make a balance between business and home
- Awareness and education can remove the discrimination against women
- Increasing the education and aware the latest technology.

### **CONCLUSION**

Women have the potential and will to establish, manage and run the enterprises their own. But they need encouragement and support from the family members and the Government. Women entrepreneurs are the dynamic element and an important component in the process of economic development. But still they are overburdened with challenges. Hence it is necessary



for the society and Government to find remedies for the challenges of women entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial activities are the greatest source of economic development of every nation so improving the status of women is a greatest need for the society.

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