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A Study on the Prospects and Problems Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala After Covid-19 Pandemic

Aswathy M V*Assistant Professor**St. Aloysius College, Elthuruth, Thrissur***Abstract**

Women's skills and knowledge, their talents and abilities in business and compelling desire of wanting to do something positive are some of the reasons for the women entrepreneurs to organize industries. Empowering women in entrepreneurship leads to break the inequalities and reduce the poverty. The purpose of the study is to explore and determine the problems faced by women entrepreneurs like financial problems, economic problems etc. The study also aims to understand the prospects of women entrepreneurs and what are the various motivational factors influence them to start their business and also make an evaluation regards government support activities. The study is limited only to women entrepreneurs of selected groups in Thrissur district. The information was collected from 100 entrepreneurs during 2022 to 2022. The important factor which influenced the selection of Thrissur district was the familiarity with the study area of the researcher to the women entrepreneurs and familiarity with the people. These factors made rapport building and data collection reliable and easy. The main objective of the study is to determine the various problems faced by women entrepreneurs and also to determine their satisfaction level of entrepreneurship. Questionnaire and schedule is used as data collection tool. It includes demographic profile, influencing factors and the major problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Women, COVID-19**Introduction**

During the last two decades Indian women have entered the field of entrepreneurship in generally increasing numbers, with the emergence and growth of their business, they have contributed to the global economy and to their surrounding communities. Women entrepreneurs have been making a considerable impact in more than 25% of all kinds of business.

Women entrepreneurs can be defined as the women or group of women who initiate, organize and operate business enterprises. The government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of capital and giving at least 51% of employment generated in the enterprises to women.

There are many reasons for women to enter into the entrepreneurial ventures in a predominantly male society. Entrepreneurship among women

is an important avenue through which women can overcome their so ordination within the family and the society as whole . therefore development of entrepreneurship among women has recieved social attention of the policymakers. in this direction, a special character in the seventh plan has converted into the integration of women in the economic development.

But the world wide pandemic Covid-19 has bring back the overall condition of Women entrepreneurs. In considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of gender, worldwide research indicates that women entrepreneurs appear to have been the hardest hit. In globally, 87% of women business owners say they have been adversely affected by this pandemic. This study tries to find out the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on Women entrepreneurs in Kerala.

Significance of the Study

The study conducted among women enterprises in different States in Kerala, south India, depends on industrial growth. The significance of the study encompasses women entrepreneurs in The state Kerala and various problems faced by women entrepreneurs who are engaged in starting a new enterprise. The study is also focused on the motivational factors influencing them to start the business, their satisfaction levels in their business and other Governmental schemes and programmes for encouraging women entrepreneurs .The study is limited only to women entrepreneurs of selected groups in various districts in Kerala. The information was collected from 100 entrepreneurs during 2000 to 2022.

Objective of the Study

- To examine the problems faced by women entrepreneurs after Covid-19 pandemic
- To analyze the factors influencing them to become an entrepreneurs
- To measure the level of satisfaction of women entrepreneurs
- To know the awareness level about the various schemes introduced for supporting women entrepreneurs

Research Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive Research is selected as research design. The main objective of research design is to depict accurately the distinctiveness of a particular group or situation.

Source of Data

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study.

Secondary Data

Secondary data required for the study was collected from various books, journals magazines, inetrnet etc.

Primary Data

Women entrepreneurs who are the main source of primary data collected through a well structured questionnaire.

Sample Design

The samples were collected by using purposive sampling method.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study is 100 women entrepreneurs from various district in Kerala.

Data Collection Tool

Questionnaire and schedule, personal interview, telephonic interview, e-mails and schedule are used as data collection tool for collecting necessary information from the respondents.

Data Analysis Tool

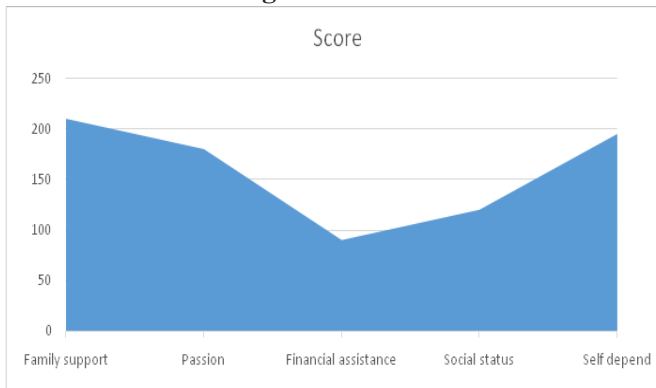
The statistical tools like percentage, ranking, weighted average cost of capital and correlation are used for analyzing the data collected from the respondents. Five point scale is used for measuring the satisfaction level with various factors. Graphs and diagrams were also used for presentig the data.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Influencing Factors to Start the Business

Factors	Score	Rank
Family support	210	1st
Passion	180	3rd
Financial assistance	90	5th
Social status	120	4th
Self depend	195	2nd

Chart 1 Influencing Factors to Start the Business



Interpretation

Family support is the one of the important factor influencing them to start the business. More of them want to become self depend and their passion is also influencing them to become an entrepreneur. Social status and family assistance are lastly considered influencing factors.

Table 2 Awarness about Government Assistance

Opinion	Percentage of respondents
Yes	40
No	60

Chart 2 Awareness about Government Assistance



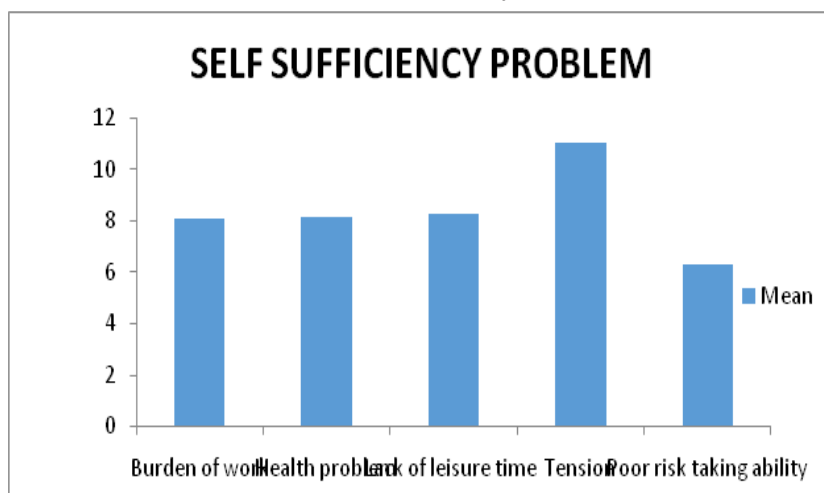
Interpretation

60% of women entrepreneurs were not aware about the various schemes provided by the government to support them. At the same time 40% of them were aware about such schemes.

Table 3 Self Sufficiency Problem

Problems	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rare	Never	Mean
Burden of work	3	3	18	14	12	8.06
Health problems	0	10	14	14	12	8.13
Lack of leisure time	3	9	9	17	12	8.26
Tension	6	20	14	3	7	11
Poor risk taking ability	0	4	10	12	24	6.26

Chart 3 Self Sufficiency Problem



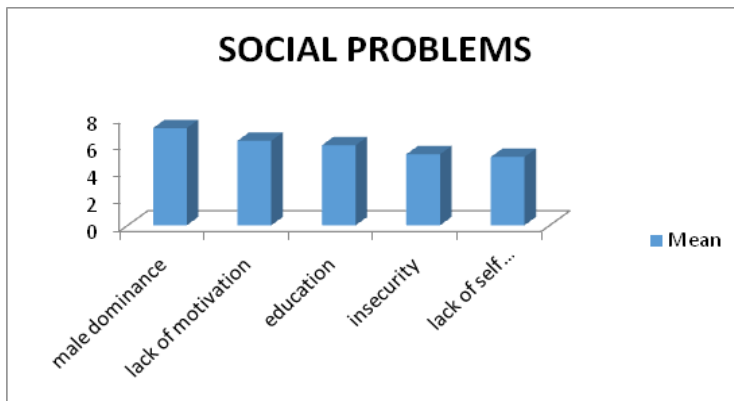
Interpretation

The main self sufficiency problem faced by women entrepreneurs is tension. Respondents neutrally agreed about the burden of work, Health problems and Lack of leisure time. And they never feel the problem of poor risk taking ability.

Table 4 Social Problems

Problems	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rare	Never	Mean
Male dominance	5	9	3	5	28	7.2
Lack of motivation	0	7	7	9	27	6.26
Education	0	7	3	12	28	5.93
Insecurity	0	3	3	14	30	5.26
Lack of self confidence	0	0	7	12	31	5.06

Chart 4 Social Problems



Interpretation

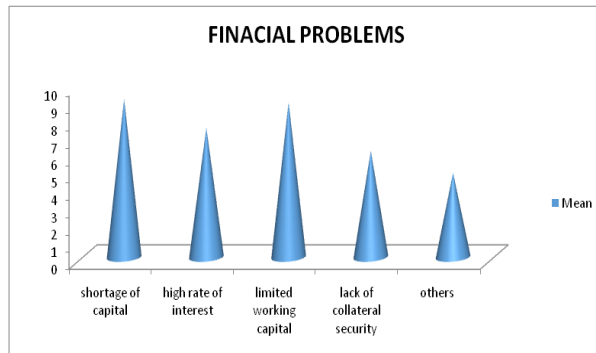
The main social problem faced by women entrepreneurs is male dominance. The above figure shows that majority of women entrepreneurs has not faced the problem of insecurity, education, self confidence, etc. As per the figures secondly arising problem is lack of motivation.

Table 5 Financial Problems

Problems	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rare	Never	Mean
Shortage of capital	4	3	24	14	5	9.13
High interest rate	7	9	0	7	27	7.46
Limited working capital	0	13	18	9	10	8.93
Lack of collateral security	0	0	14	14	22	6.13
Others	0	0	7	9	34	4.86

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 6 Financial Problems



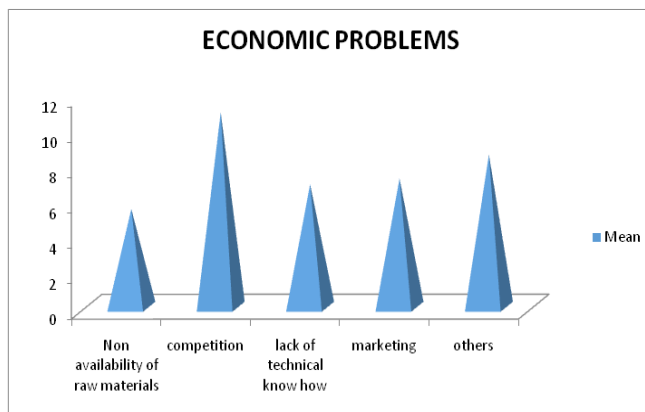
Interpretation

The main financial problems faced by the women entrepreneurs were shortage of capital and shortage of limited working capital. They were not much facing the problem of interest rate and lack of collateral security.

Table 7 Economic Problems

Problems	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rare	Never	Mean
Non availability of Raw materials	0	2	9	9	30	5.53
Competition	0	28	12	7	3	11
Lack of technical know how	3	3	12	9	23	6.93
Marketing	3	3	9	20	15	7.26
Others	0	7	23	12	8	8.6

Chart 7 Economic Problems



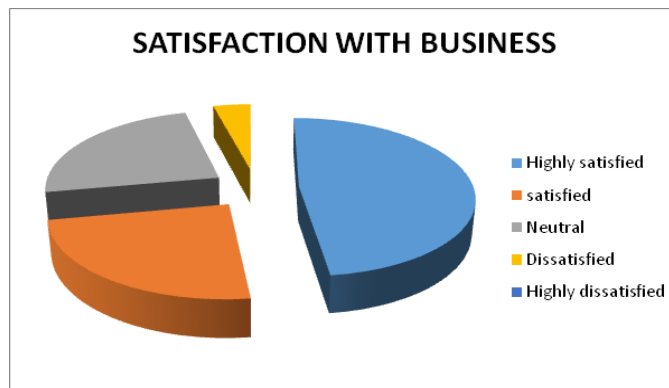
Interpretation

The main economic problem faced by the women entrepreneurs is tough competition. Next they face the problem of availability of credit facilities. Respondents were satisfied with the availability of raw materials and rarely agreed with the problem of lack of technical knowhow and marketing problems.

Table 8 Overall Satisfaction of Business

Opinion	Percentage of respondents
Highly satisfied	48
Satisfied	24
Neutral	24
Dissatisfied	4
Highly dissatisfied	0

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 8 Overall Satisfaction of Business

Interpretation

48% of women entrepreneurs are highly satisfied their business and 24% of them are satisfied with the business. 24% of respondents neutrally agreed with that. And only 4% of women entrepreneurs are dissatisfied with their business.

Summary, Suggestions and Conclusion

Summary

The study mainly focused on the prospects and problems faced by women entrepreneurs. A sample of 100 women entrepreneurs are selected from various districts in Kerala by using purposive sampling method. The main objective of the study is to determine the various problems faced by women entrepreneurs after COVID-19 and also to determine their satisfaction level of entrepreneurship. Questionnaire and schedule is used as data collection tool .It includes demographic profile , influencing factors and the major problems faced by women entrepreneurs .After the data has been collected it was analyzed using simple statistical technique , ranking and descriptive statistics are used.

Suggestions

- There should continues attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and cooperate women entrepreneurs
- As awareness programme should be conducted on a mass scale with the intention to creating awareness among women about the various scheme provided by the government for supporting them and about various areas to conduct business

- Along with the introduction of various schemes by the government they should also concentrate on how they effectively implemented among women entrepreneurs
- Women entrepreneurs should be offered soft loan and subsidies for encouraging them to industrial and other activities .The financial institution should provide more working capital assistance to women entrepreneurs and help them for smooth running of their business.

Conclusion

In Kerala, women entrepreneurs are emerging day by day and out of 7/10 women entrepreneurs having experience more than 10 years. Most of them are successful in their Business. After COVID-19 pandemic the challenges they face like difficult to balance Work-Life and there is difficult to Adapt and Diversify. And More than 50% of female entrepreneurs work in the wholesale/ retail trade, for example, which suffered greatly decreased demand due to shutdowns ie, muted demand for services. Businesses run by female entrepreneurs may be especially vulnerable during times of crisis, because they are less likely to have reserves of capital to depend on when income is low. Male dominance is also a challenge faced by them.

There should continues attempt to inspire, encourage, motivate and cooperate women entrepreneurs.

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