

Socioeconomic Status of Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

For sustained economic development and social justice, socioeconomic status of women should be improved along with that of the men folk. Socioeconomic freedom gives women the right to determine the course of their lives. Entrepreneurship enhances the social standing of women. Entrepreneurial activity is dependent on several complex economic, social, and psychological factors. Thus, for any attempt made to understand the entrepreneurial activity among women, an analysis of their socioeconomic status is necessary. The present study had been undertaken to assess the socioeconomic status of women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The respondents of the study consisted of registered women entrepreneurs of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The sample consisted of 327 women entrepreneurs from Kerala and 160 women entrepreneurs from Tamil Nadu. For the purpose of analysis, statistical tools like percentages, rank test, chi-square test, and z-test were used. The study revealed that the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu were similar in the following aspects viz. decision-making power, power exercised in the business, degree of involvement in social activities, and reason for involvement in social activities. With respect to the economic status of women entrepreneurs, significant differences were perceived in their annual sales, income, expenditure, annual savings, amount invested in total assets, fixed assets, amount of working capital at their disposal, and also in the percentage change in total assets, fixed assets, annual income, and in annual savings.

Keywords : women entrepreneurs, self help groups, Kerala state women's industries association, entrepreneurship, small scale industries, socioeconomic factors

JEL Classification : L26

Economic development of a country is generally equated with its industrial development. It is the entrepreneur who stands at the centre of the industrial activity and assumes various roles in a country's development process. For sustained economic development and social justice, socioeconomic status of the women should be improved along with that of men folk. Socioeconomic freedom gives women the right to determine the course of their lives. Entrepreneurship enhances the social standing of women. The entrepreneurial activity is dependent on several complex economic, social, and psychological factors. Thus, in order to understand the entrepreneurial activity among women, an analysis of their socioeconomic origins is necessary.

Statement of the Problem

Women development is closely associated with national development. Since women constitute half of the total population, account for the second largest group of potential entrepreneurs in India, they also play a very important role in the advancement of the country. The Government of India has made conscious efforts to substantially enhance the spirit of entrepreneurship among women from the Fifth Five Year plan (1975-79) onwards. Since then, several developmental programmes have been implemented in this direction. Still, it is a major problem for the Government and promotional agencies to identify potential women entrepreneurs and their current status to decide, implement, and derive optimum benefit of promotional measures to achieve a sustained and speedy growth in women entrepreneurship.

Though the State of Kerala has made significant progress in the field of social development, its rank is relatively low with regard to the investment climate (Confederation of Indian Industry, 2000). Regarding women entrepreneurship, although Kerala has the maximum number of women managed units and women enterprises in the SSI sector as compared with that of the other Indian States (Third All India Census of SSI, 2004), a generation of entrepreneurship has been lost due to lack of entrepreneurial skill (Confederation of Indian Industry, 2000). Further, in Kerala, the atmosphere to start, survive, or flourish women entrepreneurship is also not encouraging. As compared to Kerala, in Tamil Nadu, the entrepreneurial ambience of the State favours entrepreneurs to flourish and grow. A

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recent study by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) revealed that Tamil Nadu offers the best incentives package for industries among industrialized states in India, and it ranks second at the all India level in terms of attractiveness of incentives (Business Knowledge Resource Online , 2001). Evidently, as per the Third All India Census of SSI, 2004, Tamil Nadu ranks second in India with regard to the number of women managed units and women enterprises in the SSI sector. Over the last few years, the promotion of female entrepreneurship has become a key area of debate among academics, policy makers, and support agencies. Though several studies have been conducted in the west, only limited efforts have been made in exploring the socioeconomic status of women entrepreneurs in India. By and large, these studies have focused on women more as workers and less as entrepreneurs. Hence, these efforts were incomprehensive. Besides, a comparative analysis of women entrepreneurship in the two states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu has not been attempted in its entirety. It is in this background that the present study titled "Socioeconomic status of women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu" was attempted.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the socioeconomic status of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Review of Literature

Desai (1996) in his study stated that with education and training, women gain the confidence to do all kinds of work. Further he said that over the years, the educated women have become ambitious, have acquired experience and basic skills, competency and self-assurance by controlling their stressors. Marlow (1997) demonstrated that as a consequence of their background, Scandinavian women set up businesses in the service sector with a little use of advanced technology, with relatively small preliminary expenses, relatively lower prospects of income, and lower growth potential. Kjeldsen and Nielsen (1997) felt that women's special characteristics are not apparent because they are viewed from a traditional, male angle, which is seen as natural in connection with the setting up, development, and management of an enterprise. As an explanatory factor, they introduced the concept of "androcentrism," which reflects a common assumption that traditional, male centered business models are the neutral or normal models. This androcentrism affects decision makers, politicians, journalists, enterprise owners, and researchers.

Methodology

❖ **Selection of the Sample** : For selecting the women entrepreneurs, the States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu were first divided into three zones - south, central, and north. From these zones, one district each representing south, central, and north (Alappuzha , Ernakulam and Malappuram in Kerala, and Madurai, Dharmapuri, and Chennai in Tamil Nadu) were selected at random. There were in all 6541 women managed SSI units in the selected districts of Kerala (2522 in Alappuzha, 3037 in Ernakulam, and 982 in Malppuram) and 3130 in Tamil Nadu (671 in Madurai, 1617 in Dharmapuri, and 842 in Chennai) as on March 31, 2001. Five percent of the units (out of the total units) were selected at random for the present study. Thus, the total number of women entrepreneurs selected as sample came out to be 327 sample SSI units for Kerala and 160 for Tamil Nadu.

❖ **Collection of the Data** : The data required for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the respondents based on a structured interview schedule .The secondary data were collected from reports, books, periodicals, and from various websites.

❖ **Tools of Analysis** : The data collected were suitably classified and analyzed keeping in view the objectives of the study. For the purpose of analysis, statistical tools like percentages, rank test, chi-square test, z-test and t-test were used. The chi-square test was applied to examine the significance of variation in the opinion among the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu .The z-test was used to test the quantitative characteristics of women entrepreneurs, while the rank test was used to assess the order of preference associated with the selected variables. The t-test was used to determine whether the women entrepreneurs selected as sample in Kerala and Tamil Nadu are likely to have come from the same two underlying populations that have the same mean.

❖ **Period of the Study :** The study covers a period of ten years from 2000 to 2009. The survey was made in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu during July 2007 - February 2009.

❖ **Scope of the study :** The present study had been undertaken to assess the socioeconomic status of women entrepreneurs. The assessment was made by considering the perception of sample women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The study is confined to registered SSI units managed by women in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Hypothesis of the Study

H₀₁ : There is no difference in the socioeconomic status of women entrepreneurs in Kerala vis-à-vis women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu.

Results and Discussion

The magnitude of entrepreneurial activity, to a certain extent, depends upon the socioeconomic status of an entrepreneur. The socioeconomic status of rural and urban women are different in India, hence, there are several categories of rural women based on religion, caste, education, income and so on. The status of women is directly connected with their economic position, which in turn depends on the opportunities available to them to participate in economic and social activities. Further, the economic status of women is now recognized as an indication of society's stage of development. Entrepreneurship is a key to development, which enhances the socioeconomic status of a woman.

Historically, Kerala has been quite different from the rest of the country as far as the status of women is concerned. Women in Kerala enjoy a higher status due to progressive social movements and proper State action. In Kerala, education plays a vital role in enhancing the status of women. The achievements of Kerala in the case of social development are ahead not only with reference to all other states in India, but also with reference to most of the other developing countries. In most parts of Tamil Nadu, women have little knowledge of their legal rights and depend largely on the male siblings or husbands. They also do not have much access to credit or income as most of the family expenditure is controlled by men. Even where they have some measure of control, they spend most of their earnings on family needs. The position of women in the State was significantly improved with the starting of the SHGs in 1989 in the rural areas.

The present section seeks to investigate the socioeconomic status of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu on the basis of 21 selected variables. The two chief characteristics viz. the need for independence and a sense of determination drive women to start their own new ventures. For effectively dealing with people, a woman needs a drive which influences and controls others. This power is necessary for the success of the business. The position of a woman entrepreneur in the concern determines the degree of power exercised by her in the business, which is needed to influence people and to lead them to implement ideas. A high position in the concern gives a high power and status to the woman entrepreneur. When the women are sole owners, they enjoy a very high power and status. In the case of a partnership firm, cooperative society or limited company, the degree of power is determined by their position in the concern. The position of the women entrepreneurs in the business (Table 1) reveals that a large majority of the respondents (70 percent in Kerala and 91 percent in Tamil Nadu) enjoyed the position of being the owners of their enterprises. 11 percent of the surveyed women entrepreneurs in Kerala held the position of members, and seven percent women entrepreneurs held the position of managing director ; whereas in Tamil Nadu, nine percent women entrepreneurs were partners. The chi-square test also reveals a significant difference in the position of the women entrepreneurs in business in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

A high level of decision-making power of the entrepreneurs shows their skill in decision making, and the degree of freedom enjoyed by them in running the business. It was observed that women entrepreneurs who did not possess this skill usually delegated this authority to their husbands or others. In both the States, the decision-making power of the sample respondents (women entrepreneurs) was very high - it was 86 percent. The chi-square test also found no significant difference in the decision-making power of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Table 2).

While running a business, an entrepreneur has to take countless decisions and is also responsible for the implementation of the decisions. Generally, acceptance of the decision by the employees depends upon several factors such as loyalty, respect, fear, affection, cooperation of the employees, etc. In case of 87 percent respondents in

Table 1 : Position of the Women Entrepreneurs in Business				
Position in the business	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Managing director	25	7	-	-
Manager cum director	9	3	-	-
Partner	30	9	14	9
Member	35	11	-	-
Owner	228	70	146	91
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2 = 26.740$ with 1 degree of freedom; significant at 5 %level.
Source: Primary data

Table 2 : Decision Making Power that rested with the WEs*				
Responses	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very high	281	86	137	86
High	46	14	17	10
Moderate	-	-	-	4
Low	-	-	-	-
Nil	-	-	-	-
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2 = 0.000421$ with 1 degree of freedom; not significant at the 5 %level.
Source: Primary data , *WE - Women Entrepreneurs

Kerala and 75 percent respondents in Tamil Nadu, the employees always abided by the decisions of their employers. It was also observed that in Kerala, the employers and the employees shared a relationship of mutual respect for each other. Hence, most of the employers did not face any issues in getting the work done by the employees. Whereas in Tamil Nadu, most of the employers used an iron hand (authority) to get the things done by their employees. The chi-square test also shows a significant difference in the degree of acceptance of the decisions (made by the employers) by the employees in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Table 3). An entrepreneur has to solve numerous problems associated with a business. Problem solving depends upon the agility and business acumen of an entrepreneur. A high degree of power can be exercised when the entrepreneur enjoys freedom and possesses self- confidence. 86 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 87 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu were quite adept in solving their business

Table 3 : Employees Abiding by the Decision of the Employers				
Responses	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Always	285	87	120	75
Sometimes	12	4	-	-
Very rare	-	-	-	-
No	10	3	1	1
No opinion	20	6	39	24
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2 = 10.486$ with 1 degree of freedom; significant at 5 %level
Source: Primary data

problems. 13 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 7 percent respondents in Tamil Nadu were adept in resolving the issues associated with their business because of the form of concern opted by them. Only one percent respondents in Tamil Nadu were inept in solving their business problems. 1 percent respondents in Kerala and 5 percent respondents in Tamil Nadu exercised moderate power. The chi-square test also found no significant difference in the degree of power exercised by the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Table 4).

Table 4 : Degree of Power Exercised by the Women Entrepreneurs in Solving the Business Problems				
Responses	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very high	281	86	140	87
High	44	13	11	7
Moderate	2	1	8	5
Low	-	-	1	1
Nil	-	-	-	-
Total	327	100	160	100
$\chi^2=0.227$ with 1 degree of freedom; not significant at 5 %level.				
Source: Primary data				

Involvement in social activities is an effective driving force for women to become entrepreneurs as entrepreneurship adds good value to a woman's social standing. The responses of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu as to their involvement in social activities (Table 5) revealed that the majority of the women entrepreneurs (44 percent in Kerala and 35 percent in Tamil Nadu) did not engage in social activities as they did not have much time on their hands. However, despite the time constraints, 27 percent respondents in Kerala and 36 percent respondents in Tamil Nadu were moderately involved in social activities. The chi-square test found no significant difference in the degree of involvement in social activities among the respondents.

Table 5 : Involvement of the Women Entrepreneurs in Social Activities				
Responses	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very high	48	15	21	13
High	29	8	10	7
Moderate	88	27	58	36
Low	19	6	15	9
Nil	143	44	56	35
Total	327	100	160	100
$\chi^2=8.188$ with 4 degrees of freedom; not significant at 5 %level.				
Source: Primary data				

The type of involvement in social activities depends on several factors viz. financial position of women entrepreneurs, previous occupation, achievements in business, reputation, family status, availability of time, personal interest, purpose, etc. Those entrepreneurs who enjoyed sound financial position decided to become members of Lion's club, Rotary club, etc. Some entrepreneurs, based on their caste, became members of religious organizations. Some were members of merchants associations, KSWIA, MOOWES, WEPA, other clubs and associations, and Government sponsored welfare organizations such as SHG, Kudumbasree, etc.

The rank score comparison of the type of involvement in social activities by the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Table 6) shows that most of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu gave first preference to 'Others' since it also provided a forum to discuss some common business problems. Membership of

charitable organizations was ranked second since these activities gave them a chance to contribute to the society. Membership of government sponsored welfare organizations was ranked third both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In case of respondents from Tamil Nadu, membership of welfare societies was also ranked third.

Type of involvement	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Membership in Lion's club	8.235	6	-	-
Membership in Rotary club	8.656	4	8.571	4
Membership in charitable institutions	8.857	2	8.917	2
Membership in Govt. sponsored welfare organizations	8.833	3	8.597	3
Membership in sports associations	8.143	7	8.571	4
Membership in welfare societies	7.000	9	8.597	3
Membership in residential associations	8.400	5	8.571	4
Membership in arts club	7.857	8	-	-
Others	8.859	1	9.000	1

Source: Primary data

Women entrepreneurs engaged in social activities due to various causes. Some successful women entrepreneurs usually got offers to occupy good position in Government sponsored organizations or other welfare organizations, which provided them a good social standing, an opportunity to serve the society, better networking opportunities etc. The rank score comparison of the reason(s) for the entrepreneurs' involvement in social activities (Table 7) reveals that the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu were involved in social activities with the same purpose in view- to serve the society. Most of the respondents felt that they had an obligation towards the upliftment of the poor, which was proved by them ranking (the reason for involvement) social commitment as second, and business development, social status, and exchange of ideas were ranked as their third, fourth, and fifth preference respectively .

Reasons for involvement	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Social commitment	3.936	2	4.108	2
Mental satisfaction	4.305	1	4.570	1
Business development	3.887	3	3.702	3
Social status	2.500	4	2.911	4
Exchange of ideas	2.175	5	1.875	5

Source: Primary data

The t-test results also show that there was no significant difference in the reason for involvement in social activities (except for the reason 'mental satisfaction') among the respondents (Table 8). The rank score comparison of the nature of social activities undertaken by the women entrepreneurs reveals that a majority of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala organized/participated in medical camps and health awareness programmes simultaneously, for which they had given the first rank, whereas women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu mostly participated in relief camps. In Tamil Nadu, the second rank was given to "participated in medical camps" (Table 9).

An assessment of the amount spent by the women entrepreneurs for social activities (Table 10) revealed that a majority of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu fell in the category that spent less than ₹ 3000/- for social activities. However, the percentage of respondents in this category varied significantly between these two States, which is comparatively very high in Tamil Nadu. 41percent of the respondents in Kerala and 9 percent of the

Reasons for involvement	State	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	df	Sig.	Conclusion
Social commitment	Kerala	142	3.9085	.89049	.668	169	.505	Not Significant
	Tamil Nadu	83	4.1084					
Mental satisfaction	Kerala	155	4.2774	1.06622	-3.176	165	.002	Significant
	Tamil Nadu	86	4.5698					
Business development	Kerala	124	3.8387	1.19203	.933	120	.353	Not Significant
	Tamil Nadu	47	3.7021					
Social status	Kerala	111	2.4775	.89287	-.499	61	.620	Not Significant
	Tamil Nadu	56	2.9107					
Exchange of ideas	Kerala	98	2.1531	1.31879	-1.912	9	.088	Not Significant
	Tamil Nadu	24	1.8750					

Source: Primary data

Nature of Social Activity	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Weight	Rank	Weight	Rank
Medical camp	6.367	1	6.158	2
Health awareness programme	6.367	1	6.111	3
Pollution control programme	5.000	4	3.500	5
Industry safety programme	4.000	5	-	-
Relief camps	5.762	3	6.860	1
Crisis management	5.000	4	3.500	5
Others	6.163	2	5.250	4

Source: Primary data

Amount spent on social activities	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than ₹ 3000	194	59	147	91
₹ 3000 - ₹ 6000	62	20	11	7
₹ 6000- ₹ 9000	2	1	1	1
₹ 9000 and above	67	20	1	1
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=51.665$ with 1 degree of freedom; significant at 5 %level
Source: Primary data

Amount spent on social activities	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Kerala	8240.3670	28590.42952	2.940	.003*
	Tamil Nadu	1586.2500	1741.26707		

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 5 %level

respondents in Tamil Nadu spent more than ₹ 3000 for social activities. The chi-square test also establishes this significant difference at the 5 percent level. The mean score comparison by the z-test (Table 11) also shows a significant difference in the amount spent by the women entrepreneurs in Kerala for social activities when compared to women entrepreneurs spending on the same in Tamil Nadu. The spending pattern was higher in women entrepreneurs from Kerala as compared to their counterparts in Tamil Nadu.

The size of the business and its growth can be measured on the basis of the number of employees and the percentage increase in the total number of employees hired by the female entrepreneurs. For 43 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 36 percent respondents in Tamil Nadu, the total number of employees increased by 100 percent and more (Table 12).

Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	15	5	1	1
-100 -- 75	-	-	4	3
-75--50	-	-	-	-
-50--25	7	2	-	-
-25-0	-	-	-	-
0-25	104	32	62	39
25-50	31	9	17	10
50-75	23	7	16	10
75-100	8	2	2	1
100 and above	139	43	58	36
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2 = 5.369$ with 4 degrees of freedom; not significant at 5 %level
Source: Primary data

Number of employees	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Initial	Kerala	6.6728	12.18845	1.797	.073
At present	Tamil Nadu	4.8313	6.28588	-	-
Percentage increase	Kerala	11.8807	16.91991	3.866	.000*
	Tamil Nadu	6.4750	7.32099	-	-
	Kerala	14.7345	30.34093	-4.359	.000*
	Tamil Nadu	76.8063	149.11953	-	-

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 5 %level

However, for a majority of the respondents in Tamil Nadu (39 percent), the percentage increase was 0 to 25 percent. On the flip side, in the case of 7 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 4 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu, there was a decrease in the number of employees. The chi-square test also found no significant difference in the percentage change in the number of employees employed by the women entrepreneurs. The mean score comparison by the z-test (given in the Table 13) also shows that there is no significant difference in the number of employees employed by women entrepreneurs in the initial period between respondents in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. However, there exist significant differences in the total number of employees employed at present and in the percentage increase. In both the periods, the total number of employees employed by the respondents was higher in case of entrepreneurs from Kerala as compared to their counterparts in Tamil Nadu.

Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	-	-	-	-
-100- -75	-	-	-	-
-75--50	4	1	-	-
-50--25	2	1	1	1
-25-0	6	2	2	1
0-25	38	12	10	6
25-50	27	8	25	16
50-75	42	13	21	13
75-100	19	6	9	5
100 and above	189	57	92	58
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=9.741$ with 4 degrees of freedom; significant at 5%level
Source: Primary data

Total asset	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig. (2-tailed)
At the initial period	Kerala	624291.7431	1446716.41881	3.639	.000*
	Tamil Nadu	198295.7125	445368.98050	-	-
At present	Kerala	3147131.4985	11437939.59561	2.378	.018*
	Tamil Nadu	913166.5625	4583164.90531	-	-

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 5 %level

The total assets of women entrepreneurs included both fixed assets and current assets. The amount of investments in assets is likely to influence the efficiency and performance of the units. Most of the women entrepreneurs invested lesser amounts in assets because of the risk involved and financial limitations. By measuring the percentage change in the total assets, the growth rate of the units of the respondents could be assessed. The majority of the respondents in Kerala (57 percent) and Tamil Nadu (58 percent) achieved a growth rate of 100 percent and more in their total assets. But there was a decrease in the total assets in case of 4 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 2 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu. The chi-square test also shows a significant difference in the percentage change in the total assets of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Table 14). The mean score comparison by the z-test (given in Table 15) also shows that there was a significant difference in the total assets invested in the business by the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, both in the initial and in the present periods. The value of investment in total assets was higher in case of respondents from Kerala than it was in case of respondents from Tamil Nadu for both the periods.

The amount and knowledge regarding expenditure on capital assets have an important effect on future operating cost as investment in fixed assets carries a degree of risk and high cost. Meanwhile, the increase in fixed assets can be considered as a sign of growth of the business. The percentage increase in fixed assets of the women entrepreneurs (Table 16) revealed that 46 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 33 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu registered a growth rate of more than 100 percent in the fixed assets. In the case of 50 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu, the percentage increase was less than 25 percent. In Kerala, 1 percent respondents showed a decrease in fixed assets. The chi-square test confirms that there was a significant difference in the percentage change in total fixed assets of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The mean score comparison by the z-test (Table 17)

Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	-	-	-	-
-100- -75	-	-	-	-
-75-50	-	-	-	-
-50-25	-	-	-	-
-25-0	2	1	-	-
0-25	114	35	80	50
25-50	23	7	11	7
50-75	32	10	10	6
75-100	4	1	6	4
100 and above	152	46	53	33
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=15.088$ with 4 degrees of freedom; significant at 5%level
Source: Primary data

Total fixed assets	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Initial	Kerala	366197.9633	1125056.48638	3.111	.002*
	Tamil Nadu	86512.0000	232397.86752	-	-
At present	Kerala	787572.4771	1641072.66007	.615	.539
	Tamil Nadu	626671.8750	4107790.29875	-	-

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 5 %level

Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	-	-	-	-
-100- -75	-	-	-	-
-75--50	7	2	1	1
-50--25	10	3	1	1
-25-0	5	2	2	1
0-25	27	8	10	6
25-50	23	7	17	11
50-75	22	7	16	10
75-100	14	4	9	5
100 and above	219	67	104	65
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=7.801$ with 5 degrees of freedom; not significant at 5 %level. Source: Primary data

also shows a significant difference in the total amount invested in fixed assets by the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu at the initial period, which was higher in case of respondents from Kerala. However, there was no significant difference in the current investment in fixed assets.

Working capital is the life-blood of any business and industrial concerns require a large amount of working capital, even though it varies from business to business. A comfortable working capital position is essential to ensure smooth

Total working capital	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Initial	Kerala	253847.9083	429463.49630	3.847	.000*
	Tamil Nadu	112627.4625	252047.31021	-	-
At present	Kerala	2007742.5076	7946536.99165	2.675	.008*
	Tamil Nadu	323182.1875	665321.88366	-	-

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 5 %level

Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	1	1	-	-
-100- -75	2	1	-	-
-75--50	5	2	-	-
-50--25	11	3	1	1
-25-0	-	-	3	2
0-25	15	4	4	3
25-50	27	8	18	11
50-75	25	8	19	11
75-100	22	7	11	7
100 and above	219	66	104	65
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=6.928$ with 5 degrees of freedom; not significant at 5 %level
Source: Primary data

Annual turnover	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Initial	Kerala	610674.3119	1440247.22716	3.344	.001*
	Tamil Nadu	219036.3500	492741.11085	-	-
At present	Kerala	3995076.4526	14569361.31244	2.874	.004*
	Tamil Nadu	671551.2500	1776557.56019	-	-

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 5 %level

functioning of the business. Most of the respondents in Kerala (67 percent) and Tamil Nadu (65 percent) registered a growth rate of 100 percent or more in the working capital. However, for 7 percent of the entrepreneurs in Kerala and 3 percent of the entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, the working capital showed a decrease. The chi-square test also found no significant difference in the percentage change in the total working capital available with the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Table 18). The mean score comparison by the z-test (Table 19) shows a significant difference in the total working capital available with the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, both in the initial and present periods. Furthermore, the availability of total working capital with the women entrepreneurs was higher in case of respondents from Kerala as compared to their counterparts in Tamil Nadu for both the periods.

Maximization of profit is the most important objective of any entrepreneur, which is governed by effective sales. The whole of the industrial stage is set around this objective. Increase in annual turnover is a sign of growth of the

Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	4	1	-	-
-100- -75	2	1	-	-
-75--50	13	4	1	1
-50--25	6	2	1	1
-25-0	3	1	4	3
0-25	12	4	12	7
25-50	24	8	9	5
50-75	38	11	17	10
75-100	6	2	12	8
100 and above	219	66	104	65
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=16.714$ with 5 degrees of freedom; significant at 5%level
Source: Primary data

Annual income	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Initial period	Kerala	263992.7645	926973.74965	2.095	.037*
	Tamil Nadu	107327.6375	266454.02984	-	-
At present	Kerala	1479165.7492	6492643.00828	2.193	.029*
	Tamil Nadu	344170.3125	1170281.50374	-	-

Source: Primary data

business of an entrepreneur. It also reflects their ability in gaining customer satisfaction. 66 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 65 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu achieved a growth rate of 100 percent or more in their annual turnover. However, the annual turnover decreased for 7 percent respondents in Kerala and 3 respondents in Tamil Nadu respectively. The chi-square test also found no significant difference in the percentage change in annual turnover of the women entrepreneurs from both these States (Table 20). The mean score comparison by the z-test (Table 21) also shows that there were significant differences in the annual turnover of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu both in the initial period and in the present period. Again, the annual turnover for these two periods was higher in case of respondents from Kerala than it was in the case of respondents from Tamil Nadu.

The income earning capacity of a woman entrepreneur depends on several factors like the type of product selected, degree of competition, availability of resources for investment, capacity, and finally, the risk taking ability. Increased income results in better status of women and it also encourages them for future expansion, modernization, or for the diversification of the units. With respect to the change in the annual income, most of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala (66 percent) and Tamil Nadu (65 percent) were able to achieve an increase of 100 percent or more in their annual income (Table 22). However, in case of 9 percent and 5 percent respondents in Kerala and Tamil Nadu respectively, a decrease in their annual income was observed. The chi-square test also reveals a significant difference in the percentage change in the annual income of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The mean score comparison by the z-test (Table 23) also shows a significant difference in the annual income of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, both in the initial period and in the present period. Hence, it is observed that the annual income of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala was higher than that of the women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu for both the periods.

Change in annual expenditure of the business mainly depicts the change in the volume of production or operating costs. An increase in expenditure is a sign of growth of the business, provided there is a corresponding increase in

Table 24 : Change in Annual Expenditure Incurred by the Women Entrepreneurs				
Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	-	-	-	-
-100- -75	-	-	-	-
-75--50	7	2	1	1
-50--25	10	3	1	1
-25-0	5	2	2	1
0-25	27	8	10	6
25-50	23	7	17	11
50-75	22	7	16	10
75-100	14	4	9	5
100 and above	219	67	104	65
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=7.801$ with 5 degrees of freedom; not significant at 5 %level
Source: Primary data

Table 25 : Mean Score Comparison of the Annual Expenditure Incurred by the Women Entrepreneurs					
Annual expenditure	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Initial	Kerala	253847.9083	429463.49630	3.847	.000*
	Tamil Nadu	112627.4625	252047.31021	-	-
At present	Kerala	2007742.5076	7946536.99165	2.675	.008*
	Tamil Nadu	323182.1875	665321.88366	-	-

Source: Primary data

Table 26 : Change in Annual Savings of the Women Entrepreneurs				
Percentage increase/decrease	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than -100	7	2	1	1
-100- -75	-	-	-	-
-75--50	-	-	-	-
-50--25	1	1	-	-
-25-0	-	-	-	-
0-25	82	25	37	23
25-50	11	3	7	4
50-75	19	6	26	16
75-100	6	2	6	4
100 and above	201	61	83	52
Total	327	100	160	100

$\chi^2=16.845$ with 4 degrees of freedom; significant at 5 %level
Source: Primary data

Annual savings	State	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Initial period	Kerala	20334.8624	55497.55321	3.264	.001*
	Tamil Nadu	5668.7500	17412.59010	-	-
At present	Kerala	90978.8991	285902.24371	3.305	.001*
	Tamil Nadu	15799.6875	43910.01394	-	-

Source: Primary data
* Significant at 5 %level

Skills developed	Kerala		Tamil Nadu	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Communication	6.736	1	6.459	1
Leadership	4.467	5	2.823	7
Management	6.108	2	5.305	4
Technical	5.806	3	5.385	3
Self-confidence	5.097	4	6.426	2
Courage	4.360	6	5.149	5
Mobility	3.337	7	4.284	6
Independence	2.029	8	1.966	8

Source: Primary data

sales revenue. The annual expenditure increased by over 100 percent or more for 67 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 65 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu. Seven percent respondents in Kerala and 3 percent respondents in Tamil Nadu saw a decrease in their annual expenditure. The chi-square test also found no significant difference in the percentage change in annual expenditure of the women entrepreneurs in both the States (Table 24). The mean score comparison by the z-test (Table 25) also shows that there was a significant difference in the annual expenditure of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu for both the periods. It was observed that the annual expenditure for both the periods was higher in case of respondents in Kerala.

Women entrepreneurs are able to save only when they are able to run the business profitably. Savings leads to investment, expansion, and modernization of the business. Increased savings and investment are an indication of the growth of the business of the women entrepreneurs. The annual savings of 61 percent of the respondents in Kerala and 52 percent of the respondents in Tamil Nadu increased by 100 percent or more. Three percent respondents in Kerala and 1 percent respondents in Tamil Nadu witnessed a decrease in their annual savings. Meanwhile, the chi-square test shows a significant difference in the percentage change in the annual savings of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Table 26). The mean score comparison by the z-test (Table 27) also shows a significant difference in the annual savings of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, both in the initial and in the present period. It is understood that annual savings for both the periods was higher in case of respondents in Kerala.

Women develop several skills when they become entrepreneurs, of which the most important skills are communication and self-confidence. These skills are very essential for running an enterprise which is susceptible to risks. The management skills and communication skills play a key role in the day to day life to efficiently manage a concern. Unlike a homemaker, a woman entrepreneur has to move out of the house for carrying out business affairs, and she has to deal with long working hours. So mobility, courage, gumption to face problems, and independence are the qualities she acquires when she gets moulded as an entrepreneur and in due course of time, she acquires good leadership skills as well. The Table 28 reveals that both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the major skills developed by the women entrepreneurs were "communication skills", which are quite essential for an entrepreneur."Management

Table 29 : Skills/qualities developed by the women entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship (T-test)

Skills developed	State	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	df	Sig.	Conclusion
Communication	Kerala	314	6.7357	1.36016	1.888	406	.060	Not Significant
	Tamil Nadu	157	6.4586					
Leadership	Kerala	289	4.4671	1.98426	-8.204	462	.000	Significant
	Tamil Nadu	146	3.0274					
Management	Kerala	305	6.1082	1.52763	-5.221	449	.000	Significant
	Tamil Nadu	151	5.3046					
Technical	Kerala	278	5.8058	1.93160	-5.990	434	.000	Significant
	Tamil Nadu	130	5.3846					
Self-confidence	Kerala	309	5.0971	1.66426	-8.204	462	.000	Significant
	Tamil Nadu	155	6.4258					
Courage	Kerala	297	4.3603	1.49374	-5.221	449	.000	Significant
	Tamil Nadu	154	5.1494	1.57506				
Mobility	Kerala	288	3.3368	1.58205	-5.990	434	.000	Significant
	Tamil Nadu	148	4.2838	1.52548				
Independence	Kerala	277	2.0289	1.69373	.387	423	.699	Not Significant
	Tamil Nadu	148	1.9662	1.37230				

Source: Primary data.

skills" were ranked second in Kerala, meanwhile, in Tamil Nadu, "self-confidence" was ranked second. The analysis also reveals that the women entrepreneurs still did not enjoy much independence. But the t-test results show a significant difference in the skills/ qualities (except communication skills and independence) developed by the women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu after they became entrepreneurs (Table 29). The analysis on the socioeconomic status indicates that women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu differed significantly in most of the socioeconomic aspects. They were similar only in some of the aspects.

On this basis, the null hypothesis stating that there is no difference in the socioeconomic status of the women entrepreneurs in Kerala vis-à-vis Tamil Nadu stands rejected.

Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu were found to be similar in the following social aspects viz. decision-making power, power exercised in the business, degree of involvement in social activities, and reason for involvement in social activities. However, significant differences are observed in the degree of acceptance of decisions by their employees, nature of social activities undertaken, in the amount spent for social activities, and also the employees' opinion about women entrepreneurs. With respect to the economic status of women entrepreneurs, significant differences are perceived in their annual sales, income, expenditure, annual savings, amount invested in total assets, fixed assets, and in working capital and also in the percentage change in total assets, fixed assets, annual income, and in annual savings. However, similarities are visible in the percentage change in the number of employees, working capital, and in the annual turnover.

Managerial Implications

Women entrepreneurs are responsible for the management of their business and have to work with and through other people by coordinating and integrating their work activities in order to accomplish organizational goals. They should perform all the management activities viz., planning, organizing, directing, staffing, and controlling. They have to lay down objectives and policies for the enterprise, plan the operations, organize resources and allocate duties among the staff, issue directions, and guide and coordinate their work efforts, and then check on the operations and also ensure that these contribute to the realization of the objectives. They should possess conceptual skills, human skills, technical skills, communication skills, and effectiveness skills. Proper guidance and direction of business operations viz.

production, marketing, finance, personnel, research and development, etc., within the framework of financial resources are absolutely essential for the success of the business. An efficient management through various management activities would help in effective utilization of the factors of production.

Scope for Future Research

There is a wide scope for research and a need for systematic and scientific information on women entrepreneurs in India. The present study is confined to the small-scale sector of two different states - Kerala and Tamil Nadu - only. Future studies can focus on women entrepreneurship in the large-scale sector all over India.

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