

Problems Faced by Women Entrepreneurs of MSME Units

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Abstract: *Entrepreneurs are innovators and they can contribute positively to the development of the state. Kerala is a fully literate state where the percentage of women literacy is more than men. More than 87% of women are literate. In the past the state constituted only 6.2% women out of 1.6 million small scale entrepreneurs and now it has been increased five times. But when compared to other jobs women participation is less in entrepreneurship. But with the advent of online marketing many women are entering online trading business and their success ratio is also high. But many studies have revealed that women face many problems for starting as well as running an enterprise when compared to their male counterparts. The present study is descriptive in the sense it is oriented towards the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs who run micro, small medium enterprises in rural area in Kottayam district of Kerala.*

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Innovators, Women literacy

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship refers to selling a new business to take advantages from new opportunities. Women entrepreneurs may be defined as the woman or a group of women who start and operate a business venture. The increasing presence of women as entrepreneurs has led to the change in the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country. Women-owned businesses enterprises are playing a prominent role in society inspiring others and generating more employment opportunities in the country. With the advent of technology and online marketing women are taking more interest in the entrepreneurship in recent days. In the process of entrepreneurship, women have to face various problems and these problems get doubled because of their multiple roles. Though there are various government initiated training programmes for helping women to excel in entrepreneurship by developing their skill and confidence, many women have no knowledge about the same or lacks accessibility to the same. Women should explore the prospects of starting a new enterprise; undertake risks, introduce new innovations, coordination, administration and management of business and provide effective leadership in all aspects of business. Women Entrepreneurs are extremely increasing in the economies of almost all countries. The hidden business potentials of women have been increasing. The knowledge, ability and compliance in business are the core reasons for women to come forward into business ventures. Women entrepreneurs engage in business as a result of push and pull factors that provide confidence to women to have a self-sustaining occupation and stand on their feet.

2. Review of Literature

Ritwik Saraswat VIT University, Remya Lathabhavan (2020), Concentrates on how women of different sections should change their mindset from being limited to the four walls to take up entrepreneurship. It was found that women

can contribute to economy if due support is given to them in the form of adequate resources and by limiting the procedures to get governmental assistance.

Dr G Yoganandan, GGopalselvam Periyar University (2018), Participation of women in the field of entrepreneurship is growing and they are able to balance work and family successfully. Women are superb marketers but because of male domination and conventional attitude of society they are not able to excel in their field and come out in a full-fledged way.

Dr. B Ramesh (2018), If women entrepreneurs get support and encouragement from family, society, Government and financial institutions, such positive effort can open new avenues for them and increase the marketability and profitability of business owned by them. If the problems of women entrepreneurs are addressed properly, they can emerge as very successful entrepreneurs far better than men entrepreneurs.

3. Statement of the Problem

Balancing work and family is one of the main problems faced by working women these days. When it comes to entrepreneurship women have to devote more time and will have to undergo stress than in any other profession. Societal attitude towards women going out of the four walls and undertaking responsibilities have positively changed but when it comes to a business women that change is yet to happen. Though successful and popular women entrepreneurs are respected admired and accepted by the society, there are women who own MSME units but hardly get support from family, society and government at large. Only success stories are remembered and acknowledged. Though not popular there are women who run their business units successfully with the skill and potential they have. But they lack admiration, acceptance and respect from the society. Their problems are not addressed properly.

Hence this study orients towards the problems faced by women entrepreneurs who manages MSME units in rural area.

Objectives of the study

- To study the socio economic background of the women entrepreneurs.
- To identify the problems faced by women entrepreneurs
- To identify the factors responsible for starting own units.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and it uses both primary data and secondary data. The primary data was collected from 50 respondents of Kanjirapally Taluk, a rural area in Kottayam district of Kerala, with the help of structured questionnaire schedule. Secondary data was collected from various books and journals. Sample for the study were selected with the help of Non Probability sampling techniques. Statistical and mathematical tools like weighted average method and simple percentage method were used for data analysis.

Table 1: Socio Economic Background of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 30	8	16%
30-40	20	40%
40-50	14	28%
Above 50	8	16%
Total	50	100%
Annual Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 2, 00, 000	17	34%

2, 00, 000 to 3, 00, 000	16	32%
Above 3, 00, 000	17	34%
Total	50	100%
Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	39	78%
No	11	22%
Total	50	100%
Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Primary	4	8%
Secondary	19	38%
Tertiary	27	54%
Total	50	100%
Size of Enterprise	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Micro (1 to 9 employees)	31	62%
Small (10 to 49 employees)	17	34%
Medium (50 to 249 employees)	2	4%
Total	50	100%
Type of Business	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Computer center	11	22%
Beauty parlor	7	14%
Tailoring unit	10	20%
Manufacturing unit	8	16%
Online trading Business	14	28%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Majority of respondents are married, belongs to the age group of 30-40 and in the income category of above Rs 3, 00, 000. Most of the respondents are highly qualified, holding Micro units and are involved in online trading business.

Table 2: Problems Faced While Starting Business

S. No	Problems	Ranking								Wighted Method	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Financial problems	29	15	2	1	2	1	0		315	1
2	Combining work and family	9	10	5	8	8	5	5		219	2
3	Lack of information	2	4	8	10	6	9	11		165	6
4	Finding the right contact	4	4	6	13	9	8	6		183	5
5	Lack of self confidence	1	8	4	6	8	11	12		157	7
6	Lack of training	5	12	7	6	6	11	3		209	3
7	Lack of awareness of govt. Schemes	6	5	12	6	7	4	10		195	4

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The major problem faced by women entrepreneurs while starting business have been studied by arranging and ranking them on the basis of their importance. All the seven options have been considered for analysis and calculated through weighted average method. It is clear from the above table that the most important obstacle that affected

the respondents is financial problems and thus it was ranked one and it was followed by Combining work and family, lack of training, Lack of awareness of govt. schemes, Finding the right contact, lack of information, lack of self-confidence respectively.

Table 3: Problems Faced While Running Business

S. No	Problems	Rank								Wighted Method	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Liquidities and other financial problems	22	13	6	2	1	2	4	0	331	1
2	No time for training and upgrading status	4	4	8	3	8	5	6	12	194	6
3	Combining work and family	11	18	2	7	3	0	6	3	288	2
4	Gaining acceptance/respect of people	2	4	4	4	10	6	13	7	176	7
5	Social barriers	1	3	7	13	6	6	6	8	198	5
6	Heavy competition	7	10	9	6	4	6	5	3	157	3
7	Credit facilities	2	3	7	7	14	11	5	1	214	4
8	Problem of middlemen	1	1	6	7	6	10	8	11	167	8

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The major obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs while running business have been studied by arranging and ranking them on the basis of their importance. All the eight options have been considered for analysis and calculated through weighted method. It is clear from the above table that the most ranked obstacle in running the business is, liquidities and other financial problems, combining work and family were ranked 2nd, heavy competition ranked 3rd, credit facilities ranked 4th Social barriers were ranked 5th, No time for training and upgrading status ranked 6th, gaining acceptance ranked 7th and problem of middleman were ranked 8th by respondents.

Table 4: Factors Influencing Women Entrepreneurs to Start Own Business

Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Profit / making money	25	50%
Did not want to work for others	0	0
To be Self Sufficient	8	16%
Social status	0	0
To apply the skill	10	20%
Confidence in the product service offered	0	0
To support family/spouse	7	14%
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The above data reveals that 50% of the total respondents are of the opinion that profit or making money leads them to start new business, for 20% application of skill was the motive to start own business. 16% opined that they have started business to become self-sufficient. For 14%, to support family or spouse was the motive behind starting business.

4. Major Findings

- Majority of respondents belongs to the age group of 30-40.
- Majority respondents have annual income above Rs.300000/-.
- Most of the women entrepreneurs are married.
- Most of the respondents have tertiary education.
- Majority employees are holding Micro units and are involved in online trading business.
- With respect to the problems faced while starting business, financial problems and Balancing work and family were ranked as first and second.
- Respondents are of the opinion that main obstacle while running business is, liquidities and other financial problems. Heavy competition from male counterparts, combining work and family, lack of adequate credit facilities were also major problems faced while running units.
- To earn profit, to apply the known skill, to be self-sufficient and to support the family or spouse respectively were main motives behind starting own units.

5. Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs have become a strong driving force in today's corporate world and they play vital role in the economic development of any nation. 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. They have that potential in them. The strong desire to be self-sufficient and the urge to apply the skill have enabled them to come forward and undertake multiple responsibilities and to excel in what they do. Present study was oriented towards women entrepreneurs in rural area handling MSME units and the study revealed that women though have the potential and skill, yet they face many problems in carrying out their business successfully. They need support and encouragement from family, society and government at large to come out with flying colours. There should be a continuous attempt to inspire, encourage and motivate women. From school education onwards entrepreneurial skills can be instilled in the minds of young generation and necessary training can also be provided. Women must be educated on various government assistance available for startups. Personality development at very young age onwards will help develop confidence and realize the potential within, so that they can choose the right path by applying what they have learned or possess.

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