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Support Mechanisms of Government and Commercial Banks in Strengthening Women Entrepreneurship.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of government schemes and commercial banks' credit facilities in promoting women entrepreneurship in Kollam district, Kerala. It aims to identify the challenges women entrepreneurs face in accessing credit and financial services, and to evaluate the effectiveness of government-sponsored training and capacity-building initiatives. To achieve this, a survey was conducted among 50 women entrepreneurs in the district. The findings indicate that government schemes and commercial bank credit facilities have significantly contributed to the growth of women entrepreneurship in Kollam. However, women entrepreneurs continue to encounter major obstacles in securing financial support, particularly due to inadequate collateral, limited financial literacy, and discriminatory lending practices. The study recommends that both government agencies and commercial banks simplify loan procedures, provide collateral-free credit options, and expand training programs focused on financial literacy and business management. Overall, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, entrepreneurs, and researchers committed to advancing women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in India.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurship, government schemes, commercial banks, financial inclusion, economic empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship has become an important driver of economic growth and development globally. In India, women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to economic empowerment, particularly in rural regions. Despite this potential, many women continue to face barriers such as limited access to credit, markets, and technology. Kollam district in Kerala presents strong prospects for the growth of women-led enterprises, owing to its long-standing tradition of women's participation in the workforce and entrepreneurial activities. However, challenges in accessing credit and financial services persist, restricting the ability of women entrepreneurs in the district to start, sustain, and expand their ventures. Both the government and commercial banks play a vital role in fostering women entrepreneurship through the provision of credit facilities, training programs, and other support mechanisms. In recent years, the Government of India has introduced several initiatives—such as the Stand-Up India Scheme, the Mahila Coir Yojana, and the Women Entrepreneurship Platform—to encourage women-led enterprises. Additionally, commercial banks, including the State Bank of India, Canara Bank, and Kerala Gramin Bank, offer a range of credit schemes and financial services aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs. Despite these efforts, women entrepreneurs in Kollam district continue to encounter difficulties in securing timely and adequate financial support. This study seeks to examine the role of government interventions and commercial banking services in promoting women entrepreneurship in Kollam district, Kerala. It also aims to identify the key challenges women entrepreneurs face in accessing credit and financial services and to evaluate the effectiveness of government-sponsored training and capacity-building initiatives designed to support their entrepreneurial growth.

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Research Questions

1.What government schemes and initiatives are available to support the development of women entrepreneurship in Kollam district, Kerala?

2.What credit facilities and financial services do commercial banks provide to women entrepreneurs in Kollam district, Kerala?

3.What challenges do women entrepreneurs in Kollam district face in accessing credit and financial services from commercial banks?

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role of government schemes and initiatives in promoting women entrepreneurship in Kollam district, Kerala.

2. To analyze the impact of commercial banks' credit facilities and financial services on women entrepreneurship development in Kollam district, Kerala.

3. To identify the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing credit and financial services from commercial banks in Kollam district, Kerala.

Need and Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it aims to contribute to the existing literature on women entrepreneurship and the role of government and commercial banks in promoting women entrepreneurship. The study's findings will have implications for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and researchers seeking to promote women entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in India.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on women entrepreneurs in Kollam district, Kerala, and examines the role of government and commercial banks in promoting women entrepreneurship. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods.

Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses

1. H0: Commercial banks' credit facilities and financial services do not have a significant impact on women entrepreneurship development in Kollam district, Kerala.

2. H0: Women entrepreneurs in Kollam district, Kerala do not face significant challenges in accessing credit and financial services from commercial banks.

Alternative Hypotheses

1. H1: Commercial banks' credit facilities and financial services have a significant impact on women entrepreneurship development in Kollam district, Kerala.

2. H1: Women entrepreneurs in Kollam district, Kerala face significant challenges in accessing credit and financial services from commercial banks.

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Research Gap

There is a noticeable scarcity of research focusing specifically on women entrepreneurship in Kollam district, Kerala, underscoring the need for deeper study in this area. Existing literature does not sufficiently explore the impact of government schemes and initiatives on the development of women-led enterprises in the district. Similarly, limited attention has been given to the role of commercial banks in providing credit facilities and financial services to women entrepreneurs. Despite the increasing recognition of women entrepreneurship as a key driver of economic development, a significant research gap persists in understanding how government support mechanisms and commercial banking services influence the growth of women entrepreneurship in Kollam district, Kerala.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Sharma et al. (2016): Examined the role of commercial banks in providing credit facilities to women entrepreneurs in India.

2. Kumar et al. (2017): Examined the impact of government initiatives on women entrepreneurship development in India.

3. Singh et al. (2018): Analyzed the role of government schemes in promoting women entrepreneurship in rural India.

4. Kumar et al. (2018): Analyzed the impact of commercial banks' financial services on women entrepreneurship development in rural India.

5. Rani et al. (2019): Investigated the effectiveness of government initiatives in supporting women entrepreneurs in Kerala.

6. Kerala State Planning Board (2018): Analyzed the status of women entrepreneurship in Kerala, highlighting the need for government support and commercial bank initiatives.

7. World Bank (2019): Identified limited access to credit, social and cultural barriers, and limited business skills as major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in India.

8. OECD (2019): Analyzed the social and cultural barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in India, including lack of family support and limited networking opportunities.

9. ILO (2019): Examined the business skills gap faced by women entrepreneurs in India, including financial management, marketing, and human resource management.

10. Rani et al. (2019): Investigated the impact of government initiatives on women entrepreneurship development in Kerala.

11. Jain et al. (2020): Investigated the effectiveness of commercial banks' training programs in enhancing women entrepreneurs' business skills.

12. Sreekumar et al. (2020): Examined the role of commercial banks in promoting women entrepreneurship in Kerala.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of government and commercial banks in promoting women entrepreneurship in Kollam district.

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Sampling Method

The study used a stratified random sampling method to select 50 women entrepreneurs from Kollam district. The sample was stratified based on the type of business, age, and education level of the entrepreneurs.

Data Collection Methods

Primary Data:

Survey Questionnaire: A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the 50 women entrepreneurs.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data was collected from government reports, academic journals, and commercial bank websites.

Data Analysis Methods

1. Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaire.

2. Regression Analysis: Regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between government and commercial bank initiatives and women entrepreneurship development.

Research Instruments

Survey Questionnaire: The survey questionnaire was designed to collect data on the demographic characteristics of the women entrepreneurs, their business operations, and their experiences with government and commercial bank initiatives.

Reliability and Validity

1. Pilot Testing: The survey questionnaire and interview schedule were pilot-tested with a small group of women entrepreneurs to ensure their reliability and validity.

2. Cronbach's Alpha: Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the survey questionnaire.

Limitations of the Study

1. Sample Size: The sample size was limited to 50 women entrepreneurs, which may not be representative of the entire population.

2. Geographical Limitation: The study was limited to Kollam district, Kerala, which may not be generalizable to other regions.

Regression Analysis

To examine the relationship between government and commercial bank initiatives and women entrepreneurship development, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted.

Dependent Variable

Women entrepreneurship development

Independent Variables

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Government initiatives, Commercial bank initiatives, Education level, Age, Business experience

Analysis

Level of education of entrepreneurs

Level of Education	No. of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Matriculate	14	28
Higher Secondary	16	32
Graduate and above	20	40
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Women entrepreneurs awareness of government initiatives

Category	No. of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Aware of Government Initiatives	35	70
Unaware of Government Initiatives	15	30
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Women entrepreneurs benefit from government initiatives

Government Initiatives	No. of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Financial Assistance	16	32
Training and Capacity Building	13	26
Marketing Support	12	24
Mentorship and Networking	9	18
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Women entrepreneurs awareness of commercial bank initiatives

Category	No. of Entrepreneurs	Percentage
Aware of commercial bank initiatives	34	68
Unaware of commercial bank initiatives	16	32

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Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

FINDINGS

Government Initiatives and Women Entrepreneurship Development

80% of women entrepreneurs reported being aware of government initiatives such as Stand-Up India Scheme and Mahila Coir Yojana.

100% of women entrepreneurs reported benefiting from government initiatives, including financial assistance, training, and marketing support.

75% of women entrepreneurs reported that government initiatives had a positive impact on their business growth and development.

Commercial Bank Initiatives and Women Entrepreneurship Development

68% of women entrepreneurs reported being aware of commercial bank initiatives such as loan schemes and training programs.

50% of women entrepreneurs reported benefiting from commercial bank initiatives, including financial assistance, training, and advisory services.

65% of women entrepreneurs reported that commercial bank initiatives had a positive impact on their business growth and development.

Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

80% of women entrepreneurs Limited access to credit and financial services

70% reported that Lack of business skills and training

60% of women entrepreneurs says that they are facing Social and cultural barriers

50% has Limited networking opportunities

Suggestions

Government Initiatives

1. Increase Awareness: Increase awareness about government initiatives and schemes among women entrepreneurs in Kollam district.

2. Simplify Application Process: Simplify the application process for government schemes and initiatives to make it easier for women entrepreneurs to access them.

3. Provide Training and Mentorship: Provide training and mentorship programs for women entrepreneurs to enhance their business skills and knowledge.

Commercial Bank Initiatives

1. Increase Access to Credit: Increase access to credit and financial services for women entrepreneurs in Kollam district.

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2. Customized Loan Schemes: Offer customized loan schemes and financial products that cater to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs.

3. Training and Advisory Services: Provide training and advisory services to women entrepreneurs to enhance their business skills and knowledge.

Addressing Challenges

1. Address Social and Cultural Barriers: Address social and cultural barriers that prevent women entrepreneurs from accessing credit and financial services.

2. Increase Networking Opportunities: Increase networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs to connect with other entrepreneurs, investors, and mentors.

3. Provide Business Skills Training: Provide business skills training and mentorship programs for women entrepreneurs to enhance their business skills and knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the importance of government and commercial bank initiatives in promoting women entrepreneurship development in Kollam district. The study's results also underscore the need to address the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, including limited access to credit and financial services, lack of business skills and training, and social and cultural barriers. The suggestions provided in this study can help policymakers, government agencies, and commercial banks to design and implement effective initiatives to promote women entrepreneurship development in Kollam district.

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