

Women enterprises in a globalised economy

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ABSTRACT

Free movement of goods, services, technology and capital, including labour, across national boundaries are brought about through the process of globalisation. Vast changes in the lives of people, especially women are reported as the outcome of globalisation. These changes helped women to find out new opportunities emerged in the market. Few of them who could find out opportunities transformed themselves into entrepreneurs. It has been reported that the challenges posed by technological changes and stiff competition, especially from global players were creating serious threat to the very existence of enterprises run by women. Hence a study was attempted by selecting sample from women entrepreneurs in Thrissur District to analyse the performance of enterprises during the last 4 years and to identify the impact of globalisation. Financial viability of women enterprises was assessed by using tools such as break even analysis, return on capital, operating profit etc.

Key words : Break even point, Economic development, Financial viability, First generation entrepreneurs

Globalization is the process of integration of all the economies of the world so that there is free movement of goods, services, technology and capital, including labour, across national boundaries. Globalization is said to have contributed heavily to bring about vast changes in the lives of people especially women. As part of these changes, women who are ready to make use of new opportunities have entered the traditional male bastions of entrepreneurship (Jaya, 2002). It is reckoned that those who are averse to change will suffer badly because of the shifting nature of agriculture, increasing competition in industry and the shrinking of traditional employment avenues (Anonymous, 2007). However, with the enterprises started by women, worries remain as to whether these enterprises will be able to face the challenges posed by technological changes and stiff competition, especially from global players (Menon *et al.*, 2005; Sreeramulu, 2006, Puroshotham, 2006). It is possible that many of the new micro enterprises might perish due to the competition. Hence this study was done to evaluate the financial viability of micro enterprises run by women in the era of globalization (Jaya, 2002).

Aim:

The study was conducted with the objective of assessing the financial viability of Micro enterprises run

by women in Thrissur District of Kerala State, India.

METHODOLOGY

Geographic area of study:

The study was conducted in Thrissur District, Kerala State. Thrissur was chosen due to the centrality of its location, the presence of various professional educational institutions and the presence of banking and financial institutions all contributing to making it a hub of economic and developmental activity. Seven major Non Governmental organisations along with State Government initiative, Kudumbashree are promoting the Self-Help movement in a big way. All these have led to the development of a large number of Micro Enterprises in the District.

Sample:

The study design was descriptive. Multi stage stratified random sampling was used for selection of sample. The micro enterprises were categorized into urban, rural, individual, traditional, innovative etc. Samples were drawn from District Industries Centre, Poverty Eradication cell of District Panchayat and State Poverty Eradication Mission (Kudumbashree). This comprised of women entrepreneurs involved in production, manufacturing, trading and servicing type of enterprises. From a population of 2342 enterprises run by women, those having existence of 3 or more years were included. There were 810 such enterprises which were divided into 16 sub groups. Using random number tables, 127 were selected which formed the population for this study. The details are shown in Table 1.

Of the 127 units, 8 were excluded. Coconut palm

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