

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE GLOBALISED ECONOMY-A STUDY OF KERALA STATE

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By

RUBY S.

Under the Supervision of

Dr. RESIA BEEGAM S.

Professor and Head



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

**School of Business Management and Legal Studies
University of Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram**

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Chapter Seven

Chapter 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In India, especially in Kerala, though women have played a key role in the society, their entrepreneurial ability has not been properly tapped due to the lower status of women in the society. But the trend is now changing. Women across India especially Kerala are showing great interest to be economically independent. Women are coming forth to the competitive business arena with lots of ideas to start enterprises. The development of women entrepreneurship has also become an important aspect of Central and State plan priorities. The role of women entrepreneurs is most relevant in the situation of large scale female unemployment that the country and Kerala state faces. In India, women job seekers comprise 34.9 per cent of the total live register as per the Annual Report of Ministry of Labour and Employment. As per the live register of Employment Exchange in Kerala as on 2011, the number of jobless was 43.42 lakhs of which 25.68 lakhs (55 %) were female.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector plays a significant role absorbing around 80 per cent of the employment. Women can be encouraged to set up micro, small and medium enterprises on their own initiative. Women will become competent to start enterprises only if their specific problems are solved and properly trained or financially supported. Entrepreneurship development for women is an important factor in the economic development of any country or state. In other words, entrepreneurship among women improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. Women Entrepreneurship should be moulded effectively with entrepreneurial skills and qualities to meet the changes in current competitive economy, challenge global markets and also to compete enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial arena.

7.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

An attempt has been made in the present study to analyse the managerial capabilities, training needs and problems of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. The study also aims to find out the efficacy of supporting institutions for the promotion of women entrepreneurs in Kerala and tries to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats they face in the globalised scenario of Kerala. The present study also tries to make an assessment of women entrepreneurship by analyzing the views of both the top level and middle level officials of various entrepreneurial supporting institutions responsible for the promotion of women entrepreneurship. In addition to the views of officials, selected consumers of women entrepreneur's products/services were also selected and their specific views about women entrepreneur's products/services, their pricing, promotion and level of satisfaction were analyzed in the present chapter.

7.1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To understand the present scenario and growth of women entrepreneurship in the globalised economy.
2. To identify and analyse the managerial capabilities, training needs and problems of women entrepreneurs in Kerala.
3. To find out the efficacy of supporting institutions for the promotion of women entrepreneurs in Kerala.
4. To identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of women entrepreneurs in the globalised economy of Kerala.
5. To assess the views of various institutional heads, officials and consumers towards women entrepreneurship in Kerala.

7.1.2 Research Methodology

Primary data required for the study was collected from 420 sample women entrepreneurs, 95 institutional heads and officials of entrepreneurial supporting institutions and 330 consumers of women entrepreneur's products/services. Multi Stage Stratified

Proportionate Random Sampling was used for the selection of women entrepreneurial units grouped into ten strata from the three districts of Kerala namely, Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Kannur. Simple Random Sampling was used to select sufficient number of officials from Entrepreneurial Supporting Institutions of Kerala identified from the Entrepreneurship Support Guide of Kerala. Purposive Sampling method was applied for selecting the consumers from the above mentioned three districts and to understand their views about women entrepreneurs' products or services.

7.1.3 Data Analysis

The data collected through the structured interview schedule and questionnaires were tabulated with the help of computer software SPSS, Version 21. The frequency of each variable was computed and relevant tables were prepared.

7.1.4 Tools of Analysis

Data analysis has been done using suitable mathematical tools such as percentages, averages etc. Statistical tools have also been employed. Statistical tests have also been employed. Tests of significance like t-test, one-way ANOVA (F-test), Two-way ANOVA, Chi-Square test, Scheffe test as a post-hoc test and Spearman's Rank Correlation have been used.

7.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

7.2.1 Present Scenario and Growth of Women Entrepreneurship

The condition of women in the global scenario contrary to the existing developmental norms can be seen as per International Labour Organisation (ILO) statistics, as 70 percent of the world's 1.3 billion poor are women living on the equivalent of US \$ 1 per day, women spend twice as much time as men or more time on unpaid work, and women make up the majority of the world's part-time workers between 60 per cent and 90 per cent. So, this pathetic situation can be changed only if *women* themselves become *entrepreneurs* and start their own enterprises.

In the past, women were engaged in Kitchen, doing Knitting and nursing Kids (3Ks) and now they have changed from the Powder, Pickle and Papad Making (3Ps) of business to

the emerging fields of Electronics, Energy and Engineering (3Es), most recently they can be said as tokens of Fortune, Fame and Flourish (3Fs). The modern day women entrepreneurs have successfully entered the non-traditional areas such as engineering, retailing, exports and still exploring new avenues of economic participation.

Since 1970, the percentage of business owned by women in U.S has increased from 5% to 30% representing nearly 40% of all firms and 3 million of the nation's total 12 million small businesses. The Bureau of US census, 2001 claims that 5.4 million women owned business employed 7.1 million people and generated \$ 818.7 billion in 1997 alone. Global Women Entrepreneurship Scorecard 2015 also shows that USA got 1st Rank with Score of 71. It has been seen that women outnumber men by at least two times, particularly when it comes to starting businesses in China. There are 5 million women entrepreneurs constituting one-fourth of all entrepreneurs in China. In Japan too, a similar trend has been noticed. In Canada, one-third of small businesses are owned by women and in France, it is one-fifth. In the United Kingdom, since 1980, the number of self-employed women has increased three times as fast as the number of self-employed men. Women entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Australia and the US. The areas chosen by women are retail trade, restaurants, hotels, cultural, insurance and many. As per GEM 2012, the percentage share of women entrepreneurs (activities comprise trade, transport and accommodation) was at the highest in Mexico, Korea and Sweden. Total Entrepreneurship Activity by females with regard to consumer services is very high in Developing Asia when compared to other regions. The percentage share of women entrepreneurship activity with innovative products or services is at the highest in the USA.

According to the Second All India Census for SSI units, 1987-88, 5.15 per cent of the entrepreneurs were owned and managed by women. The DC (SSI) Survey for the reference year (92-93) showed that 7.69 per cent of the entrepreneurs were owned and managed by women. According to GEM, 2002, India was ranked as the second highest among 37 countries in women entrepreneurship, proved that there was a significant positive change in terms of market perceptions, entrepreneurial capacity and financial

support. According to Fourth All India Census of MSME, 2006-07, the number of women entrepreneurs is one-seventh of the total number of working enterprises 215036 units constituting 13.85 per cent. As per the Annual Report of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME), Government of India, the total number of women enterprises has increased from 10.64 lakh to 20.21 lakh units i.e. almost doubled between 2001-02 and 2006-07. This is a very significant development.

But, Gender-GEDI (2014) - An analysis of 30 countries that foster high potential female entrepreneurship, measuring entrepreneurial environment, eco system and individual aspirations ranks India at the 26th place i.e., in the lowest tier of eight economies ranked 23rd to 30th place. India has also been ranked among the worst performing countries in the area of women entrepreneurship in gender-focused global entrepreneurship survey, released in July 2013 by PC maker Dell and Washington based consulting firm Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (GEDI). Of the 17 countries surveyed India ranks only 16th and so many other nations have outperformed India. Indian women have established brands in the world. Vinita Jain of Biotique and Shahanaz Husain of Shahanaz herbals are global brands today. In the beginning of 70's, women were not much interested to enter the business sector of Kerala, but Govt.'s various schemes and efforts made their number increase in business units set-up year by year. There has been considerable increase in the number of women entrepreneurial units registered in Kerala. The number has increased from 11000 in 1993 to 58774 in 2014. In 1993-94, Annual Growth Rate is 34.01 % while in 2013-14, it is only 6.06 %. SSI registration has been discontinued from 2006 onwards and as per new MSME registration, 19058 women units have registered in Kerala for the period from 2006-2013. As per III All India census of MSME, Kerala occupies the first position regarding the total number of registered women units (1.39 lakhs), but as per IV All India Census of MSME, Kerala occupies the second position behind Tamil Nadu, though there was increase in the number of units (2.69 lakhs). During the year 2013-14, twenty five per cent of the MSME units are registered by Women in Kerala and out of 566 societies, 138 industrial co-operative societies were run by women.

7.2.2 Findings of Survey Results

BASED ON VIEWS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

7.2.2.1 Personal Profile of Women Entrepreneurs

Out of 420 sample women entrepreneurs, 41.90 percent belongs to the age group of 36-45 and only 24.76 per cent is in the age of above 45. The marital status of the respondents reveals that majority of the respondents are married and only a meagre percent was divorced or widowed. Most of the women entrepreneurs belonged to the Hindu religion and 50.71 per cent of the sample are in the backward communities followed by 5.71 per cent in the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe group. Majority of the respondents have monthly income up to Rs.30000. Around fifty per cent of the respondents are graduates. However, the number of respondents having below SSLC education is comparatively less constituting only 8.33 per cent. Regarding the previous occupation, around 50 per cent were housewives and 19.05 per cent have private jobs. Around 90 per cent of the respondents were first generation entrepreneurs.

Category-wise analysis of the sample women entrepreneurs by various personal characteristics revealed that most of the women entrepreneurs who are in the *IT Enabled* and *Beauty Care Services* are middle aged. All the women entrepreneurs in the *Printing or Photography* units are married. Most of the women entrepreneurs in the *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products* manufacturing units and *IT Enabled Services* belong to forward community. 60 per cent of women rendering *Flour Milling Service* were housewives before entering entrepreneurship and an excellent majority of women in *Printing or Photography* business were first generation entrepreneurs.

When asked about the motivators in business, majority of the respondents have given top rank to ‘Self’, followed by spouse and parents. Around forty per cent the sample’s family members have positive attitude towards their entrepreneurship. 40 per cent of women doing *Flour Milling Service* and 41.67 per cent of women providing *IT Enabled Services* got positive attitude from their families for doing business confidently.

7.2.2.2 Organisational Profile of Women Entrepreneurs

An excellent majority of the selected respondents are sole proprietors and belonged to Micro category. Sixty per cent of women entrepreneurs belonged to rural areas. Around fifty per cent of the sample has experience in business for 9-20 years. 28.60 per cent of the sample has only up to two employees, followed by 36.40 per cent have more than 5 employees. Majority have created their business and sell their products or services in their own districts. ‘Marketing Facilities’ and ‘Nearness to Home’ were the reason for their set up of business. 25 per cent of the total sample units are doing Textiles/Tailoring/Garment Designing business, followed by 20.24 per cent in the Food Processing category. Around 15 per cent of the selected sample comes under miscellaneous category. Most of the women entrepreneurs have annual sales up to 250000. 27.60 per cent of the sample comes under the investment category of 100001-300000, followed by 30.70 per cent have investment between 300001 and 1000000 and only 20 per cent have the investment above 1000000. When asked about the motivational factors, women entrepreneurs assigned the first and second rank respectively for ‘Be Your Own Boss’ and ‘Satisfaction of Core Initiative’.

Category-wise analysis of the sample women entrepreneurs by various organisational characteristics revealed that all *Beauticians* are sole proprietors. Only one per cent of the sample comes under small units comprising two *Food Processing* units, one *Plastic manufacturing unit* and one *Printing business*. Majority of the women rendering *Beauty Care Service* belong to urban areas. 50 per cent of *Printing/Photography* businesses are having above five employees. Only a small percentage of women in *Textiles/Tailoring/Garment Designing* business have global sales. Majority of the women in *Beauty Care Service* started their business in their respective locations because of marketing facilities. 28.13 per cent of the units having annual sales above 1500000 belonged to women entrepreneurs of *Plastic or Rubber or Paper or Wax products* manufacturing units and 17.86 per cent of the units having investment above 1000000 belong to *Food Processing* category.

7.2.2.3 Managerial Capabilities of Women Entrepreneurs

• General Managerial Capabilities

Majority of the women entrepreneurs in *Beauty Care Services* (74.07 per cent), *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* (67.57 per cent), *Printing/Photography* (66.67 per cent), *Flour Milling* (65 per cent) and *Miscellaneous Units* (50.82 per cent) are having very good opinion on their **financial management**. But, 14.75 per cent of the women running *Miscellaneous Units*, 13.33 per cent of women in *Textiles/Tailoring/Garment Designing* sector, 12.50 per cent of women producing *Furniture/Wood Products* and 12.12 per cent of them manufacturing *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products* were poor in managing their financial matters. So, it can be inferred that financial management of women entrepreneurs is obviously better and their performance was found to be consistent with respect to the nature of business.

Majority of the women entrepreneurs who were in *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products*, *Printing/Photography*, *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products* units having very good opinion on their **production or service management**, but 18.75 per cent of the women running *Furniture/Wood Products*, 13.51 per cent of women in *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* sector and 12.50 per cent of women in *IT Enabled Service* were very poor in managing their production or service related matters. So, it can be concluded that Production/Service management of women entrepreneurs is obviously better, but their performance was found to be varying with respect to the nature of business.

Majority of the women entrepreneurs who were in *Beauty Care Services*, *Printing/Photography* and *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* having very good opinion on their **labour management and marketing skills**, but a small portion of women producing *Furniture/Wood Products*, *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* and those in *Flour Milling Service* were very poor in managing their human resources. 19.67 per cent of women entrepreneurs who are grouped into *miscellaneous* category and 14.29 per cent of women in *Textiles/Tailoring/Garment Designing* sector were poor in managing their marketing aspects. So, it can be inferred that supervision of labour and

marketing skills among women entrepreneurs is obviously good. Even though majority of the women entrepreneurs were having very good opinion on their **technology acquisition**, 16.67 per cent of the women rendering *IT Enabled Service*, 15.00 per cent of women in *Flour Milling service* and 10.81 per cent of women producing *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* were very poor in the same.

Women entrepreneurs are good in their general managerial capabilities as the total mean score is 3.86. However, those in *Printing/Photography* service are excellent in their general managerial capabilities and those producing *Furniture/Wood Products* are only moderate in the same.

- **Specific Managerial Capabilities**

Informational Role as a Monitor: Informational role of women entrepreneurs belonging to all different nature of businesses as a monitor is obviously better in *Unit Monitoring* and their performance was found to be consistent with respect to nature of business. But, in the case of *Environment Scanning* and *Early Spotting of Problems*, their informational role as a monitor is not satisfactory. With regard to *Environment Scanning* and *Early Spotting Problems*, mean opinion scores of women entrepreneurs are highest in *Textiles/Tailoring/Garment Designing* category. But the informational role as a monitor is below average among women in *IT Enabled Service* and *Flour Milling Service* with regard to *Environment Scanning* and *Early Spotting Problems*.

Informational Role as a Spokesperson: The informational role of women entrepreneurs as a spokesperson is obviously better in *Information Communication* and *Multiple Levels of Interaction*. But, in the case of *Representation of Business to Social Functions*, their informational role as a spokesperson is not satisfactory and their performance was found to be varying widely with respect to nature of business. In the case of *Representation of Business to Social Functions*, women entrepreneurs belonging to *Food Processing, IT Enabled Services and Flour Milling Service* are not performing not well. But, with regard to *Multiple Levels of Interaction*, women entrepreneurs belonging to *Furniture/Wood Products, Flour Milling Service and Miscellaneous Units* are performing well.

Interpersonal Role as a Leader: The interpersonal role of women entrepreneurs as a leader is obviously better in *Rewards and Recognition to Staff* and *Non-Exploitation of Staff* and their performance was found to be consistent with respect to nature of business. In the case of *Effective Conflict Management*, though their interpersonal role as a leader is moderately good, performance was found to be varying widely with respect to nature of business i.e. women entrepreneurs belonging to *Food Processing* and *IT Enabled Service* are not performing well in the case of *Effective Conflict Management*.

Interpersonal Role as a Liaison: The interpersonal role of women entrepreneurs as a liaison with regard to *Co-ordination and Networking* is not satisfactory. In the case of *Creating External Alliances*, though their interpersonal role as a liaison is moderately good, their performance was found to be varying widely with respect to nature of business. In the case of *Co-ordination and Networking*, women entrepreneurs in *Flour Milling Service* are performing moderately well while those women in *IT Enabled Service* are performing poorly. In the case of *Creating External Alliances*, women entrepreneurs of *IT Enabled Service* have a very low performance and those in *Food Processing* and *Textiles/Tailoring /Garment Designing* units are performing well.

Action Role as an Innovator: In the case of *New Approaches in Problem Solving*, the action role of women entrepreneurs as an innovator is not satisfactory. But, in the case of *Generation of New Ideas in Management*, their action role as an innovator is obviously better and their performance also was found to be consistent with respect to nature of business. Women entrepreneurs belonging to different nature of businesses such as *Furniture/Wood Products*, *Printing/Photography* and *Beauty Care Service* units are performing not well with regard to *New Approaches in Problem Solving*. But in the case of *Generation of New Ideas in Management*, women entrepreneurs belonging to different nature of businesses, such as *IT Enabled Services* and *Miscellaneous Units* are performing quite well.

Action Role as a Decision Maker: In the case of *Modification of Plans Based on Changes* and *Employees Abiding of Decisions*, the action role of women entrepreneurs as a decision maker is better. In the case of *Modification of Plans Based on Changes*,

women entrepreneurs belonging to different nature of businesses such as *Textiles/Tailoring/Garment Designing*, *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* and *Miscellaneous units* are performing well, but those in *IT Enabled Service* are performing very poorly. With regard to *Employees Abiding of Decisions*, women entrepreneurs of *Furniture/Wood Products* are performing poor and those in *miscellaneous units*, *Printing/Photography Service* and *Textiles/Tailoring /Garment Designing* units are performing well.

- **Style of Management and Business plan Preparation**

Majority of the women entrepreneurs choose democratic style of leadership and consultative style of managerial decision making while they manage their entrepreneurial units. Majority of the respondents were having well prepared business plans. Majority of them had a strong usage of ICT for sourcing of the information and for communication/networking. Majority of the respondents had a strong spouse support for improving their managerial effectiveness. Majority of them (91.80 per cent) belonged to *miscellaneous* category and *Beauty Care Services* improved their managerial effectiveness by effective communication, spouse support and technical skills.

7.2.2.4 Training Needs of Women Entrepreneurs

Majority (55.71 per cent) of the sample women entrepreneurs have undergone training related to their business and 44.29 per cent of the total respondents haven't undergone any kind of training. Majority of the married and widowed women entrepreneurs (56.61 per cent and 65 per cent respectively) are trained compared to the divorced category where majority are untrained. 71.43 per cent of the women entrepreneurs belonging to ST category were untrained. Majority of the respondents (60 per cent) having monthly income above Rs 100000 were trained. Majority of the respondents belonging to the type of business such as *sole proprietorship*, *company* and *others* have got training. Majority of the women entrepreneurs belonging to the investment limits of 1000000+ were trained and most of the women entrepreneurs having a maximum of 20 years experience in business were trained.

- **Training Status of Women Entrepreneurs**

47.01 per cent of the women entrepreneurs have undergone training after entering business and only a small portion of the respondents have undergone training before and after entering business. Majority of the women entrepreneurs have got *EDP training* from *District Industries Centre* and *R-SETI*. Even though there are several institutions providing EDP training, *District Industries Centre* is still dominating in imparting maximum benefits of training to women entrepreneurs. Majority of the women entrepreneurs have undergone training for one week or two weeks which are specifically arranged for women and have not paid any fees for the training which they have attended. When asked about the rate of fees charged generally by the training institutions, majority of the women entrepreneurs have opined that the rate was *medium*. Most of the respondents belonging to different nature of business had got awareness on training programmes through previous trainees or friends and relatives and had selected a particular training institution because of the reasons as convenience and reputation.

- **Level of Awareness of trained women entrepreneurs about entrepreneurship related aspects**

Majority of the trained women entrepreneurs doesn't have much awareness on the entrepreneurship related aspects as the total mean score is only 2.66 and their awareness level was found to be consistent with respect to nature of business. With respect to the entrepreneurship related aspects such as *EDPs and Institutions, Untapped Industrial Opportunities, Managerial Aspects, Marketing Research and Project Plan Preparation*, women entrepreneurs of different natures of business except those in *Textiles/Tailoring/Garment Designing* units and *miscellaneous* units have only average level of awareness. In the case of *Entrepreneurial Scenario in the State, Legal Formalities and Govt. Subsidies & Assistance*, a good majority of women entrepreneurs, except those in *Food Processing* units and *Printing/photography* service have less awareness.

- **Satisfaction of trained women entrepreneurs about selected aspects in training**

The trained women entrepreneurs are satisfied on the selected aspects in training such as *Getting Proper Motivation, Untapped Opportunity Identification, Managerial Capability Inputs, Knowledge of Incentives & Subsidies and Help for Project Report Preparation*.

but they are found to be less satisfied with respect to *Awareness of Supporting Agencies, Registration and Legal Formalities, Various Skills Improvement, Trainer's Support and Guidance* and *Unit visits and Familiarisation*. Nature of business wise result shows that women producing *Furniture/ Wood Products* and those in *Printing/Photography* service are less satisfied with the aspects such as *Managerial Capability Inputs* and *Knowledge of Incentives and subsidies* (mean score 2.09 and 1.83 respectively), related to training. In the case of *Various Skills Improvement*, women producing *Furniture/ Wood Products* and those in *miscellaneous* units were less satisfied as the mean scores are 1.79 and 2.61 respectively.

- **Opinion of trained women entrepreneurs on Sufficiency related to Coverage of certain aspects in training**

The coverage of selected aspects in training was not sufficient as the total mean score is only 1.88. However, women in *Printing/Photography* service are having moderate opinion on the coverage of selected aspects in training and those in *Textiles/Tailoring /Garment Designing units* have opined that the coverage of selected aspects in training was not sufficient. Coverage of aspects such as *Financial Management, Production Management* and *External Agency Contacts* were found to be not sufficient, but coverage of *Marketing Management* and *Human Resource Management* were moderately sufficient.

- **Opinion of trained women entrepreneurs on Positive and Negative impacts of training**

Regarding the positive impacts of training, majority have placed the variable *Mentally Strengthened to Start Business* in the first position, followed by the variable *Encouraged to Enter Business Field*. With respect to the negative impact of training, majority ranked the variable *Lack of Well-Structured Schedule* in the first place, followed by the variable *Lack of Efficient Trainers*.

- **Training program desired in future**

Majority of the respondents belonging to different nature of business selected *Managerial* type of training as their option for training desired in future. Majority of the respondents in *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products* units and those in *Printing/Photography* service have desire to get *Technical* training in future, 72.73 per cent of them in *IT Enabled*

service have an eye on *General* nature training and 83.33 per cent of the women entrepreneurs rendering *Flour Milling Service* selected *Managerial* type when asked about desired type of training in future.

- **Effect of Training on business improvement**

Women entrepreneurs' business was moderately improved because of training as the total mean score is only 3.07. Women in *Flour Milling* service opined that their business was moderately improved because of training and those in *Food processing units* argued that there is less improvement in all the selected business improvement aspects because of training. In the case of variables such as *Managing Staff, Finance and Cash Flow, Growth of Business, Creative Problem Solving, Profitability of Business and Satisfaction of Customers*, majority of women entrepreneurs' business have improved. At the same time, with respect to *Drawing up of Financial Statements*; women entrepreneurs are less improved as the total mean scores are significantly below the average value of 3.00.

- **Aspects of Training which needs improvement**

Regarding the aspects of training which needs improvement, majority have placed the variable *Adequate follow-up* in the first position, followed by the variables *Awareness of Incentives and Subsidies* and *Practical Training rather than Theoretical*. Women entrepreneurs are not satisfied with the follow-up, knowledge on incentives /subsidies and they require improvement in practical training also.

- **Opinion of untrained women entrepreneurs on Status of comfort in managing business without training**

Majority of the women entrepreneurs are comfortable in managing business without attending training. But, majority of women in different natures of business such as *Textiles/Tailoring /Garment Designing, Food Processing, Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* and *IT Enabled Services* were not comfortable in their respective business because of the fact that they are untrained.

- **Opinion of untrained women entrepreneurs on the reasons for not attending the training**

Majority of the respondents belonging to different nature of business had not attended training because of lack of awareness and also due to the notion that training provides only theoretical knowledge. Category-wise analysis shows that 92.86 per cent of the

sample women entrepreneurs who are producing *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products* thought that training is so costly, 83.33 per cent of them in *Printing/Photography Service* has not undergone training because of *Inconvenience due to Family Responsibility* and 88.89 per cent of the women entrepreneurs rendering *Beauty Care Services* have the will power to do business without attending training.

- **Level of awareness of untrained entrepreneurs about entrepreneurship related aspects**

Most of the untrained women entrepreneurs have only moderate awareness on entrepreneurship related aspects such as Avenues of finance, Formalities, Legal aspects, Marketing avenues and Changes in current business environment. Women entrepreneurs producing *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products* have less awareness on the aspects such as *Governmental Assistance, Managerial Aspects, Supporting Institutions* and *Project Report Preparation*. Women entrepreneurs in *Flour Milling Service* are not much aware of the aspects of *Supporting Institutions* and *Project Report Preparation*.

- **Problems faced by untrained entrepreneurs**

Majority placed the variable *Project Report Preparation* in the first position, followed by the variable *New Project Identification*. The variable *Labour Management* was placed in the last position.

7.2.2.5 Problems of Women Entrepreneurs

- **Personal Problems of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are struggling because of *Dual Role Expectations, Restricted Mobility* and *Limited Networks*, but they have self-confidence, aspiration and information. In the case of *Lack of Confidence*, women entrepreneurs of *Printing/Photography service* and *Beauty Care Service* units have strong disagreement, but those in *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax products* units have strong agreement. With regard to *Low Level of Aspiration*, women entrepreneurs of *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax products* and *Construction/Electrical & Metal Products* units have strong disagreement. In the case of *Dual Role Expectations*, women entrepreneurs of *miscellaneous* units have strong disagreement and those in *Flour Milling Service* units have shown their agreement.

- **Psycho Social Barriers of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are facing major psycho social barriers as *Inadequate Motivation*, *Lack of Risk Taking Capacity and Underrated Ideas*, but there is no *Faulty Socialisation* and *Suspicion towards Negative Attitudes*. In the case of *Faulty Socialisation* and *Afraid of Criticism*, women entrepreneurs of *Printing/Photography* units have strong disagreement and those in *miscellaneous* units and *Flour Milling* units have high agreement. In the case of *Lack of Risk Taking Capacity*, women entrepreneurs of *Furniture/Wood Products* units have shown strong disagreement.

- **Production/Service Problems of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are facing major production/service problems as *Technology Obsolescence*, *Quality Maintenance*, *High Cost of Production/Service* and *Lack of Innovation*. . In the case of *Technology Obsolescence*, an excellent majority of women entrepreneurs except those in *Food Processing* units have strong positive agreement. In the case of *Lack of Modernisation*, women entrepreneurs of *Printing/Photography* units have shown their strong disagreement and those in *Flour Milling* units are showing their positive agreement.

- **Marketing Problems of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are facing major marketing problems as *Shrinking Share in Local Market*, *Lack of Marketing Skills*, *Competition from Large Companies* and *No Wider Distribution Networks*, but they have product varieties and capability to canvass orders. In the case of *Lack of Marketing Skills*, an excellent majority of women entrepreneurs except those in *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* units are showing their strong positive agreement on their inefficiency in marketing.

- **Labour Problems of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are facing major labour problems as *Lack of Skilled Labour* and *High Labour Cost*, but there is no reduced productivity, absenteeism, non-co-operation and indiscipline, with regard to their workers. Those in *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products*, *Flour milling Service* and *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* have

positive agreement with regard to the variables such as *Low Productivity*, *High Absenteeism/ Carelessness* and *Indiscipline as Women Management*.

- **Financial Problems of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are facing major financial problems as *Inadequate Working Capital*, *Shortage of Fixed Capital*, *High Interest Rates* and *Low Reserves*, but they have not much accounts receivable. Women entrepreneurs of *IT Enabled services* have strong positive agreement on the variables *Inadequate Working Capital* and *Low Reserves* and those in *Flour Milling* units are suffering from *Shortage of Fixed Capital*.

- **Credit related Problems of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are facing Credit related problems related to *Procurement & Sanction*, *Disbursement and Documentation*, but there is no discrimination and negative attitude among officers. Those women entrepreneurs in *Beauty Care Service*, *IT Enabled Service* and *Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax Products* have strong disagreement with regard to *Procurement & Sanction*, *Disbursement and Documentation*. Those women entrepreneurs in *Beauty Care Service* have complaint against the negative attitude of officials.

- **Institutional Problems of women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are facing institutional problems such as *Diversion of Funds*, *Limited Schemes*, *Corruption/Commission/Bribing*, *Poor Follow-Up*, *Vexing Formalities and Red tapism / Bureaucracy*. Women running *Textiles/Tailoring /Garment Designing* units have strong positive agreement towards the Institutional problems and those in *Printing/Photography service* have only moderate agreement with the same.

7.2.2.6 Efficacy of Supporting Institutions on the promotion of women entrepreneurs

Majority of the respondents belonging to different nature of business availed *Short-Term Loans* from different supporting institutions, which could be repayable within a short period of time. Around fifty per cent of the women entrepreneurs got *Subsidy or Margin Money* and 41 per cent of the respondents didn't get any help from govt. level institutions. Only 2.90 per cent of the sample has availed the benefit of *Reduction in Electricity Tariff*.

- **Expectation Fulfilment and Level of Easiness to get support from different Supporting Agencies**

Women entrepreneurs' expectation fulfilment from selected institutions like commercial banks, KVIB, KFC, KSWDC and others was only moderate or least. But, DIC is supporting them effectively. Regarding Commercial Banks and Other institutions like Kerala Vyaapari Vyavasayi Ekopana Samithi, they have opined that their expectation was moderately fulfilled. Their opinion shows that the level of easiness in getting support from institutions was not satisfactory. Women entrepreneurs have strong positive agreement towards the variables such as *Non-collectiveness among authorities*, *Poor discharge of motivational role* and *Non-availability of specific schemes* while evaluating the supporting institutions.

- **Evaluation of Supporting Institutions**

Women entrepreneurs have strong positive agreement towards the variables such as *Non-collectiveness among authorities*, *Poor discharge of motivational role* and *Non-availability of specific schemes*, *Demand unnecessary licenses/certificates*, *Inadequate marketing & technology support* and *Inadequate working capital assistance* while evaluating the supporting institutions.

- **Efficacy of Supporting Institutions**

Women entrepreneurs' opinion on efficacy of supporting institutions was good. Women entrepreneurs have acquired more *Fixed Assets* due to the support from the institutions. *Use of ICT* and *Profitability* also have positively improved due to the support from various institutions. But *Exporting* and *Diversification* have not improved among women entrepreneurs. Women Entrepreneurs of *Furniture/Wood Products* units have the opinion that their business has slightly improved, but women in *Flour Milling* service have complained that there is not much business improvement due to the support from the institutions.

7.2.2.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of women entrepreneurs

- Strengths of Women Entrepreneurs**

There is improvement in all the identified Strengths of women entrepreneurs in this globalised economy, such as *Social Support/Recognition, Global Opportunities, Efficient Information System, Export /Greater Exposure, New Markets, Reputation in Markets, More Incubation Centres and Technology Adoption*; their opinions was also found to be consistent with respect to the nature of business.

- Weaknesses of Women Entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs have Weaknesses such as *Lack of Financial Strength, No Technological Superiority, Inadequate Marketing Support, Distribution Problems, Poor Networking, Poor Brand Image and Internet Marketing*, but there is professional management among women entrepreneurs to a certain extent. Those in *Beauty Care Service* who have good contacts disagree with the Variable *Poor Networking*. Regarding the variable *Poor Brand Image*, women entrepreneurs in *IT Enabled Services* have very strong positive agreement, but those in *Construction/Electrical/Metal Products* units are having strong disagreement with regard to the same.

- Opportunities of Women Entrepreneurs**

There are favourable opportunities for women entrepreneurs in this globalised economy such as *Increased Market Access, Imported / New Technology, Global Information, Increased IT Use, Untapped Markets, New Methods of Production and Scope for Expansion*, but they have less favourable opportunities in the *Outsourcing* field; their opinions was found to be consistent with respect to the nature of business. Women in *Furniture/ Wood products* units have comparatively strong positive favourable opinion on the available opportunities and those in *Textiles/Tailoring /Garment Designing units* and *IT Enabled Service* have only a moderate level of agreement towards the same.

- Threats of Women Entrepreneurs**

In this globalised economy, women entrepreneurs are seriously concerned the variables related to *Threats* and there is a great need to address those threats such as *Competition from MNCs, Technology Obsolescence, New Local Competitors, Changes in Govt. Policies, Changing Customer Preferences, Rising Demand of Buyers, Adverse Economic*

Condition and Availability of Low Cost Production. Those in *IT Enabled Service* units are having the opinion that the changes in govt. policies will not become a threat to them and those in *Printing/Photography Service* are of the opinion that changes in customer preference was less important.

7.2.3 Findings of Survey Results

BASED ON VIEWS OF INSTITUTIONAL HEADS AND OFFICIALS

7.2.3.1 Profile of Officials

Out of the 95 sample selected, 44 are Top-level officials (18 Directors and 26 Managers) and 51 Middle-level officials covering 37 officers and 14 others (includes statistical assistants, principal consultants and co-ordinators). Majority of the respondents belong to state level institutions, providing training to women entrepreneurs. Most of the respondents belonged to the institutions providing finance, rendering advisory or consultancy service, technical and marketing assistance to women entrepreneurs.

7.2.3.2 Views on aspects needed for growth of women entrepreneurship

An excellent majority of officials have opined that *Achievement Motivation Training*, *Training on Managerial Inputs*, *Interaction with Successful and unsuccessful Entrepreneurs* are so important for the growth of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. As the awareness campaigns are mostly successful due to various innovative information gathering options, *Awareness of Financial Institutions* is the variable which has got the least total mean score, followed by *Production Management & Market Survey* which should be done voluntarily by women entrepreneurs when running an enterprise.

7.2.3.3 Views on aspects responsible for slow growth of women entrepreneurs

An excellent majority of them agree with the variable '*Banks- Security Conscious and disburse less amount*' as the important reason for slow growth of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. *Initial excitement and Lagging later on*, *Developmental approach is more 'strategic' than 'operational'*, and *Start business without studying market properly* are the other reasons for their slow growth. But, mental stamina and thrust for survival in the

women of Kerala is high and so many innovative information gathering options are available for women in order to be aware of almost all the available schemes and policies.

7.2.3.4 Views on Environmental Aspects related to women entrepreneurship

Economic Environment and *Marketing Environment* are the two favourable environmental aspects related to women entrepreneurs of Kerala. As Kerala women entrepreneurs thrust for fighting against competition is less, *Competitive Environment* is unfavourable; *Technological Environment* is also not so favourable because their technology adoption is in a low level. So it is high time to find the ways for adoption of most modern technologies and strategies to fight against competition.

7.2.3.5 Views on Business Aspects related to women entrepreneurship

Publicity and *Mission* are the two favourable business aspects related to women entrepreneurs of Kerala. As Kerala women entrepreneurs are not giving much care and attention to appropriate product planning, *Product Planning* is the variable which has got the least total mean score followed by *Marketing Information*, because their marketing information gathering has not much improved. *Infrastructure* facilities are available, but *Brand Image*, *Innovation* and *Product Demand* related to women entrepreneurs were only moderate.

7.2.3.6 Views on Selected Aspects related to women entrepreneurship

Supporting Organizations and *Attitude of Society* are the two favourable selected aspects related to women entrepreneurs of Kerala. As the earlier women specific schemes such as WIP and WIS were suspended, officials have given just moderately favourable opinion on *Schemes and Policies*. As Development Providers are in the initial stage of its operation in Kerala, *Development Providers* is the variable which has got the least total mean score, followed by *Marketing Agencies*, because marketing agencies are ready to assist only big companies which will help them to earn maximum profits. When asked about *Development Prospects* and *Attitude of Govt.*, the officials have given positive opinion.

7.2.3.7 Suggestions for effective development of Women entrepreneurs

An excellent majority of them have positively agreeing with the variables '*Consultancy on a large scale to remove psychological causes is a must*', '*Assistance to participate in trade fairs and exhibitions*', '*One-Stop Shops for schemes, services and all programs exclusively for women entrepreneurs*' and '*Adequate training for managerial skill improvement is needed*' as suggestions for women entrepreneurs' growth. Most of the officials have the opinion that consider women as a specific target group is not much essential, because they can effectively utilize all the benefits of common development programs.

7.2.4 Findings of Survey Results

BASED ON VIEWS OF CONSUMERS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

7.2.4.1 Profile of Consumers

32.42 per cent of the respondents belong to southern district of Thiruvananthapuram, 41.52 per cent of them belong to central region of Thrissur and 26.06 per cent belong to northern district of Kannur area. Thus a total of 330 sample respondents were surveyed from the three regions of the State. Most of the consumers have got awareness about selected unit's products/services through their *Friends or Relatives*. 80 per cent of the total consumers have opined that their frequency of visit is regular. 'Convenience' and 'Proximity' are the two main reasons for buying from the identified shops of women.

7.2.4.2 Views on Products/Services Attributes

Quality and Attraction was preferred by consumers to shop in women entrepreneurs' units irrespective of the *Innovation* and *Branding* of the product. Consumers belonging to all age groups and income groups had a good opinion on *Attraction* and *Quality* which scored the highest mean values. All the segments are having high mean scores on *Attraction*. Consumers belonging to *Beauty Care services* are not satisfied with the *Innovation*. Regarding consumers belonging to the category *Textiles, Tailoring and Garment designing*, they have only moderate opinion on all the listed product/service attributes. Consumers of all the education categories except SSLC got the highest mean score for *Quality*. But for SSLC groups, *Branding* attracts them the most as a product

aspect and are not satisfied with the *Innovation*. Mean scores of Professionals, Salaried persons, self-employers and housewives are high on *Quality* and *Attraction*.

7.2.4.3 Views on Pricing Attributes

Credit Policy was preferred by consumers to shop in women entrepreneurs' units irrespective of the *Discounts* and *Special Offers*. Consumers of almost all the segments had an average opinion on *Discounts* and *Special Offers*. Regarding consumers belonging to the category *Beauty Care Services*, they are satisfied on *Special Offers*. Consumers belonging to *Textiles, Tailoring and Garment Designing* are not satisfied on *Discounts*. Consumers belonging to the age group of less than 35 years had a high mean score of 3.27 about *Special Offers* when compared to other age groups. But with regard to *Discounts*, the mean score seem to be either lower or equal to average for all age groups. For SSLC groups, *Credit Policy* attracts them the most as a pricing aspect and is not satisfied with the *Special Offers* and *Discounts* which gets the lowest mean scores. Consumers belonging to *Professional* category are not satisfied with the *Credit Policy*. With regard to *Discounts* and *Special Offers* in women entrepreneurs' pricing attributes, consumers belonging to the income category of 10000-20000 had a very poor opinion.

7.2.4.4 Views on Promotional Attributes

Cards, Boards and Hoardings as well as *Advertisement* was preferred by consumers to shop in women entrepreneurs' units irrespective of the *Brochures* and *Personal Selling*. Consumers belonging to all the age groups and income had got high mean scores on *Cards, Boards and Hoardings*. Mean scores of all the segments are having high scores on *Advertisement* and *Cards, Boards and Hoardings*. Consumers belonging to almost all the segments are not satisfied with *Brochures* and *Personal Selling*. But consumers belonging to the categories such as *Furniture/wood Products, Plastic/Rubber/Paper/Wax products, IT Enabled services* and *Printing /Photography* have moderate opinion on *Personal Selling*. Consumers of all the educational categories except SSLC have quoted either an average or high mean score for *Advertisement*.

7.2.4.5 Views on Special Attributes

After Sales Service and *Staff Behaviour* have motivated consumers to purchase again from the respective women entrepreneurial units. Women entrepreneurs belonged to all the segments are satisfied on *Order through phone*, *Staff Behaviour* and *after sales service*. But consumers belonging to the *IT Enabled services* have very poor opinion on *Convenient Timing*. Those in *Textiles, Tailoring and Garment Designing* and *Food Processing* units have poor opinion on *Trained Personnel*. Consumers of occupational groups such as Housewives and Labourers are having low mean scores on *convenient timing*. There exists significant difference of opinion among the income groups regarding the special attributes except on *Order through Phone* and *Trained Personnel* of women entrepreneurs.

7.2.4.6 Views about Success Factors

Majority of the consumers have the opinion that women entrepreneurs are successfully managing themselves. 44.68 per cent of the respondents are of the view that there is scope for expansion, 42.25 per cent had the view that social support is the reason for success of women entrepreneurs. Consumers belonging to *IT enabled services* are having the opinion that the main success factor behind the success of women entrepreneurs is *Expertise in a specific area*. Majority of the consumers of *Beauty Care services* are having the opinion that the main success factors behind the success of women entrepreneurs are *successfully managing themselves, Social Support* and *Scope for Expansion*.

7.2.4.7 Views about problems faced by women entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs are struggling mainly due to *Strong Competition, Technological Inferiority, Distribution Problems* and *Poor Brand Image*. In the case of *Strong Competition*, consumers of *Printing/Photography* service have strong agreement. With regard to *Changing Customer Preferences*, women entrepreneurs of *Beauty Care Services* have strong positive agreement and those in *Furniture/Wood Products* units have strong disagreement.

7.2.4.8 Views about certain selected aspects

Majority of the consumers of women entrepreneurs have only less favourable views on the selected aspects such as *Product Positioning*, *Market Strategy*, *New Promotion Techniques*, *Competitive Spirit* and their views was found to be almost consistent with respect to different segments. In the case of *Motivation to buy* and *Social Responsibility*, a good majority of consumers in *Flour Milling* service are having highly unfavourable opinion. Those buying *Furniture/wood products* are having moderately good opinion towards the *Competitive Spirit* of women entrepreneurs.

7.2.4.9 Level of Satisfaction of women entrepreneur's products/services

The level of satisfaction of consumers belonging to different segments of women entrepreneurial units is obviously better and their satisfaction was found to be consistent with respect to different segments. Only 16.67 per cent of the consumers from Plastic/Rubber/ Paper/ Wax Products Units, 14.29 per cent of consumers in Flour Milling service and 10 per cent of consumers from Printing/Photography were unsatisfied with their respective products/services offered by women entrepreneurial units.

7.3 CONCLUSION

The contribution of women entrepreneurs to the process of development and growth has been a subject of considerable topical interest since 1980s. Significant government and local initiatives have been introduced with the intervention of stimulating entrepreneurship among women. But, probably more needs to be done to ensure that these benefits finally trickle down to the common women. The specific training needs to be taken care of, problems be mitigated and supporting institutions should be efficient in their role for proper guidance in order to have growth and development of women entrepreneurs. This will certainly leads to the development of a desirable environment in which women will come forth and give vent to their entrepreneurial talents. Due to the changing economic norms, modernisation and technology upgradation, development of trade and commerce, spread of education and fast communication in the world, there is increase in skilled women entering into business. Leading more women to entrepreneurship demands a systematic approach, women EDPs must cover all

entrepreneurship related aspects not only for running of enterprises, but also for development of their entrepreneurial and managerial capabilities. Due to the liberalisation and globalisation, women entrepreneurs are facing stiff competition and technology obsolescence. So, it is high time to mitigate all the challenges in order to tap new opportunities.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following proposals are advanced so as to promote women entrepreneurship in Kerala.

- Conduct Special Training Programs**

Entrepreneurship Development Programs, Skill development training programs, workshops, counselling services seminars and conferences are necessary for the development of women entrepreneurs. Based on the findings of the study, women entrepreneurs are poor in various managerial capabilities which are essential for the success of a business. They are not properly analysing the external environment in which their business exist and the entrepreneurial scenario of the state. They are found to be poor in finding innovative ways for problem solving. So, it is high time to concentrate on training programs which will give great emphasis on managerial capability inputs in order to run entrepreneurial units and bring professionalism in management skills and also achievement motivation. Training in technical skills will help women entrepreneurs acquire information about variety, range and quality of competing products and provide a platform for marketing of their products/services. Training which includes the awareness on overall business environment, especially related policies, schemes of assistance and their acquisition will certainly induce women entrepreneurs.

- Create good awareness on Entrepreneurship related aspects**

As majority of the trained as well as untrained women entrepreneurs are unaware of the essential entrepreneurship related aspects, awareness creation in this regard is highly essential. Awareness on governmental assistance, legal formalities, subsidies and incentives, project report preparation, availability of new opportunities and total quality management are the variables found to be highly essential among women entrepreneurs of Kerala. Information on various supporting institutions is also essential because most of

the women entrepreneurs are unaware of various dominant supporting agencies and NGOs in the state who are providing special concern for the growth of women entrepreneurs.

- **Provide Access to latest technologies and Innovation**

Access to latest technologies is highly essential as most of the women entrepreneurs are facing ‘Technological Obsolescence’ as one of the threat in this globalised economy. Latest technology will enable them to improve productivity and climb up the value chain. As sample consumers have opined about the poor innovation on products and services of women entrepreneurs, training and access to sophisticated technologies and innovative methods will increase the success rate of women ventures in Kerala.

- **Adopt Total Quality Management**

As majority of the women entrepreneurs are struggling in this fast paced competitive arena, because of inefficient quality maintenance, there is a need to adopt total quality management in their respective units with a view to producing quality standardised products acceptable to all kinds of consumers.

- **Ensure effective marketing of products/services**

Because of high competition from large companies in this competitive business set up, more marketing outlets and agencies should be started in order to grow women entrepreneurs. Private marketing agencies are supporting only big business concerns in order to earn good profits, so it is necessary to assist women entrepreneurs by starting government controlled marketing agencies or outlets. Under the new Entrepreneurship Support Scheme (ESS) of Govt. of Kerala for supporting entrepreneurs, there is no special assistance for marketing products or services. So, women entrepreneurs must be given opportunities to be a part of trade fairs and exhibitions. Publicity of such fairs and exhibitions should be done effectively and women entrepreneurs should be given stalls at free of cost. As majority of the Kerala women entrepreneurs have started their respective businesses without studying the market properly, there is great need for market survey assistance also.

- **Ensure easy financial assistance**

One of the main reasons for slow growth of women entrepreneurs in Kerala is lack of finance due to security insisting by banks, as opined by the sample officials. Formalities

for getting fund from financial institutions should be simplified. One of the main difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala is lack of timely working capital assistance. As per new Entrepreneurship Support Scheme (ESS) of the state government also, there is no provision for providing working capital assistance which are very essential for the successful running of women enterprises. Due to cumbersome formalities to be followed in commercial banks, currently women entrepreneurs are relying on private money lenders and *Vyapari Vyavasayi associations*. All the required documents should be intimated and collected one time, special concessions should be informed so that unnecessary delay can be avoided. Setting a separate quota for assistance to women entrepreneurs only, by various financial institutions will help a lot in this regard.

- **Make exposure to Exporting**

Women entrepreneurs in India as well as Kerala are performing very poor in Exporting field. So in order to grow in this highly competitive arena, proper care should be taken to produce international quality products or services acceptable to global customers.

- **Consultancy to remove psychological problems**

One of the reasons for the slow growth of women entrepreneurs in Kerala is ‘Initial excitement and lagging later on’. The inner urge and change should happen in the women themselves for their success. Here, women are inadequately motivated and their ideas are underrated. So counselling through NGOs, managerial experts and psychologists is necessary to remove psychological problems.

- **Improve assistance from supporting institutions**

Adequate support should be undertaken in identifying prospective projects and untapped opportunities to suit women entrepreneurial needs. Here, non-collectiveness among various authorities and departments is a big problem and based on the opinion of women entrepreneurs, various institutions like Pollution Control Board, Sales Tax Authorities and Health Department are harassing without making them aware of the formalities, rules and regulations. Assistance should be simplified by starting One-Stop Shop or Specific Wing for streamlining all assistances and co-ordination of procedures in order to reduce the number of institutions or departments to be contacted by women entrepreneurs for various assistances. Better inter-departmental co-ordination and handholding support is

necessary to enable faster and effective service delivery with regard to legal formalities, licences, clearances and marketing agencies for women entrepreneurs. There is also a great necessity for women specific entrepreneurship support scheme from the government's part as the earlier Women Industries Program (WIP) was suspended.

- **Networking and Interaction with successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs**

In order to tackle various problems, women entrepreneurs should make networking together and conduct 'Meet the Entrepreneurs' to interact with successful and unsuccessful women entrepreneurs in order to learn from best practices as well as bitter experiences. By organising themselves in associations or groups, women entrepreneurs can effectively voice their specific issues and advocate changes. It is so essential because their capacity to participate in policy decisions is limited. An exclusive portal linking various websites of women entrepreneurs, projects and events related to women entrepreneurship will also be helpful.

- **Adopt appropriate strategies to get and retain consumers**

As the sample consumers of women entrepreneurs' products or services are having poor opinion with regard to offers and discounts, brand image, product positioning, marketing strategies and innovative promotion techniques, it is high time for the women entrepreneurs in Kerala to adopt all the measures to attract and retain consumers. Women entrepreneurs have to compete with those having already adopted all the virtual innovations including internet marketing, so they should realise the opportunities brought out by E-Commerce (Electronic Commerce) and F-Commerce (Facebook Commerce) as virtual outlets for growth and survival.

- **Ensure an Operational development approach**

Instead of making several strategic development policies or programs, it is high time to ensure an operational approach for the growth of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. Development Providers such as Business Incubators and Start-up assistors should concentrate specifically on the viable projects of prospective women entrepreneurs.

7.5 TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A Study on the efficacy of Financial Institutions for the promotion of women entrepreneurs in Kerala.
2. A Comparative study on efficiency and competence among men as well as women entrepreneurs of Kerala
3. A Study on Group Dynamics and social networking among women entrepreneurs of Kerala.
4. A Study on Face book Commerce (F-Commerce) among women entrepreneurs of Kerala.
5. An Analysis on the role of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in the growth of women entrepreneurs of Kerala.