

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KERALA

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DECLARATION

I **MEREESHA A**, do hereby declare that this Dissertation titled “**CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KERALA**” is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2021-2023 towards partial fulfilment of the requirements for the **Master of Arts in Human Resource Management** Degree Examination. I further declare that this dissertation is based on the original study undertaken by me and has not been submitted for the award of any diploma or degree from any other University/ Institution.

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled on “CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KERALA” is a record of genuine work done by Mereesha A, fourth semester Master of Arts in Human Resource Management student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that is hereby approved for submission

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates into the difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala, with a focus on their individual, entrepreneurial skill-related, and financial challenges. By analyzing data gathered from 85 women entrepreneurs, the research explores various aspects of their entrepreneurial journey. The outcomes reveal that a substantial portion of these entrepreneurs falls within the 25 to 45 age group, suggesting a significant presence of young talents in the entrepreneurial sphere. The majority of businesses fall under the sole proprietorship category, while a notable number of entrepreneurs adopt a mixed approach by combining offline and online business methods. In terms of income, most respondents report earning between 1 to 25 lakhs, indicating a prevalence of middle-income levels.

When considering the challenges faced, the study investigates "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors." While there are some differences across age groups, ownership types, and business modes, common challenges emerge. The study underscores the interconnectedness of these factors, as evident from the strong positive correlations among them.

The research underscores the necessity of addressing these challenges comprehensively, encompassing personal attributes, entrepreneurial skills, and financial situations, to effectively support and empower women entrepreneurs. This study enhances the understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape in Kerala and offers insights for cultivating an environment that fosters the success and growth of women entrepreneurs.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the current scenario, women entrepreneurs are increasingly breaking through traditional barriers and making their mark in diverse industries globally. These visionary and determined women are driving innovation, creating job opportunities, and contributing significantly to economic growth. Despite persistent challenges such as gender bias and limited access to funding, women entrepreneurs are leveraging their unique perspectives and experiences to launch successful ventures. With the rise of digital platforms and e-commerce, many are also venturing into online businesses, harnessing technology to reach a global audience. Governments, organizations, and societies are recognizing the immense potential of women-led businesses and are actively working to provide mentorship, funding, and supportive ecosystems. As role models and agents of change, women entrepreneurs are inspiring future generations, fuelling a positive cycle of empowerment and progress. As we move forward, it is evident that women entrepreneurs are reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape and contributing to a more inclusive and dynamic business world

In today's interconnected and dynamic world, the role of women entrepreneurs is gaining increasing prominence as they navigate and shape the complexities of the business landscape. These enterprising women are boldly stepping into sectors across the globe, from established industries to emerging markets, injecting innovation, diversity, and resilience into their ventures. Their entrepreneurial journey is a testament to breaking down barriers and defying traditional norms, highlighting the immense potential that women bring to the realm of business. As they forge their paths, women entrepreneurs not only contribute to economic growth but also inspire change, challenge stereotypes, and champion the notion that entrepreneurship knows no gender boundaries. This introduction sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the remarkable contributions and transformative impact of women entrepreneurs worldwide.

In the dynamic landscape of Indian business, women entrepreneurs have emerged as powerful agents of change, reshaping industries and redefining societal norms. With a blend of innovation, determination, and adaptability, these visionary women are carving out their niches across diverse sectors, from technology and healthcare to sustainable fashion and rural empowerment. Their entrepreneurial spirit is not only fuel economic growth but also challenging deeply entrenched gender biases, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable business environment. Against a backdrop of both opportunities and obstacles, women

entrepreneurs in India are weaving narratives of success, resilience, and empowerment, inspiring a new generation to break free from traditional constraints and embrace the limitless possibilities of entrepreneurship. This introduction sets the stage to delve into the remarkable journeys and transformative impact of women entrepreneurs in the vibrant tapestry of India's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Women entrepreneurs are women who establish and manage their own businesses, taking on the associated risks and responsibilities. They have made remarkable progress in the business world, breaking through societal barriers and proving their competence and leadership abilities. Women entrepreneurs contribute to economic growth, create employment opportunities, and empower other women to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. However, they still face challenges such as limited access to capital and networks, as well as biases and expectations. Nonetheless, support networks and initiatives promoting gender equality are helping women entrepreneurs overcome these obstacles. The success stories of women entrepreneurs serve as inspiration for aspiring businesswomen globally, emphasizing the importance of equal opportunities. In Kerala, women entrepreneurs have excelled in various sectors, contributing to economic growth and becoming role models for others. The availability of government initiatives, financial assistance, and mentorship programs has played a significant role in empowering women in business in Kerala.

Additionally, networking forums and support groups have provided guidance and resources, fostering collaboration and a strong support system. Women entrepreneurs in Kerala have expanded their businesses beyond regional boundaries, inspiring others and contributing to the overall entrepreneurial landscape in India.

Women entrepreneurs face a myriad of challenges that span from deeply ingrained societal biases to structural barriers within the business ecosystem. These obstacles, often rooted in historical gender norms, can significantly impact women's ability to establish, grow, and sustain their businesses. As the world gradually acknowledges the importance of gender equality, it is imperative to examine and address these challenges to create a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial landscape.

One of the primary challenges faced by women entrepreneurs is gender bias, which manifests in various forms and can influence perceptions, decisions, and opportunities. Stereotypes that undermine women's capabilities and associate them primarily with caregiving roles persist, affecting how their entrepreneurial endeavours are viewed. Such biases can result in reduced

access to funding, support networks, and mentorship, thus impeding the growth potential of women-led businesses. Moreover, women entrepreneurs often find themselves having to prove their competence and dedication to overcome initial scepticism, which can be both exhausting and discouraging

Access to funding remains a significant hurdle for women entrepreneurs globally. Inadequate financial support can stunt business growth and limit opportunities for scaling. Research consistently reveals a funding gap between women-led ventures and those led by men. Venture capital firms and angel investors, who play a crucial role in providing financial backing to start-up's tend to favour male-led businesses due to systemic biases and a lack of diverse representation in decision-making roles. This disparity in funding opportunities not only affects individual women entrepreneurs but also contributes to perpetuating gender inequalities in entrepreneurship.

The dearth of female role models and mentors presents another substantial challenge. Mentorship is instrumental in providing guidance, insights, and a support network for entrepreneurs, helping them navigate the complexities of business. However, women often face difficulties in finding relatable role models and mentors in industries dominated by men. This lack of representation hampers their ability to access valuable knowledge, network connections, and strategic advice, hindering their overall business growth and development. Work-life balance is a persistent concern for women entrepreneurs, particularly those who juggle business responsibilities with family and caregiving duties. Societal expectations and traditional gender roles can create added pressure on women to fulfil domestic responsibilities, making it challenging to allocate sufficient time and energy to their entrepreneurial pursuits. Striking a balance between running a business and managing familial roles often requires extraordinary organizational skills, time management, and support systems that are not always readily available.

Networking and access to business networks can also be problematic for women entrepreneurs. Many industries still feature predominantly male-dominated networks and events, which might not always be inclusive or accommodating to women. This lack of access to networking opportunities can limit women's exposure to potential clients, collaborators, and mentors, thereby affecting their ability to forge essential partnerships and gain visibility within their industries.

Cultural and social barriers can pose significant challenges in specific regions and communities. Cultural norms and expectations about women's roles may hinder their ability to start or manage businesses, impacting their mobility, access to resources, and decision-making authority. Overcoming deeply ingrained cultural biases requires a concerted effort to challenge stereotypes and promote a more inclusive understanding of women's roles in the business world.

Moreover, women entrepreneurs often encounter difficulties in male-dominated industries or sectors. The tech and STEM fields, for instance, continue to be underrepresented by women, leading to challenges such as a lack of credibility and limited access to industry networks. Breaking into established networks and overcoming stereotypes can be particularly arduous in sectors where women are historically marginalized. , necessitate concerted efforts to level the playing field and create an environment conducive to women's entrepreneurial endeavours. Addressing these obstacles requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses policy.

In the lush and culturally diverse landscape of Kerala, a group of enterprising women are scripting their entrepreneurial journeys, often against a backdrop of unique challenges that require resilience, adaptability, and innovation. This study aims to delve into the multifaceted challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala as they embark on the path of business ownership and endeavour to make their mark in a traditionally male-dominated arena. The objectives of this research are threefold. First and foremost, it seeks to explore the personal challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs during the inception of their businesses. These challenges might encompass societal expectations, familial responsibilities, and cultural norms that can influence women's decisions to take the entrepreneurial plunge.

Secondly, this study aims to shed light on the entrepreneurship skill-related challenges that women entrepreneurs encounter in the dynamic business landscape of Kerala. From acquiring essential business skills to navigating the intricacies of networking, marketing, and decision-making, women entrepreneurs may face obstacles that demand targeted support and resources

Lastly, this research endeavours to comprehensively examine the financial challenges and issues that women entrepreneurs grapple with as they strive to establish and grow their businesses. Access to funding, traditional financial practices, and gender biases in investment allocation can all contribute to a complex financial landscape that requires a closer investigation. Entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant driver of economic growth and innovation, fostering employment opportunities and empowering individuals to realize their

ambitions. In recent years, women entrepreneurs have made noteworthy contributions to various industries, breaking through societal barriers and challenging gender norms. However, despite these advancements, women entrepreneurs still encounter unique challenges and hurdles in their entrepreneurial journeys.

This study aims to delve into the multifaceted challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the state of Kerala, India. It seeks to investigate three key dimensions of these challenges: personal, entrepreneurship skills, and financial issues. Understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment that promotes women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study extensively investigates the range of hurdles that women entrepreneurs confront within Kerala's business arena in India. With a particular focus on the personal, skill-related, and financial challenges that emerge during the establishment and operation of their enterprises, this research aims to uncover the intricate details of these impediments. By delving deeply into these challenges, the study not only seeks to raise awareness about the distinctive barriers that women entrepreneurs face but also aims to identify potential strategies and support systems that could stimulate their achievements in entrepreneurship.

The insights derived from this research carry substantial implications for various stakeholders. Policymakers can draw insights from the study's findings to inform the formulation of targeted policies and initiatives that address the specific challenges identified, thereby fostering a more enabling environment for women entrepreneurs. Organizations and institutions can utilize the research results to design tailored training programs, mentorship platforms, and networking opportunities that directly target the skill-related challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Additionally, the study's focus on financial challenges and gender biases underscores the need for equitable investment practices and enhanced financial inclusion. Overall, this research has the potential to usher in transformative changes in Kerala's entrepreneurial landscape, paving the way for a more inclusive, diverse, and flourishing business environment.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant implications driven by its three distinct objectives. Firstly, exploring the personal challenges faced by women entrepreneurs during the initiation of their businesses carries societal importance. Unveiling these challenges offers insights into the impact of cultural norms and expectations on women's entry into entrepreneurship. This comprehension can pave the way for targeted support mechanisms and mentorship initiatives, aiding women in overcoming personal barriers and instilling confidence to enter the entrepreneurial sphere. Such efforts contribute to a more diverse and inclusive entrepreneurial landscape.

Secondly, investigating challenges related to entrepreneurship skills has practical significance for the growth of women entrepreneurs. Identifying specific skill gaps, such as networking and decision-making, informs the design of customized skill development programs. These programs can equip women entrepreneurs with the necessary abilities to navigate obstacles and seize opportunities effectively. The study's importance lies in nurturing women's self-assurance and competence, amplifying their role in driving economic progress.

Lastly, comprehending the financial challenges and issues faced by women entrepreneurs holds substantial economic implications. Addressing barriers in accessing funding, traditional financial practices, and investment biases is pivotal for ensuring equitable prospects. The study's findings can steer policy modifications aimed at levelling the financial playing field, translating into improved funding availability and financial inclusivity for women entrepreneurs. This aspect's significance resides in dismantling financial impediments, enabling women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and fostering a more balanced economic landscape. In summation, the study's multifaceted significance revolves around empowering women, honing their skills, and catalysing economic advancement in the domain of women entrepreneurs in Kerala.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

- To study the personal challenges faced by women entrepreneurs while starting their business
- To study the entrepreneurship skill related challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in their business.
- To study the financial challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in their business

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Challenges:

Theoretical definition

Challenge is defined as a demanding task or situation that requires as a demanding task or situation that requires effort ,skills ,or determination to overcome ,often presenting difficulties or obstacles to be resolved – (oxford English Dictionary)

Operational definition

Challenges refer to difficult situations, obstacles, or tasks that require effort, skill, and determination to overcome. They can be encountered in various domains of life, such as personal, professional, academic, or social contexts. Challenges often test one's abilities, resilience, and problem-solving skills, and they can offer opportunities for personal growth and learning.

Women:

Theoretical definition

No experience of womanhood is ever singular or universal; all women must negotiate their positionality in regard to race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, ability, and/or nationality – (Amy K. Guenther)

Operational definition

Gender identity is a deeply personal and subjective experience, and individuals' self-identified gender should be respected and affirmed. Some Individuals assigned female at birth may not identify as women, and conversely, some Individuals assigned male at birth may identify and live as women. Gender identity is diverse and encompasses a range of experiences and expressions.

Entrepreneur:

Theoretical definition

Entrepreneur is an innovator who brings economic development through new combinations of factors of production - (Joseph Schumpeter)

Operational definition

An entrepreneur is an individual who identifies and pursues opportunities, often in the form of new business ventures or initiatives. Entrepreneurs are characterized by their ability to innovate, take calculated risks, and create value. They play a pivotal role in driving economic growth and societal progress

1.6 CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1 – Introduction which includes Statement of the problem, Significance of the study, Objectives, Definition of concepts and Chapterization

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature, Introduction and Conclusion

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology which included Introduction, Title, Scope of the study, Research design, Research variables, Universe of the study, Sampling design, Sources of data, Tools for data collection, Data collection, Data analysis and Limitations of the study

Chapter 4 – Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 5 – Findings and Conclusion

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature plays a crucial role in assessing the existing body of published works related to the chosen topic. It offers a comprehensive assessment and overview of the current state of knowledge. Our focus in this review is on exploring the different aspects of sustainable energy technologies specifically in urban environments. Given the increasing demand for sustainable energy solutions, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the research and advancements in this area. The primary objective of this literature review is to analyse and synthesize a wide range of literature sources, including academic articles and industry reports, to identify key patterns, gaps, and challenges. By investigating the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainable energy technologies, this review aims to deepen our understanding of their potential benefits and limitations within urban settings. Ultimately, the insights gained from this literature review will contribute to informing future research, policy development, and decision-making processes in the pursuit of sustainable and resilient urban energy systems.

2.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chaker, H., & Zouaoui, S. (2023). The authors have conducted a study titled on “*Meeting the Challenge of Entrepreneurship with Social Media: The Case of Tunisian Women Entrepreneurs*” “Despite the significant presence of digital women entrepreneurs globally, the extent to which social media aids them in addressing entrepreneurial challenges remains unclear. This study utilized semi-structured interviews to investigate the role of social media in the operations of eight Tunisian digital women entrepreneurs. Tunisia, situated in the Middle East and North Africa region, was chosen due to its intriguing landscape of women's involvement across various sectors, particularly entrepreneurship. Surprisingly, there is a dearth of research on this topic within this context, despite the widespread usage of social media platforms. The findings indicate that social media has a positive impact on these women entrepreneurs' professional lives, assisting them in navigating the intricacies of entrepreneurship.

G Antony, G Sebastian (2021) the authors have conducted a study titled on “*Women entrepreneurs in Kerala and their investment Behaviour*” “The level of investment plays a crucial role in determining economic growth. Women entrepreneurship has gained importance due to the combination of economic independence and support from their families. The inclusion of women in mainstream economic activities is essential for meaningful economic

development. This study focuses on various aspects of investment and investment opportunities, factors influencing the investment behaviour of women entrepreneurs, family support, motivating factors, and challenges faced by them during investment. The majority of the respondents were married and cited the company's reputation, ease of withdrawals, and low-risk investments as their motivating factors for investing. The study found no significant relationship between the marital status of women entrepreneurs and their investment motivations. In conclusion, the majority of the respondents receive support from their family members

PB Datta, R Gailey (2021) the authors have conducted a study titled “on empowering women through social entrepreneurship: Case study of a women's cooperative in India “This article aims to expand the current knowledge on women's entrepreneurship by examining a less explored type of venture in India, specifically a social entrepreneurial venture. The study utilizes a case study analysis to investigate two main aspects: (1) the empowerment elements integrated into the venture's business model and (2) the individual perceptions of empowerment. By analysing the personal experiences of female members involved in the cooperative, the findings highlight three ways in which this collective form of entrepreneurship has empowered them: providing economic security, fostering the development of entrepreneurial skills and mind-set and increasing their contributions to the family's well-being.

Manjula R. Iyer (2019) the author have conducted a study titled on “Problems faced by women entrepreneurs in Ernakulam district, Kerala ‘, there is a growing presence of women entrepreneurs in small-scale industries. However, despite the government's efforts to mobilize women through various associations, they demonstrate a hesitancy to venture into business. Compared to men, women encounter specific obstacles that dampen their motivation to initiate and sustain business ventures. This study seeks to identify the primary challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Ernakulam District, Kerala. By collecting primary data from 90 women entrepreneurs and utilizing simple statistical tools for analysis, the study reveals that the key hurdles include financial limitations, inadequate support from institutions, marketing complexities, societal attitudes, and a dearth of skilled workers. Addressing these issues becomes imperative to foster the growth and prosperity of women entrepreneurs in the region.

SV Priya, KD Sreeranganadhan (2017) the authors have conducted a study titled on” *Gender Issues and Challenges of Fisherwomen to Become an Entrepreneur in Kerala* “ within fishermen families, men are actively involved in fishing, but the uncertain nature of the fishing

sector leads to an unreliable income. As a result, women shoulder the responsibilities of managing the household, including food, childcare, education, family health, sanitation, financial management, and debt repayment. Fisherwomen face various challenges when trying to enter the industry, especially with the introduction of mechanization and multi-day fishing. They play a crucial role in meeting the domestic needs of the fishing community. This study focuses on documenting the difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs in the fishermen community in Kerala and emphasizes the role of education in empowering them

K Koneru (2017) the author have conducted a study titled on “ *Women entrepreneurship in India-problems and prospects* “ Indian women face significant challenges in their journey towards achieving equal rights and positions due to deep-rooted traditions and a male-dominated sociological structure. Despite these obstacles, Indian women have shown remarkable achievements in various fields and are recognized for their accomplishments. The changing social landscape in India, including increased educational opportunities for women and aspirations for a better lifestyle, has necessitated a shift in the way Indian women live their lives. They have not only competed with men but also excelled alongside them in various domains, including business. These women leaders possess qualities such as assertiveness, persuasiveness, and a willingness to take risks. Through hard work, diligence, and perseverance, they have not only survived but also thrived in the competitive business environment.

A Kumar, J Rakhin (2016) the authors have conducted a study titled on “*Kudumbashree: Promoting the Self-Help Group Model of Empowerment through Women Entrepreneurship in Kerala-A Study*” Kudumbashree, a poverty reduction project in the state of Kerala, India, has become a significant movement for women's empowerment and entrepreneurship. It follows a self-help group model and aims to create human resources within the productive sector for sustainable livelihoods. Kerala stands out among Indian states and even compares favourably with developed countries in terms of various social well-being indicators, thanks to factors like women's literacy, equal salaries, technical and professional services, and gender equality. The success of Kudumbashree reflects a broader understanding of poverty as the freedom to choose socio-economic functioning, rather than solely focusing on income. This project recognizes that poverty reduction is intricately connected to women's empowerment and entrepreneurship. Over the years, Kudumbashree has evolved into one of Asia's largest women's movements, fostering a wide range of female entrepreneurial activities. A research study conducted from July to September 2015 among female entrepreneurs actively involved in Kudumbashree

explored the organization's activities, its impact on women's empowerment, and its role in promoting female entrepreneurship

K Sangolagi, M Alagawadi (2016) .the authors have conducted a study titled on “ *Women entrepreneurs* “This research endeavour focuses on Women's entrepreneurship and empowerment are recognized as vital tools in combatting poverty and unemployment. In contemporary times, women's empowerment has gained prominence. However, empowering women extends beyond mere job creation; it necessitates inspiring them to establish their own enterprises. Traditionally, women have played pivotal roles in both family and society, yet their contributions have often gone unnoticed significant Women are actively engaged in various spheres, from family and agriculture to commerce, industry, and even politics. While women entrepreneurs are gaining momentum worldwide, they encounter numerous challenges. Overcoming these challenges requires raising awareness about available opportunities and garnering support from their families

V Yadav, J Unni (2016)) the authors have conducted a study titled on “ *Women entrepreneurship: research review and future directions* “ Research on women entrepreneurship has experienced significant growth in the last three decades, with numerous publications in journals, literature reviews, and books. This study has two objectives: firstly, to analyse the number of papers published on women entrepreneurship in 12 established entrepreneurship journals from 1900 to 2016, and secondly, to review literature reviews published between the 1980s and 2016 to assess the field's growth and propose future research directions. The findings of the review indicate that there is still much work to be done in terms of developing a strong theoretical foundation for research on women entrepreneurship. Integrating feminist theories with existing entrepreneurship theories can help advance the field. Methodologically, previous research has predominantly followed a positivist approach, calling for the adoption of innovative methods and a constructionist approach to build explanatory frameworks. Moreover, most studies have focused on developed economies within national boundaries, highlighting the importance of building transnational networks and fostering professional communities to facilitate the field's growth.

J Rani, SK Sinha (2016) the authors have conducted a study titled on “*Barriers facing women entrepreneurs in rural India: A study in Haryana* “This study examines the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Haryana, India, focusing on rural areas in District Jind. It uses a descriptive and exploratory approach, collecting primary data through a structured

questionnaire using convenient sampling. The findings reveal several barriers for women entrepreneurs, such as lack of family support, resistance from male counterparts, weak negotiation power, psychological obstacles, limited experience and knowledge, societal and community lack of support, harassment, difficulties in obtaining business loans, lack of awareness about credit facilities, inadequate infrastructure, strict regulations, customer attraction, limited marketing skills, and unfavourable market behaviour. The study suggests that women entrepreneurs should start with sufficient funds, explore new markets, build networks, and seek professional advice. It also emphasizes the need for honest implementation of policies and programs to promote women entrepreneurship. Future research could expand the scope by exploring other Indian states for comparison. Importantly, this study is the first empirical investigation to examine the relationship between educational status and barriers faced by rural women entrepreneurs in Haryana, India.

Chinomona, E., & Maziriri, E. T. (2015) the authors have conducted a study titled on” *Women In Action: Challenges Facing Women Entrepreneurs In The Gauteng Province Of South Africa* “ This research paper focuses on examining the obstacles confronted by women entrepreneurs in South Africa's Gauteng province. This investigation is crucial for aspiring women entrepreneurs, researchers, the South African government, and various stakeholders. The study employed qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews and focus groups. The outcomes highlighted challenges that hinder women entrepreneurs, encompassing limited access to education and training, financial resources, gender bias, negative perceptions, and insufficient support. The paper concludes by offering recommendations to women entrepreneurs, the South African government, and other concerned parties. It also acknowledges the study's limitations and suggests avenues for future research.

Dr. Jain Sunita (2015) the author have conducted a study titled on “Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in India “ The Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (RJHSS) is a globally recognized, peer-reviewed publication that focuses on the areas of arts, commerce, and social sciences. RJHSS aims to present original research articles, short communications, and review articles across a range of disciplines including linguistics, commerce, anthropology, sociology, geography, economics, history, environmental studies, business administration, home science, public health, political science, demography, cultural studies, ethnography, and sociolinguistics. The primary goal of RJHSS is to provide a platform for scholarly contributions that advance knowledge and understanding within these diverse fields.

Deborah, A. E., Wilhelmina, et.al, (2015). The authors have conducted a study titled on “*Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and strategies adopted by women entrepreneurs to ensure small business success in Nkonkobe Municipality, South Africa.*” “This study aims to establish a foundational comprehension of the fundamental operational values of women entrepreneurs in Nkonkobe Municipality, located in the Eastern Cape Province.

V Sreeram (2015) the author have conducted a study titled on ‘ *Problems and prospects of women Entrepreneurship in kerala A study was conducted in Palakkad district of Kerala*’ to explore the challenges and potential opportunities encountered by rural women entrepreneurs in Kudumbashree Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs). The research involved 120 participants, and Garrett's Ranking principle was utilized to determine the most influential factors impacting their businesses. The findings highlighted that the main hurdles revolved around marketing their products, with a mean score of 63.3, followed by issues concerning the operational aspects of their enterprises, scoring 60.25. The study also sought recommendations from the women entrepreneurs on how to tackle these challenges. It was noted that a majority of the respondents expressed significant concerns regarding the marketing of their product and improving the overall performance of their ventures. They offered valuable suggestions in these domains.

L De Vita, M Mari, et.al, (2014) the authors have conducted a study titled on “*Women entrepreneurs in and from developing countries: Evidences from the literature*” “Entrepreneurship has traditionally been seen as male-dominated, but recent studies highlight the significant contribution of women in this field. In 2010, approximately 42% of entrepreneurs globally were women. While research on women entrepreneurs in developed countries has received attention since the late 1970s, the focus on female entrepreneurship in emerging economies and the significance of immigrant female entrepreneurs in developed countries is relatively recent. Given the importance of these two issues for economic development and the need for a comprehensive understanding of theoretical and empirical findings, the authors aim to bridge this gap through a systematic literature review based on rigorous criteria.

Mauchi, Fungai N. (2014) .the authors have conducted a study titled on “*Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs: a case study of Mashonaland central province.*” While acknowledging the pivotal role women entrepreneurs play in economic activity, their growth has been considerably limited due to gender-related challenges when competing with their male counterparts in the business sphere. This study aimed to uncover the specific obstacles

encountered by women entrepreneurs in Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe. The research, conducted through qualitative in-depth interviews with 50 women entrepreneurs in the province, found that these entrepreneurs, aged 20 to 55, primarily operated as sole traders or partnerships, often without formal registration. The study identified challenges concerning limited access to finances, conflicts between work and family responsibilities, networking difficulties, inadequate education and management skills. Interestingly, sourcing raw materials and markets were reported as comparatively less challenging for these women entrepreneurs

Bose, V. (2013) the author have conducted a study titled on “*An analysis of women entrepreneurship development programmes in the state of Kerala.* “ Entrepreneurship has gained momentum in India in recent years, with Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) being considered an effective tool for fostering entrepreneurship in rural areas. Numerous organizations conduct EDPs to provide entrepreneurial training to thousands of participants. However, despite the intention to groom entrepreneurs, these programs often fail to produce the desired outcomes. Both central and state governments are now organizing EDPs, and the author has had the opportunity to conduct such programs for both the government and private sector in Kerala. This paper is based on a field survey of 50 women entrepreneurs who attended Entrepreneurship Development Training, as well as the author's own experiences conducting the programs. The paper also offers suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the programs and provides insights into the existing supportive agencies in Kerala that contribute to entrepreneurship development.

Kaushik, S. (2013) the author have conducted a study titled on “ Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in India “ he study focuses on understanding the motivating and demotivating factors that influence women's entrepreneurship, which is considered the core of economic development. Women are recognized as an emerging economic force in the present time, and their involvement in entrepreneurship not only benefits their families but also contributes to the progress of society and the nation as a whole. Despite the aspirations of many women to start their own businesses, the Indian environment presents challenges that hinder their success. However, with the changing landscape, men are becoming more accepting of women's entrepreneurial opportunities. Moreover, the growing service sector in India plays a significant role in promoting women's entrepreneurship.

A Pharm, R Sritharan (2013). The authors have conducted a study titled on “ Problems Being Faced By Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Areas “ Women have broken traditional

boundaries and are excelling across various professions and services, displaying equal business acumen to men in entrepreneurship. The rise of women-owned businesses globally reflects evolving perceptions of women's economic roles. These entrepreneurs are driven by skills, knowledge, and adaptability, seeking both personal fulfilment and economic independence. In Tamil Nadu, India, an industrially developing area, some excel in small-scale industries. However, despite government efforts and women's associations, many women remain hesitant to venture into business due to fear and lack of motivation. This study focuses on promoting women's entrepreneurial growth by examining their motivations, socio-economic backgrounds, and existing entrepreneurial traits

M Das (2012) the author have conducted a study titled on “*Women entrepreneurs from India: Problems, motivations and success factors*” This research investigates the experiences of female entrepreneurs who own and run small to medium-sized enterprises in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in southern India. The study focuses on the challenges encountered by these women during the establishment and ongoing operation of their businesses, as well as the work-family conflicts they face. Additionally, it explores their motivations for initiating a business venture and the self-reported factors contributing to their success. While the initial obstacles encountered by these women may resemble those faced by female entrepreneurs in Western countries, Indian women entrepreneurs tend to experience lower levels of work-family conflicts and exhibit distinct reasons for embarking on entrepreneurial endeavours and achieving success.

R Narendran (2012) the author have conducted a study titled on” *Social risk and female entrepreneurs in Kerala, India: A preliminary assessment* “This research paper examines the often neglected aspect of social risk in female entrepreneurship, which is often overshadowed by financial risks. The study was conducted in Kerala, a state in South India known for empowering women, and it combines a literature review with qualitative analysis involving 40 female entrepreneurs. The study identifies five prominent social risk factors: limited mobility, male dominance, lack of supportive institutions, perceived discomfort, and societal stigma. The paper emphasizes the importance of policymakers and researchers addressing social risk, particularly in the context of Indian female entrepreneurs who face poverty, abuse, and discrimination. While the Indian government has implemented measures to support women and small businesses, social attitudes and male dominance continue to pose challenges. The paper introduces the concept of fear of social repercussions as a component of social risk and concludes by providing recommendations for further research and governmental actions.

AB Siddiqui (2012) the author have conducted a study titled on “ *Problems encountered by women entrepreneurs in India* “ This research delves into the hurdles confronting women entrepreneurs in India, emphasizing their quest for economic autonomy amid underutilized skills. Despite being regarded as a wellspring of strength, Indian women confront constraints arising from entrenched gender norms and male influence. The study employs a mix of primary (unstructured questionnaires) and secondary data sources to uncover key challenges encompassing familial obligations, gender disparities, financial limitations, risk aversion, and gender-based competition. To enable and maximize the potential of women entrepreneurs, the study underscores the importance of training, incentives, encouragement, social validation, and familial backing as crucial measures

G Javadian, RP Singh (2012) the authors have conducted a study titled on “*Examining successful Iranian women entrepreneurs: an exploratory study* “This study explores the success factors of Iranian women entrepreneurs, including self-efficacy, risk-taking, societal stereotypes, and cultural traditions. Interviews with accomplished entrepreneurs reveal the significance of overcoming societal challenges and leveraging personal attributes such as self-efficacy and risk propensity for achieving success. Despite potential interpretation and translation concerns, this research addresses the scarcity of empirical studies on Iranian women entrepreneurs, serving as a crucial foundation for further exploration. By illuminating this unique entrepreneurial subset, the study enriches our understanding of Iranian women's entrepreneurial journeys.

S Billore (2011) the author have conducted a study titled on “*Female immigrant entrepreneurship: Exploring international entrepreneurship through the status of Indian women entrepreneurs in Japan* “The purpose of the paper is to explore how entrepreneurial opportunities are used by the rapidly increasing immigrant Indian female population in Japan. Given that a majority of Indian women are housewives and grew up in conservative family backgrounds, this analysis seeks to provide an insight into the situations that aided them and the challenges they faced in their entrepreneurial business ventures far from home.

Halkias, D., Nwajiuba, et.al, (2011). The authors have conducted a study titled on “*Challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Nigeria* “This research endeavour focuses on exploring the business and social characteristics of 67 women entrepreneurs across three regions in Nigeria. The primary goal is to unveil recurring trends in entrepreneurship and shed light on the socio-economic challenges that women business proprietors encounter in Nigeria.

The study aims to provide impetus and support for sustainable small-scale economic ventures initiated by Nigerian women. Additionally, it seeks to identify avenues for integrating these modest enterprises into ongoing urban economic development initiatives and strategies aimed at alleviating poverty.

T Tambunan (2009) the author have conducted a study titled on “ Women entrepreneurship in Asian developing countries: Their development and main constraints “ This paper aims to explore the recent developments in women's entrepreneurship in Asian developing countries, considering its significance in poverty reduction efforts aligned with the Millennium Development Goals. The study relies on data analysis and a review of relevant literature, focusing specifically on women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The findings reveal three key insights: firstly, SMEs play a dominant role in the region, accounting for over 95% of all firms across sectors. Secondly, the representation of women entrepreneurs remains relatively low due to factors like limited education, lack of capital, and cultural or religious constraints. Lastly, many women entrepreneurs in SMEs are compelled by the need for improved family income, suggesting that increased educational opportunities and better-paid employment for women may decrease their participation as entrepreneurs in SMEs.

G Singh, R Belwal (2008) the authors have conducted a study titled on “*Entrepreneurship and SMEs in Ethiopia: Evaluating the role, prospects and problems faced by women in this emergent sector* “This research paper aims to identify the challenges and development issues associated with women's entrepreneurship in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with a specific focus on Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Additionally, the paper seeks to propose strategies to promote the growth of women entrepreneurs and advance SMEs in the region.

Aidis, R., Welter, et.al. (2007). The authors have conducted a study titled on “Female entrepreneurship in transition economies: the case of Lithuania and Ukraine“Until now, limited research has delved into female entrepreneurship within transitioning nations. This study adopts an institutional viewpoint to compare two countries in varying stages of transformation. Lithuania underwent swift transition culminating in European Union integration, whereas Ukraine's developmental trajectory is notably slower. While women entrepreneurs in Lithuania and Ukraine exhibit shared attributes and challenges, noteworthy disparities emerge in their respective experiences. This underscores the necessity of acknowledging the diversity among

transitioning countries, which stems from distinct legacies inherited from the Soviet era and variations in the speed of change during the transition phase

2.3 Research gap

This research focuses on uncovering the difficulties encountered by women entrepreneurs in Kerala, considering personal, entrepreneurship skill-related, and financial aspects. Despite increasing awareness of gender-related challenges in entrepreneurship, there's a lack of specific investigations into how these issues interact within Kerala's cultural and socio-economic framework. Existing studies often fail to thoroughly analyse how personal barriers, skill gaps, and financial obstacles collectively hinder the progress of women entrepreneurs within Kerala's unique business landscape. Closing this research gap is crucial for revealing nuanced insights that can guide tailored support systems, policies, and strategies. This, in turn, can foster a more supportive environment for women's entrepreneurial pursuits in the region.

In Kerala, women entrepreneurs face distinct personal challenges influenced by cultural norms and societal expectations. Conventional gender roles and family responsibilities can limit their participation in entrepreneurial activities. The prevailing belief that a woman's primary role is homemaking can curtail their networking opportunities, mobility, and decision-making authority. This often results in lower self-confidence and belief in their capabilities, impacting their ability to take risks and navigate the challenges inherent in entrepreneurship.

The study also aims to explore the entrepreneurship skill-related hurdles encountered by women in Kerala. While women's educational attainment is improving, certain industries and sectors remain male-dominated. This lack of representation translates into fewer role models and mentors for aspiring women entrepreneurs. Moreover, inadequate access to skill development and entrepreneurship training tailored to their needs hampers their ability to bring their business ideas to fruition. The scarcity of opportunities to enhance leadership, negotiation, and marketing skills further restricts their competitiveness in the market.

Financial constraints are a significant dimension of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala. Access to finance is a common barrier globally, and Kerala is no different. Traditional financial institutions might perceive women's businesses as riskier, leading to stricter collateral requirements and higher interest rates. This limited access to loans and investments hampers their potential for business growth. The research seeks to uncover how these financial challenges intersect with cultural factors to create a complex web of barriers, hindering women entrepreneurs' access to vital resources.

What sets this research apart is its focus on the unique cultural and socio-economic context of Kerala. While gender-related entrepreneurship challenges have gained global attention, the specific manifestations of these challenges in Kerala have often been overlooked. The state's distinctive cultural dynamics influence how women's entrepreneurial aspirations are nurtured or stifled. The research aims to unravel these intricacies and reveal insights that can guide the development of context-specific policies and strategies.

Tackling these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that blends short-term and long-term measures. In the short term, targeted programs to build skills and provide mentorship can equip women entrepreneurs with the tools they need. Changing traditional gender norms involves engaging with local communities and families to shift perceptions of women's roles. Additionally, creating accessible financial support mechanisms like microfinance can ease the funding barriers faced by women.

In the long term, building an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem requires collaboration between government bodies, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Policies should be designed to encourage women's participation in entrepreneurship and incentivize financial institutions to be more accommodating. Establishing networks where women can share experiences and knowledge can provide vital support and a sense of community.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the systematic framework and set of procedures that guide the entire research process, from the formulation of research questions or hypotheses to the interpretation and analysis of results. It encompasses the strategies, techniques, and tools that researchers employ to gather relevant data, ensure its accuracy and reliability, and ultimately derive meaningful insights and conclusions. A well-designed research methodology provides structure and clarity, helping researchers navigate the complexities of their study and ensuring that the research is conducted in a rigorous and systematic manner. It involves a careful consideration of the appropriate research design, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and interpretation methods, all tailored to the specific goals and objectives of the study. A robust research methodology not only enhances the credibility and validity of the research findings but also contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the chosen field of inquiry.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

The challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala

3.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on investigating the multifaceted challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in Kerala. The scope encompasses an examination of personal challenges, encompassing societal expectations, cultural norms, and work-life balance issues that women entrepreneurs face during business initiation. Additionally, the study delves into skill-related challenges, exploring how factors such as marketing, strategic planning, networking, and technology adoption impact their entrepreneurial endeavours. Furthermore, the study analyses the financial challenges women entrepreneurs navigate, encompassing difficulties in securing funding, managing cash flow, and addressing potential gender biases in financial interactions. By meticulously scrutinizing these three dimensions, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research study titled "Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala: A Cross-Sectional Study" aims to comprehensively investigate the hurdles encountered by women entrepreneurs in the Kerala region of India. With the increasing involvement of women in entrepreneurship, it is imperative to gain a deep understanding of the specific challenges that hinder their progress. This research design outlines the methodological approach to achieve the objectives of the study.

The chosen research design for this study is a cross-sectional design, which is well-suited to capturing a snapshot of challenges faced by women entrepreneurs within a specific timeframe. This design enables the collection of data from a diverse group of women entrepreneurs at a single point in time, providing insights into their experiences and challenges in starting and running their businesses.

Convenience sampling will be employed as the sampling method. Given the practicality of reaching out to women entrepreneurs, this approach allows for efficient data collection. The target population for this study comprises women entrepreneurs in Kerala. The criteria for inclusion will be defined based on their involvement in entrepreneurial activities. While convenience sampling may introduce some biases, efforts will be made to ensure that the sample represents a variety of industries and business sizes to enhance the study's validity and generalizability.

The primary data collection method for this study will be a survey. A comprehensive survey questionnaire will be developed to address the specific objectives of the study. The questionnaire will be structured into three main sections:

1. **Personal Challenges:** This section will explore the personal and societal barriers faced by women entrepreneurs while initiating their businesses. It will encompass aspects such as family support, cultural norms, and access to networks.
2. **Entrepreneurship Skill Challenges:** This section will focus on the challenges related to entrepreneurial skills and competencies required for business success. It will assess factors such as access to training, mentorship, and skill gaps.
3. **Financial Challenges:** This section will delve into the financial constraints and issues faced by women entrepreneurs during different stages of their business. It will investigate access to funding, credit availability, and financial literacy.

The cross-sectional design will allow for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will be obtained through structured questions with Likert-scale responses, enabling statistical analysis. Qualitative data will be collected through open-ended questions, providing insights into nuanced experiences and perspectives.

Ethical considerations will be of paramount importance throughout the study. Participant confidentiality and informed consent will be ensured. The survey process will be designed to be user-friendly and accessible to encourage participation.

Data analysis will involve both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis will provide a summary of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, while inferential statistics may help identify relationships and patterns within the data.

3.5 RESEARCH VARIABLES

Dependent variable: Challenges

Independent variable: Personal factors, Entrepreneurship skills, Financial Factors

3.6 UNIVERSE AND UNIT OF STUDY

UNIT OF STUDY

Women entrepreneurs.

UNIVERSE OF STUDY

Women entrepreneurs in Kerala

3.7 SAMPLING DESIGN

From readily accessible participants without the need for complex selection procedures. Convenience sampling, a prevalent sampling technique in research, is chosen for its practicality and accessibility. It involves selecting participants based on their ease of availability and proximity to the researcher, making it a straightforward method to gather data quickly. Unlike more elaborate sampling methods, convenience sampling is often chosen for its simplicity and efficiency in situations where time and resources are constrained. This approach, while not always representative of the entire population, provides valuable insights that can offer initial perspectives on a research topic. In this context, convenience sampling was adopted as the sampling design, allowing the researcher to efficiently collect data

SAMPLE SIZE

The term "sample size" refers to the volume of data gathered, or the number of data gathered using the researcher's data collecting method. The researcher was able to gather data for this study from 85 entrepreneurs in Kerala

3.8 SOURCES OF DATA

Primary data

Primary data was collected directly from the women entrepreneurs by administering the questionnaire designed by the researcher.

Secondary data

The researcher has collected secondary data from Newspapers, journal Articles, Internet and Magazines.

3.9 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

A tool in research context refers to the means or techniques employed by the investigator to collect data from participants. In this study, the chosen tool for data collection was a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research instrument involving a set of queries or cues presented to participants to elicit specific information. In alignment with this study's objectives, the researchers developed a questionnaire that encompassed 35 queries, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale for responses. Additionally, the questionnaire encompassed demographic inquiries to profile the participants.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher gathered from primary data the participants by using a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), a software tool utilized for performing statistical analyses.

3.12 Limitation of the study

- Gathering data from female entrepreneurs across Kerala proves to be extremely time-consuming and presents challenges in locating women entrepreneurs throughout the entire region.
- As the data was collected using Google forms, the researcher could not be directly involved in the data collection.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the analysis of data. The data analysis of this study was done quantitatively with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was collected from women entrepreneurs in Kerala using a questionnaire. This chapter includes the demographic profile of the respondents and the analysis of data based on the objectives.

Table 4.1 - Frequency table - Age

	Frequency	Percent
Less Than 25	21	24.7
25 - 35	18	21.2
35 - 45	33	38.8
45 - 55	6	7.1
55 - 65	6	7.1
Greater Than 65	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0

The table provides an overview of age distribution in a group of 85 individuals. It shows that the majority of the group, around 38.8%, falls within the "35 - 45" age range. The younger segment, "Less Than 25" and "25 - 35," comprises 24.7% and 21.2% of the group respectively. The "45 - 55" and "55 - 65" age ranges are each represented by 7.1% of the group. Individuals aged "Greater Than 65" make up the smallest portion at 1.2%. Cumulatively, the data reveals that up to 98.8% of the group is under 65 years old, while the remaining 1.2% is over 65.

Table 4.2 - Frequency table - Type of ownership

	Frequency	Percent
Family Business	6	7.1
Sole Proprietorship	55	64.7
Private Company	7	8.2

	Partnership	17	20.0
	Total	85	100.0
			0

This table illustrates the types of ownership within a sample of 85 entities. Notably, 64.7% are categorized as "Sole Proprietorship," followed by "Partnership" at 20%. Additionally, 7.1% represent "Family Business," while 8.2% fall under "Private Company" ownership. Cumulatively, this data encompasses the entire sample, revealing that the majority of entities are sole proprietorships, with partnerships being the second most prevalent ownership structure.

Table 4.3 - Frequency table - Mode of business

		Frequency	Percent
	Offline	19	22.4
	Online	13	15.3
	Both	53	62.4
	Total	85	100.0

This table outlines the modes of business operation within a dataset of 85 entities. Notably, 62.4% utilize a combination of "Both" offline and online methods, while 22.4% operate solely "Offline," and 15.3% exclusively function "Online." Collectively, this data encapsulates the entirety of the dataset, highlighting that a significant proportion of entities utilize a mixed approach involving both offline and online business modes.

Table 4.4 - Frequency table - Annual Income

		Frequency	Percent
	Less Than 1 Lakhs	23	27.1
	1 Lakhs to 10 Lakhs	26	30.6

	10 Lakhs to 25 Lakhs	25	29.4
	25 Lakhs to 50 Lakhs	10	11.8
	50 Lakhs to 75 Lakhs	1	1.2
	Total	85	100.0

This table presents the annual income distribution within a dataset of 85 entries. Notably, 30.6% fall within the "1 Lakhs to 10 Lakhs" income range, followed by 29.4% within the "10 Lakhs to 25 Lakhs" bracket. Additionally, 27.1% have an income of "Less Than 1 Lakhs," while 11.8% belong to the "25 Lakhs to 50 Lakhs" category. A minor percentage of 1.2% have earnings in the "50 Lakhs to 75 Lakhs" range. Collectively, this data covers the entire dataset and underscores the prevalent income distribution between 1 to 25 lakhs, with a small proportion having higher earnings.

Means table 4. 5 - Personal Factors Entrepreneurial skills financial factors by Age

Age		Personal Factors	Entrepreneurial skills	financial factors
Less Than 25	Mean	3.3274	3.2487	3.4048
	N	21	21	21
	Std. Deviation	.69087	.57403	.64699
25 - 35	Mean	3.5139	3.4259	3.6319
	N	18	18	18
	Std. Deviation	.45554	.27283	.43823
35 - 45	Mean	3.2727	3.2458	3.4886
	N	33	33	33
	Std. Deviation	.70257	.44075	.37807
45 - 55	Mean	3.7917	3.9259	3.7708
	N	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	.40052	.24003	.47048
55 - 65	Mean	3.8333	3.6481	3.8542
	N	6	6	6

	Std. Deviation	.10206	.12989	.12290
Greater Than 65	Mean	3.7500	3.5556	3.3750
	N	1	1	1
	Std. Deviation	.	.	.
Total	Mean	3.4191	3.3647	3.5426
	N	85	85	85
	Std. Deviation	.62432	.45864	.47503

ONE WAY ANOVA – AGE

Table 4.6 Personal Factors Entrepreneurial skills financial factors by Age

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Factors	Between Groups	3.017	5	.603	1.604	.169
	Within Groups	29.724	79	.376		
	Total	32.741	84			
Entrepreneurial skills	Between Groups	3.225	5	.645	3.528	.006
	Within Groups	14.444	79	.183		
	Total	17.669	84			
financial factors	Between Groups	1.562	5	.312	1.419	.227
	Within Groups	17.393	79	.220		
	Total	18.955	84			

The ANOVA table presents the analysis of variance for three factors: "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors." For "Personal Factors," the observed variance between groups is 3.017, distributed across 5 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.603. The calculated F-statistic is 1.604, with a p-value of 0.169, indicating a lack

of significant differences among groups. In the case of "Entrepreneurial Skills," the between-groups variance is 3.225, with 5 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 0.645. The computed F-statistic is 3.528, and the associated p-value is 0.006, suggesting potential statistical significance in group distinctions. Similarly, for "Financial Factors," the variance between groups is 1.562, across 5 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.312. The calculated F-statistic is 1.419, and the corresponding p-value is 0.227, suggesting a lack of significant differences among groups. These results provide insights into the variance within and between groups for each factor, offering F-statistics and p-values to gauge the potential significance of these variations.

One way ANOVA – Type of ownership

MEANS TABLES 4. 6 - Personal Factors Entrepreneurial skills financial factors by Type of ownership

Type of ownership		Personal Factors	Entrepreneurial skills	financial factors
Family Business	Mean	3.0417	3.1667	3.1458
	N	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	1.02977	.67312	.81170
Sole Proprietorship	Mean	3.3955	3.3414	3.5182
	N	55	55	55
	Std. Deviation	.60513	.39071	.42179
Private Company	Mean	3.6786	3.5714	3.9286
	N	7	7	7
	Std. Deviation	.25877	.37090	.22658
Partnership	Mean	3.5221	3.4248	3.6029
	N	17	17	17
	Std. Deviation	.59823	.59736	.47851
Total	Mean	3.4191	3.3647	3.5426
	N	85	85	85
	Std. Deviation	.62432	.45864	.47503

ONE WAY ANOVA - Type of ownership

Table 4.7 Personal Factors Entrepreneurial skills financial factors by Type of ownership

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Factors	Between Groups	1.537	3	.512	1.330	.270
	Within Groups	31.204	81	.385		
	Total	32.741	84			
Entrepreneurial skills	Between Groups	.626	3	.209	.991	.401
	Within Groups	17.044	81	.210		
	Total	17.669	84			
financial factors	Between Groups	2.082	3	.694	3.332	.024
	Within Groups	16.873	81	.208		
	Total	18.955	84			

The ANOVA table outlines variance analysis for "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors." Notably, the observed variance between groups is 1.537 for "Personal Factors," with a calculated F-statistic of 1.330 ($p=0.270$), indicating no significant group differences. Similarly, the variance between groups is 0.626 for "Entrepreneurial Skills," with an F-statistic of 0.991 ($p=0.401$), suggesting no notable group distinctions. For "Financial Factors," the between-groups variance is 2.082, yielding an F-statistic of 3.332 ($p=0.024$), implying potential group distinctions. These findings employ F-statistics and p-values to assess the significance of variation within and between groups.

**MEANS TABLES 4.8 - Personal Factors Entrepreneurial skills financial factors by
Mode of business**

Mode of business		Personal Factors	Entrepreneurial skills	financial factors
Offline	Mean	3.6053	3.4737	3.6250
	N	19	19	19
	Std. Deviation	.61416	.35879	.45644
Online	Mean	3.1635	3.0769	3.3654
	N	13	13	13
	Std. Deviation	.57596	.67034	.57160
Both	Mean	3.4151	3.3962	3.5566
	N	53	53	53
	Std. Deviation	.62729	.40680	.45439
Total	Mean	3.4191	3.3647	3.5426
	N	85	85	85
	Std. Deviation	.62432	.45864	.47503

ONE WAY ANOVA - Mode of business

Table 4.9 - Personal Factors, Entrepreneurial skills, financial factors BY Mode of business

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Factors	Between Groups	1.509	2	.754	1.981	.145
	Within Groups	31.232	82	.381		
	Total	32.741	84			
Entrepreneurial skills	Between Groups	1.355	2	.677	3.405	.038
	Within Groups	16.314	82	.199		
	Total	17.669	84			
financial factors	Between Groups	.548	2	.274	1.220	.301
	Within Groups	18.407	82	.224		
	Total	18.955	84			

The ANOVA table presents variance analysis for three factors: "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors." Notably, the observed variance between groups is 1.509 for "Personal Factors," with a calculated F-statistic of 1.981 ($p=0.145$), implying no statistically significant differences among groups. Similarly, for "Entrepreneurial Skills," the variance between groups is 1.355, with an F-statistic of 3.405 ($p=0.038$), suggesting potential group distinctions. Regarding "Financial Factors," the between-groups variance is 0.548, resulting in an F-statistic of 1.220 ($p=0.301$), indicating no significant group differences. These insights utilize F-statistics and p-values to assess the significance of variation within and between groups.

**MEANS TABLES 4.10 - Personal Factors Entrepreneurial skills financial factors BY
Annual Income**

Case Processing Summary

	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Personal Factors Annual Income	85	100.0%	0	0.0%	85	100.0%
Entrepreneurial skills Annual Income	85	100.0%	0	0.0%	85	100.0%
financial factors Annual Income	85	100.0%	0	0.0%	85	100.0%

Table – 4.11

Annual Income		Personal Factors	Entrepreneurial skills	financial factors
Less Than 1 Lakhs	Mean	3.3750	3.2609	3.4076
	N	23	23	23
	Std. Deviation	.67525	.54701	.63650
1 Lakhs to 10 Lakhs	Mean	3.1202	3.2222	3.5240
	N	26	26	26
	Std. Deviation	.74202	.45866	.29795
10 Lakhs to 25 Lakhs	Mean	3.6400	3.4444	3.5400
	N	25	25	25
	Std. Deviation	.40395	.29745	.49043
25 Lakhs to 50 Lakhs	Mean	3.7125	3.7111	3.8250
	N	10	10	10
	Std. Deviation	.22860	.35985	.12076
50 Lakhs to 75 Lakhs	Mean	3.7500	4.0000	4.3750
	N	1	1	1
	Std. Deviation	.	.	.

Total	Mean	3.4191	3.3647	3.5426
	N	85	85	85
	Std. Deviation	.62432	.45864	.47503

ONE WAY ANOVA - Annual Income

Table 4.12 - Personal Factors Entrepreneurial skills financial factors BY Annual Income

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Factors	Between Groups	4.558	4	1.139	3.235	.016
	Within Groups	28.183	80	.352		
	Total	32.741	84			
Entrepreneurial skills	Between Groups	2.538	4	.635	3.355	.014
	Within Groups	15.131	80	.189		
	Total	17.669	84			
financial factors	Between Groups	1.919	4	.480	2.252	.071
	Within Groups	17.036	80	.213		
	Total	18.955	84			

The ANOVA table provides variance analysis for three factors: "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors." Notably, the observed variance between groups is 4.558 for "Personal Factors," with a calculated F-statistic of 3.235 (p=0.016), indicating potential group distinctions. Similarly, for "Entrepreneurial Skills," the variance between groups is 2.538, yielding an F-statistic of 3.355 (p=0.014), suggesting potential group differences. Regarding "Financial Factors," the between-groups variance is 1.919, with an F-

statistic of 2.252 ($p=0.071$), hinting at possible group distinctions. These insights employ F-statistics and p-values to assess the significance of variation within and between groups.

Correlations Table – 4.13

		Personal Factors	Entrepreneurial skills	financial factors
Personal Factors	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	85	85	85
Entrepreneurial skills	Pearson Correlation	.675**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	85	85	85
financial factors	Pearson Correlation	.549**	.555**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	85	85	85
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The correlation table illustrates the relationships among "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors." Notably, there is a strong positive correlation between "Personal Factors" and "Entrepreneurial Skills" ($r = 0.675$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between "Personal Factors" and "Financial Factors" ($r = 0.549$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, a strong positive correlation is observed between "Entrepreneurial Skills" and "Financial Factors" ($r = 0.555$, $p < 0.01$). These significant correlations suggest that these factors are interrelated and tend to vary together. The results emphasize the potential connections and associations among these variables within the data set

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The presented data analysis delves into the interplay between demographic factors, business attributes, and entrepreneurial competencies within a sample of 85 entities. The study investigates how age, ownership types, business modes, and annual income levels influence personal factors, entrepreneurial skills, and financial aspects. The aim is to uncover potential patterns, correlations, and implications that could guide strategic decisions and resource allocation.

5.2 FINDINGS

This section exclusively presents the results in an objective manner, devoid of any personal interpretations or biases. The presentation of results follows a structured organization, often mirroring the structure of the questionnaire used in the study. Through this process the following insights were uncovered

- The examination of the data reveals significant trends within the group of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. Among these trends, it is evident that individuals aged 35 to 45 hold a substantial presence, indicating a focus on this age range for entrepreneurial activities. Notably, the younger age groups (Less Than 25 and 25 - 35) also make a considerable contribution, while the representation of older age groups (45 - 55, 55 - 65, and Greater Than 65) is relatively limited, suggesting a concentration of entrepreneurship among middle-aged and younger individuals.
- The dominance of the Sole Proprietorship ownership type highlights that a significant number of women entrepreneurs manage their businesses independently. The presence of Partnership and Private Company ownership types is also noteworthy, while Family Business ownership indicates the continuation of familial entrepreneurial traditions.
- In terms of operational methods, a majority of businesses utilize a combination of offline and online modes, reflecting the contemporary business landscape's diversification. The existence of purely offline or online businesses further emphasizes the diversity of operational strategies.
- The distribution of annual income showcases that a significant portion of women entrepreneurs earns between 1 lakh to 10 lakhs annually, indicating the prevalence of smaller-scale or emerging businesses. Interestingly, respondents with higher income

levels (10 lakhs to 25 lakhs, 25 lakhs to 50 lakhs, and 50 lakhs to 75 lakhs) are also included, suggesting the presence of more financially successful ventures.

- Regarding the ANOVA outcomes, there is a suggestion of potential significance in "Entrepreneurial Skills" with respect to different age groups, implying potential variations in skills based on age. However, for "Personal Factors" and "Financial Factors," no statistically significant differences were observed across age groups.
- Considering the ownership types, the ANOVA outcomes imply potential distinctions in "Financial Factors," indicating potential variations in financial aspects based on ownership structures. However, for "Personal Factors" and "Entrepreneurial Skills," no significant differences were noted across ownership types.
- Analysing the business modes, the ANOVA results propose potential differences in "Entrepreneurial Skills," indicating that skills might vary based on the operational mode. Yet, for "Personal Factors" and "Financial Factors," no significant differences were detected across different business modes.
- Furthermore, when considering annual income, the ANOVA outcomes reveal noteworthy variations in "Personal Factors" and "Entrepreneurial Skills," suggesting that income may be associated with differences in these factors. However, for "Financial Factors," no significant differences were identified in relation to annual income.
- The strong positive correlations between "Personal Factors" and "Entrepreneurial Skills," "Personal Factors" and "Financial Factors," and "Entrepreneurial Skills" and "Financial Factors" suggest interconnections among these attributes. This implies that certain personal traits among women entrepreneurs may correspond to strong entrepreneurial skills and an understanding of financial matters.

5.3 Suggestions

- The research indicates that the majority of women entrepreneurs fall within the 35 to 45 age range. Designing support programs that cater to the specific needs of this age bracket could enhance their entrepreneurial prospects. This might involve initiatives

such as mentorship and networking programs that focus on fostering business growth within this particular segment.

- While Sole Proprietorship is predominant, promoting the adoption of other models like Partnerships and Private Companies could enrich business diversity. Raising awareness about the advantages and disadvantages of each ownership structure might empower women entrepreneurs to make well-informed decisions.
- The prevalence of businesses embracing both offline and online modes suggests an opportunity for training that addresses the management of hybrid business models. Providing resources to effectively leverage the benefits of both approaches could prove beneficial for women entrepreneurs and contribute to their business expansion.
- It is imperative to address the needs of women entrepreneurs earning between 1 lakh to 10 lakhs annually. Initiatives such as micro financing, targeted business training, and establishing connections with markets could facilitate the growth and scalability of these smaller enterprises.
- The ANOVA findings imply potential disparities in skill levels based on age, income, and business mode. Offering tailored training programs could assist in developing specific skills that align with the unique profiles of entrepreneurs, ultimately leading to more effective capacity enhancement.
- The correlations observed between "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors" underscore their interconnected nature. Creating an environment that nurtures personal traits such as risk-taking and adaptability, alongside technical skills, can provide substantial support to women entrepreneurs along their journey.
- Encouraging collaboration among diverse age groups can yield positive outcomes. Younger entrepreneurs can gain insights from experienced counterparts, while the latter can benefit from fresh perspectives and digital competencies.
- The findings underscore the significance of data in shaping support initiatives. Regular data collection and analysis can inform policy formulation, intervention strategies, and the evaluation of programs, leading to more effective assistance for women entrepreneurs.
- While the study yields valuable insights, further research endeavours could delve deeper into specific facets like ownership preferences and income disparities. Ongoing research can enhance comprehension and provide nuanced solutions.

- Highlighting success stories of diverse women entrepreneurs can serve as a source of inspiration for others considering entrepreneurship. Such campaigns can challenge stereotypes and motivate a greater number of women to venture into this domain.

5.4 Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in Kerala, focusing on their personal, entrepreneurial skill-related, and financial challenges. The analysis of data gathered from a sample of 85 women entrepreneurs revealed noteworthy insights. In terms of personal challenges, the data showed that the respondents predominantly fell within the age range of 35 to 45, with a significant representation in the "25 - 35" and "Less Than 25" categories. This suggests that a considerable proportion of women entrepreneurs are relatively young, highlighting the potential for emerging talents in the entrepreneurial landscape.

When examining the types of ownership, the majority of the businesses in the sample were categorized as "Sole Proprietorship," indicating the prevalence of individual-owned ventures. Additionally, a significant number of entrepreneurs employed a mixed mode of business operation, combining offline and online methods, indicating the growing influence of digital platforms in business strategies.

The study also delved into the annual income distribution among women entrepreneurs, revealing that a substantial portion of the respondents reported earning between 1 to 25 lakhs annually. This finding underscores the middle-income range as dominant among women entrepreneurs, with a smaller proportion achieving higher earnings.

Analysing the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, the study examined "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors." While the ANOVA results indicated some statistically significant differences in the challenges across different age groups, types of ownership, and modes of business, it's noteworthy that the observed variations were relatively moderate. This implies that, overall, women entrepreneurs in Kerala encounter relatively consistent challenges across various demographic and business dimensions.

The correlations among "Personal Factors," "Entrepreneurial Skills," and "Financial Factors" highlight strong positive relationships between these variables. This suggests that women entrepreneurs who reported higher levels of personal attributes also tended to possess stronger entrepreneurial skills and face fewer financial challenges, reflecting the interconnected nature of these factors in their entrepreneurial journey.

The findings of this study shed light on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala. While some variations exist based on demographic and business factors, a consistent pattern of challenges emerges. The prevalence of young entrepreneurs, the dominance of sole proprietorships, and the common mid-range income levels among women entrepreneurs all contribute to a nuanced understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape in Kerala. The strong correlations between personal attributes, entrepreneurial skills, and financial challenges highlight the importance of addressing these factors holistically to support and empower women entrepreneurs in their endeavours. Further research and targeted interventions can contribute to fostering a more conducive environment for women entrepreneurs to thrive in Kerala's business ecosystem.

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APPENDIX

ANNEXURE 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: A study on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala

Objective:

- To study the personal challenges faced by women entrepreneurs while starting their business
- To study the entrepreneurship skill related challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in their business.
- To study the financial challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in their business

Tool: Questionnaire

Demographic Questions

1. Age
 - a) <25
 - b) 25-35
 - c) 36-45
 - d) 46-55
 - e) 56-65
 - f) >65

2. Educational Qualification
 - a) SSLC
 - b) Higher Secondary
 - c) Graduation
 - d) Post-Graduation
 - e) Others

3. Marital Status
 - a) Married
 - b) Unmarried

4. Location

- a) Urban
- b) Semi Urban
- c) Rural

5. Family Type

- a) Nuclear
- b) Joined

6. Type of Ownership

- a) Family business
- b) Sole Proprietorship
- c) Private company
- d) Partnership

7. Mode of Business

- a) Offline
- b) Online
- c) Both

8. Age of Business (Year)

- a) <1
- b) 1-5
- c) 6-10
- d) >10

9. Annual Income

- a) <1 laks
- b) 1 to 10 Laks
- c) 10 to 25 Laks
- d) 25 to 50 Laks
- e) 50 to 75 Laks
- f) 75 to 1 Cr
- g) >1 Cr

5 items measure- Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I had/have lack of correct education and guidance	1	2	3	4	5
I had/have lack of support from family members	1	2	3	4	5
I had lack of awareness about the different business avenues	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lack of stable mental outlook as well as pessimistic outlook	1	2	3	4	5
My Family responsibilities makes it difficult to be an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5
My Own hobbies and personal time create a conflicting situation for women entrepreneurs	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lack of time for personal life due to involvement in business	1	2	3	4	5
My duty to up bring my children is a challenge to start business	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lack of knowledge regarding the available resources	1	2	3	4	5
I lack managerial skills regarding the adequate planning regarding the resources	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lack of entrepreneurial education	1	2	3	4	5
I am less self-dependent to make decisions in setting up the business ventures and decisions	1	2	3	4	5

I have an unavailability of correct raw materials	1	2	3	4	5
I have faced situations of blockage of finished products	1	2	3	4	5
I have an Inability to manage the resources	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lack of awareness regarding the market situations	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lack of ICT (Information and communications technology) related knowledge to enhance their market and customer base	1	2	3	4	5
I had a lack of collateral security	1	2	3	4	5
I lack the risk bearing capacity	1	2	3	4	5
I had to face High transactional cost to administer the loan procedures	1	2	3	4	5
I have faced tedious documentation procedures during taking loans and other sources of funds	1	2	3	4	5
I had to face High transactional cost to administer the loan procedures	1	2	3	4	5
I had limited financial knowledge about managing finances,	1	2	3	4	5
I had a lack of awareness about funding options	1	2	3	4	5