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**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PALAKKAD DISTRICT****DEEPIKA C****LECTURER****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
SRIKRISHNAPURAM VTB COLLEGE  
MANNAMPATTA****ABSTRACT**

*The entrepreneur is the aggressive catalyst for change in the world of business. He or she is an independent thinker who dares to be different in a background of common events. Women who were earlier the bread maker have now become the bread earners and they are doing a great job indeed. Today many women are open to the entrepreneurial world despite of the problems faced by them. Even though it is said that entrepreneurs are born, they can be made by sharpening their skills and providing training. There are several institutes and organizations in our country to provide entrepreneurship training and financial assistance. But measures should be initiated to make it popular among the women. The present study is an attempt to study the problems faced by women entrepreneurs in Palakkad District. Thus the study is relevant to examine the present status of women and development in women entrepreneurship in Palakkad district. The study reveals that women entrepreneurs faces financial, labour, personal and technical problems. Though the present status of the women are satisfactory, and they possess various skills such as communication, leadership, technical and managing ability. But there are still a lot of challenges to women entrepreneurs. Thus the study concludes that a conscious effort by everyone in the ecosystem is needed to combat the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Palakkad District.*

**KEYWORDS**

Women entrepreneurship, women power.

**INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurs are always an important source of economic development. It is only through effective training programmes will be able to provide entrepreneurial motivation to the upcoming generation. Today many women are open to the entrepreneurial world despite of the problems faced by them. Even though it is said that entrepreneurs are born, they can be made by sharpening their skills and providing training. There are several institutes and organizations in our country to provide entrepreneurship training. But measures should be initiated to make it popular among the women. In order to promote this, such activities should be done. Thus, Entrepreneurship is considered as one of the most important factors contributing to the development of the society in India.

Women in Kerala has marked their presence in every walk in life such as freedom fight, literature, politics, governance, social work, professions and fine art and so on. Although women constitute half of the population only minorities of them have active participation in the entrepreneurial sector. Majority of the working women were engaged in the unorganized sector as employees and when they start a business or industry that was confined to low technology and investment traditional lines. Kerala that has been placed in the first for highest degree of literacy among women in India is promoting women entrepreneurship with a dedication.

Because of this prominence, it is very essential to study the problems faced by women entrepreneurs. Thus the present study is relevant to examine the development in women entrepreneurship in Palakkad district.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

It was always believed that as an entrepreneur, women tend to stick to comfort zones like apparel and hospitality. In the more profitable sectors of science, engineering and technology, women are marginalized by the macho culture. Nevertheless, as per recent respective studies and data, women seem to be breaking their shackles and are trying their luck in all these fields. Many women have been choosing this path by their choice or by force. Now-a-days, several Government agencies and financial institutions have been lending their aid to construct a strong women entrepreneurial base. Based on anecdotal evidence, it was stated that women have more limited access to bank loans and the gap is even wider when it comes to venture capital funding. Thus the present study is relevant and it is conducted to envisage the women entrepreneurship in Palakkad District.

**RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Since time immemorial, women have always been celebrated and respected. Women play important role in bringing about important social changes. Women are also considered to be the strength adding function in man. It is depicted in the godly form of 'Ardhanareeshwara' where the deity is depicted as half man and half woman. The word 'Shakti' refers to the power that a woman possesses to create tremendous change in society. The present study is an attempt to examine the women entrepreneurship in Palakkad District. It seeks to explore the problems faced by women entrepreneurs. It also identifies the present status and the skills possessed by women entrepreneurs.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The primary objective of the study is to examine the women entrepreneurship in Palakkad District. In order to fulfil the primary objective the following secondary objectives were formulated.

The secondary objectives are:-

- To explore the problems faced by women entrepreneurs.
- To identify the skills possessed by women entrepreneurs.
- To find out the present status of women entrepreneurs.

**METHODOLOGY AND DATA BASE**

The study used a descriptive and analytical research approach based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data necessary for the study has been collected from 30 entrepreneurs in Palakkad District. This study was conducted as a survey using structured questionnaire that examines the problems faced by women entrepreneurs. The secondary data required for the study were collected from the books, Journals, websites etc.



**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the analysis are briefly given below:

**TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

Characteristics	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percent
Marital status	Married	24	80
	Unmarried	5	17
	Divorced	1	3
Age-group	20 to 30	6	20
	30 to 40	10	33
	40 to 50	9	30
	50 to 60	4	14
	above 60	1	3
Qualification	SSLC	5	17
	HSE	7	23
	DEGREE	13	43
	PG	5	17
Experience	Less than 5	22	73
	5 to 10	3	10
	More than 10	5	17
	Total	30	100

Source: Primary data

A brief demographic profile of the surveyed respondents is given in table 1. Marital status distribution of sample respondents shows that 80% of the sample respondents are married. It is seen that 83% of the sample respondents are in the age group of below 50. The qualification level shows that most of them are degree holders. Experience level of the majority of the respondents is below 5 years.

**TABLE 2: BUSINESS PROFILE OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

Characteristics	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percent
Ownership	Owned	12	40
	Rented	18	60
Form of business unit	Sole proprietorship	23	77
	Partnership	5	17
	Co-operative society	2	6
Origin	Inherited	8	27
	Purchased	3	10
	Newly started	18	60
	Others	3	1
Position	MD	24	80
	Manager	6	20
	Total	30	100

Source: Primary data

A brief Business profile of the surveyed respondents is given in table 2. Among the 30 people surveyed, around 60% of sample have rented out their business unit and the balance owns them. The main form of business among the women entrepreneurs are sole proprietorship. Majority of the sample respondents have started their business unit newly. Majority of the sample holds the position of MD in their business unit and the balance acts as managers.

**TABLE 3: PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS**

Problems	N	Mean	Ranks
Financial	30	4.8	I
Technical	30	2.2	III
Labour	30	4.3	II
Personal	30	2.1	IV

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The above table presents Problems faced by the women entrepreneurs. The respondents' ranked finance as the major problem and personal problem as the least one. The mean score for Financial, Technical, Labour and Personal is 4.8, 2.2, 4.3 and 2.1 respectively. The first rank is assigned to Financial Problem. Followed by this second rank is assigned to Labour Problem while third rank goes to Technical Problem. The fourth rank was assigned to Personal Problem. It can be noted that Financial and Labour Problem are the major Problems faced by the women entrepreneurs.

**TABLE 4: SKILLS POSSESSED**

Skills	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Communication	12	40	40
Technical	5	17	57
Managing	3	10	67
Leadership	10	33	100
Total	30	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The above table presents skills possessed by the women entrepreneurs. 40% of the women entrepreneurs' possessed Communication skill. 33% among them possessed leadership skill. 17% of the respondents acquired Technical skill. About 10% possessed Managing skill.

TABLE 5: PRESENT STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Statement	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low	Mean score	Sd
1.Taking major decisions	16 (53)	10 (33)	4 (14)	0	0	4.4	.72
2.Problem solving power	14 (47)	16 (53)	0	0	0	4.46	.50
3.Motivating power	18 (60)	9 (30)	3 (10)	0	0	4.5	.68
<b>Total Mean score</b>						<b>13.36</b>	

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Note: The figure in the parenthesis represents percentage.

Scale (individual mean) 0-2.5=low: 2.51-3.5= average and 3.51 and above=high

Scale (overall mean) 3-7=low: 8-11=moderate and 12-15=high

The above table presents present status of women entrepreneurs. The overall mean score is 13.36 which means that the respondents are having highly favourable opinion about their present status.

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Problems faced by the women entrepreneurs are Financial, Technical, Labour and personal. The respondents' ranked finance as the major problem and personal problem as the least one.
- Commonly developed skills includes communication skills and leadership skills. About 15% had development of their technical skills and 12% had development of their managing skills.
- The present status of the women entrepreneurs are highly satisfied. The overall mean score is 13.36 which means that the respondents are having highly favourable opinion about their present status.

### SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Women have been the backbone of the family and the society from time immemorial. Since India is an agricultural country, men were known to work in the fields since it involve lot of physical labour. Women stayed at home to take care of the family, although they were not contributing financially. Though initially by force, there was a gradual change in the trend where women started working or started their own ventures more by choice, thereby contributing positively towards their families and society at large. Initiations can be made from the part of government in the form of financial aid and infrastructure support to the women who are taking up new entrepreneurial initiatives. Government should also initiate programs imparting the knowledge of entrepreneurship and to develop skills among women. Government should conduct awareness programs to make aware the women about the schemes provided by govt. A conscious effort by everyone in the ecosystem is needed to combat these challenges.

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