

## INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment is a multifaceted concept which comprise of social, economic and political upliftment of women and thus they enjoy an equal status as that of men (Saravanakumar and Varakumari, 2019). Economic empowerment of women is attained through gainful employment opportunities and active economic participation of women contribute to the rise in national income (Kazi, 2015). Access to economic well- being for women mark up the progress of a society. It is the need of the hour to recognise the potentialities of women and make them actively engaged in economic matters (Panwar and Dave, 2016). Income generating activities are generally being graded solely as a tool for economic needs of women, instead, it should be noted that it is a powerful contrivance to empower them (Haseena and Mohammed, 2014).

Development and independence of women in terms of economic aspects are directly proportional and it ultimately result in better status of women. Advancement and empowerment of women leads to higher standard of living and higher decision making power (Gupta, 2014). The stunt economic growth is rectified only through encouraging sustainable gainful employment among women which is made possible through entrepreneurship development (Bala and Jain, 2017). Accordingly, it is noteworthy that women entrepreneurship and sustainable economic development are closely interrelated (Ambepitiya, 2016).

Entrepreneurship is defined as something which goes beyond the creation of a new enterprise with an objective to tackle economic problems (Chauhan and Aggarwal, 2017). Entrepreneurship give rise to satisfaction, positive effect and psychological well- being other than economic well- being with regard to establishing, managing and expansion of enterprises (Wiklund et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship is an opportunity to do something that you enjoy and simultaneously contribute to the community (Uslu and Kedikli, 2019). It is a process by which a new product or service is introduced to the market based on the market needs using innovation and this business keeps on going, managed and promoted (Sarboland et al., 2013). It simultaneously engage a person in self- employment and provide job for others (Bori, 2017). Entrepreneurship open up scope for utilization of skills and capabilities, there by facilitating them to be empowered by all means (Mantok, 2016).

The earlier perception of women viewed as home makers have changed now and more women are taking entrepreneurship as a career along by balancing work and personal life (Rupinder, 2019). They have started defeating the conventional gender roles and emerged out into the world of entrepreneurship (Malhotra et al., 2019).

Women entrepreneurs start their business at small scale level and emerge as large scale business networks. They are the major points of economic acceleration. In India, women entrepreneurs are more concentrated in MSME Sectors (Susruthan and Priyadharshany, 2018). They accept the challenging role of personal needs and economic independence. They are working and skewed towards small scale units and they contribute a great share on micro-enterprises (Rathee and Yadav, 2017).

Women owned enterprises are increasing all over the world. They are active in every sort of activities from pickle making to innovative IT Start ups in tech cities. They are reaping profit and providing economic assets to the nation (Parmar, 2018). Today's dynamic entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country is bringing up many opportunities for women (Das, 2017). Generally, women entrepreneurs are in organised and unorganised sectors; traditional and modern industries; urban and rural areas; large scale and small scale industries and single ventures and joint ventures (Asharani and Sriramappa, 2014).

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, women constitute around 14 percent of the total entrepreneurship in India (Mansur, 2019). A 2015 study by McKinsey has shown that with equal participation of women in the economy, India's GDP can rise by 16- 60 percent by the year 2025 (Jyothirmayee, 2019). India ranks third position in the Startup ecosystem in the world. These startups ranges from Robotics to Agritechs and Fintech to Foodtech ([www.startupindia.gov.in](http://www.startupindia.gov.in)) while, as per the Global Entrepreneurship Survey (2017), in comparison to other countries, India has not yet earned an achievable position in terms of women entrepreneurship (Wadhawan, 2018).

Women entrepreneurs develop and increases socio- political interactions along with economic and psychological empowerments (Vasanthi and Shetty, 2019). After venturing as entrepreneurs, women become more motivated to be successful and income inequalities increases (Chennakrishnan, 2019). Women who have acquired adequate business skills and proficient in technical education are entering the entrepreneurial field (Amanpreet, 2019). Besides monitory gains and financial inclusion, women entrepreneurship bring up resource generation, reputation and recognition for women (Colaco and Hans, 2018). They have great role in the process of societal changes (Yadav et al., 2019).

More women with these qualifications create a new talent pool and leave the corporate world to chart their own destinies as independent women entrepreneurs (Singhal and Saxena, 2017). Entrepreneurial growth among women is viewed as an inclusive growth in India which is capable of transforming the tradition role of women and mainstream their

empowerment (Pandey and Parthasarathy, 2019). They are important source for the development of the nation and their contribution to the industrial economy is remarkable (Kumar and Patrick, 2018). They convert idle resources in favour of the economy of the nation. Per capita income and GDP of the country are raised by their involvement in the industries sector (Sahu, 2016). A recent trend is that they are more involving in private and public business organizations and thus having top positions (Babu, 2012).

As per the changing external factors, the economic and non- economic role played by the women in the society have been changing (Mittal and Dutta, 2019). Kerala is an Indian state which have meddled national trends and gave an epitome of development index that is an exemplar in the gender development (Sivaraman, 2017). In spite of the position in the Development Index, women in Kerala are seen to be more dependent on men for the economic well- being. One of the most possible way to improve their status in terms of social and economic empowerment, is by equipping them with professional capabilities (Jose, 2015).

Women in Kerala are now different from the earlier home bound women. They are owners of hotel chains, well known film makers and distributors. They can choose to be at home and be in touch with the outside world through modern technologies. They are able to fulfil their family needs as well as achieve economic independence (Kumari, 2016). They enter the field of entrepreneurship due to push and pull factors. Researches carried out on women entrepreneurs in the state noted down that educated unemployment and compulsion out of the absence of bread winner made them entrepreneurs (Sunandha, 2015). It can be heighted that women had begun to apprehend the worth of economic independence and thus, they are now making use of their proficiencies in entrepreneurial endeavors (Sengar, 2017). They achieve better outcomes by running micro- enterprises (Chandrasekar, 2014).

Only 11.3 percent of women in the state venture into the field of entrepreneurship. The reasons which avert women are fear of failure, risk, family responsibilities in spite of being privileged to have highest sex ratio and literacy rate among other states in the country ([www.keralainsider.com](http://www.keralainsider.com)). Still, the business platform is changing from male dominated to a different space filled by enthusiastic and confident young women in Kerala ([www.manaoramaonline.com](http://www.manaoramaonline.com)). They involve and take part in Government schemes for women entrepreneurs. They take up medium and small industries and develop it to earn a livelihood for themselves and also for other women (Arun and Unnipulan, 2015).

Small enterprises play a role in the upward movement of the economic structure of the state as more women entrepreneurs are involved in micro- enterprises (Ambika, 2018).

Women's entrepreneurial activities in registries of Department of Industries and Commerce in Kerala during the past ten years show dominance of micro enterprises, more number of sole proprietorship and increasing manufacturing sectors in the State (Nisha and Khan, 2016).

Women entrepreneurs play two different roles in their life. They play the domestic role as mother, wife, daughter, sister, home maker and so on. They also play management role as manager or proprietor. Demographic characteristics and environmental factors affect women entrepreneurs and are influenced by family and work life, creativity and innovation, social and personal networks, decision making, participation in fairs and new market opportunities (Amin, 2018). Women entrepreneurship increases income, self-worth, self-confidence and social status of women (Swapna, 2017).

Women turn to entrepreneurs because of the reasons like innovative thinking, self-identity, education, success stories, need for additional income, government policies and measures, employment generation and support from family members (Tikku, 2018). Family support, confidence, hardworking mind set and profit are the strengths of women entrepreneurs (Rajasekhar and Hymavathikumari, 2017).

The necessities that push women along the road to enterprise building are insufficient income, solo bread winner role and unemployment. Pull factors draw women to entrepreneurship as a result of need for financial independence, existing skills, education and being boss of own venture employing more human resources (Lal and Arora, 2017).

Improvement of family financial status, desire for the fulfilment of ambition, desire for being independent motivate them to take part in entrepreneurship (Balakumar and Devanesan, 2014). Women entrepreneurs' network is one of the effective tools for promoting and developing entrepreneurship among women as they improve skills and act as knowledge pool of existing and potential entrepreneurs (Arya and Ansari, 2016).

As per the Annual report (2016-2017) of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, less than five percent of the total workforce in India has got formal skill training. Similar status can be observed when the data that of women are taken. Major portion are untrained and devoid of skill training opportunities. Adequate training facilities equip them with required skills and knowledge in all the functional areas of enterprise management, which in turn can facilitate women to outstand in the management and development of a good business network (Sreelakshmi, 2018).

Present situation of India, as mentioned above indicates that, the mainstream women labour force is not skilled. In the urban areas, women are educated unemployed whereas in

rural areas, women are not courageous to involve in self-employment (Mishra et al., 2017). A large number of women are unskilled and deprived of any economic benefits. Training them to enhance their skills for creating an economic prosperity through entrepreneurship is very much needed in the current employment scenario (Vyas, 2018). By developing their skills, women can get viable income and contribute their share of income to the national development (Tripathi and Singh, 2017).

Women devoid of adequate training held back from participating in industrial activities. Training facilities and elements suiting the needs, skills and interest need to be framed out for encouraging them to get into entrepreneurship. Thus, entrepreneurial talents and abilities can be developed in them (Gopikala, 2014). To compete in the entrepreneurial arena, women must be moulded with apt traits and skills, thereby able to achieve goals, go hand in hand with the changing trends and fight the constraints in their path (Geetha and Rajani, 2017). Entrepreneurship education and training are essential to prepare women to become entrepreneurs (Zenner et al., 2017). Appropriate measures like policies and institutional structure for creating entrepreneurial skills and providing entrepreneurial skill education have expanded the horizon for economic sustainability of women (Zai and Kumar, 2019).

Importance should be given to provide better training to current entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs. Emphasis need to be laid upon to the fact of improvement in the skills of women entrepreneurs. They have to be updated with information technology and market segmentation in order to keep pace with the era of free market economies (Kumar and Yadav, 2015). Training is the basic capital input that enable improvement in the quality of human resources. In order to compete in the emerging economic market, entrepreneurs need to be trained well (Kamasturyani, et al., 2019).

Training programmes enhance the professional competency along with leadership skills in women entrepreneurs. Government and Non- Government agencies are working for the conduct of various entrepreneurial training programmes (Tefwari and Malhotra, 2014). The role of public- private partnership also cannot be neglected where private firms invest for the training programmes (Prasad and Purohit, 2017).

Providing entrepreneurial training and awareness to potential as well as existing women entrepreneurs helps to enhance entrepreneurial activities in a nation (Swarnalatha and Vasantha, 2014). Capacity building and training in finance, marketing, production and managerial skills add benefit to entrepreneurship training programmes for women (Balaji, 2014).

Entrepreneurship development training programmes increases their earning potential, increase their productivity and help them to opt for supplementary income or livelihood (Kapila and Dhillon, 2019). It equip women to seize opportunities for economic development through entrepreneurship activities (Ali and George, 2019). It ensures availability of skilled manpower, enhance abilities of potential entrepreneurs, enhance efficiency and develop quality (Bagul, 2017). The success rate of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes conducted in India shows a positive trend with improved techniques and follow up measures (Rajakumari and Punitha, 2019).

Self- employment training programme for engaging in Self Help Group activities and thereby develop entrepreneurship skills need to be given utmost importance (Shettar, 2015). Enrichment of women with aspects of education, employment and entrepreneurship along with political and socio-economic empowerment is achieved through entrepreneurship development training programmes (Nimisha and Arumugam, 2019).

Women entrepreneurs can lead to women empowerment through more and more training programmes (Lawatre, 2016). On the contrary to this fact, it was found in a study that majority of women attend entrepreneurship development training programmes without enough entrepreneurial bend of mind. They attend only for the sake of participation (Deepa, 2014).

Even though entrepreneurship is same for both men and women, women entrepreneurs have to face gender based problems apart from general constraints in high dimension and magnitude. Delay in getting credit from financial firms and gender based discrimination by higher officials are major concerns of women at the inception stage of enterprise building. Marketing difficulties and inadequacy of working capital are some of the major problems while running the enterprise (Stalin, 2017).

In the efforts to venture successfully in entrepreneurship, women face problems at various stages from the thought of becoming an entrepreneur to starting, running, managing and even in expanding their enterprises. Some of the hurdles are shortage of finance, stiff competition, marketing problems, low risk taking ability, family conflicts, shortage of raw materials, high cost of production, legal formalities, patriarchal society, lack of training and so on (Sharma, 2017). Low degree of financial liberty, paradox of finance and entrepreneurial skill are also barriers for them (Chirag, 2016). Absence of motivation, low risk bearing capacity, socio- cultural barriers, balance between family and career, limited managerial skills, difficulties in procuring raw materials and social attitudes add the burden for them (Gautam and Mishra, 2016).

In spite of all these hurdles, they have the potential and capacity to overcome with determination to set up, manage and run their ventures. Appropriate measures from stake holders from all sectors can give hand for them to rise up from all the constraints (Dwivedi, 2017). The possible solution is development of proper industrial eco- system enhancing the importance and relevance of entrepreneurship, especially women entrepreneurship in a developing economy (Shou and Nigam, 2018).

It is vital to identify those women who have inclination and rudimentary competencies in engaging in entrepreneurial activities need to be encouraged properly (Rengamani, 2015). ICTs opened up new arenas of education, communication and improving marketing skills of women entrepreneurs with the help of internet and modern portable devices (Inthiyaz and Jayamma, 2017). Government of India provide training and financial exposures to develop entrepreneurial skills among women. More over public sector and private sector banks enable credit facilities for them to involve in economic activities (Dilip, 2016). Proper encouragement and assistance should be provided to them in areas of marketing and distribution of their products (Unnikrishnan and Bhuvanewari, 2016).

Thus, it is a challenge to put all efforts to women's development in entrepreneurial context, which in turn merit attention to women transforming from a homemaker or a professional to business magnets (Mishra, 2015). They are needed to be targeted on inculcating skills to improve their social and economic status (Verma, 2015). Orientation in the right direction and removal of all the hindrances are stepping stones for success of women entrepreneurship in India (Zinjurde, 2017). Resurgence of entrepreneurship is need of the hour, focusing on the development of entrepreneurial skills and qualities for women. They need to be made aware of their strengths and opportunities to outshine in the area of entrepreneurial global arena (Priyadarshini and Basariya, 2018).

### **Significance of the study**

Development in terms of economic prosperity is the vital component that is always been subjected to be indexed and measured from the grass root to global level. Positive triggers in economic development bring about national development. Entrepreneurship is considered as the backbone of industrial economy. Women, being potential human resource moulding the destiny of the world need to be empowered in all aspects. Women entrepreneurship is a way of introducing sustainable development, whose participation in economic matters have a direct link to the growth of the country. As far as the women owned enterprises are considered, their participation is much lesser than that of male participation in this field. The MSME Report

2017- 18 pinpoints that as the women involvement rises in par with that of men, then the economic growth of our country would improve by 1.4 percent. These facts signifies the role and importance of women in entrepreneurship. An appropriate intervention at right time helps to develop entrepreneurship and promotion of it assures sustainable production cum consumption systems on a long term perspective.

### **Statement of the problem**

Development of women entrepreneurship aims at ultimate women empowerment. Entrepreneurial training programmes engage women in economic activities, develop skills, promote positive attitude and enrich them with required knowledge. Thereby improving earning potential and productivity. So, an action towards the right direction in order to imbibe entrepreneurial knowledge, attitude and practice is the need of the hour in a fast moving and developing economy. Hence, there is a need to develop and provide such training programmes for women and assess its impact on them. A training without proper impact assessment and follow up is like a work that has become vain in spite of constant efforts. It is also necessary to study the changes brought about by the training in terms of knowledge, attitude and practice on the aspect of entrepreneurship. Along with this, it is essential to understand the socio-economic status, training needs and SWOC (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges) of the women trainees.

The **research gap** identified reveals that majority of the studies reviewed related to women entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial training programmes were ex- post facto researches carried out on trained and untrained women entrepreneurs. Few studies were seen in the field of action research transforming non- entrepreneur women to entrepreneurs with emphasis on impact assessment of the training programmes. The researcher had made an attempt to carry out action research by implementing entrepreneurial training programmes and assessing impact of it on selected women in Thiruvananthapuram District of Kerala. Hence, the study had taken a humble step forward to motivate, develop skill and orient women to bring into the mainstream of entrepreneurship world, there by empowering them in all spheres of life. An entrepreneurship training package based on the training needs assessment, organisation of evaluation and proper follow up activities along with various support services and linkages for sustaining the entrepreneurial spirit among the trainees make this research work stand out from other similar studies.

## **Research questions**

1. What are the entrepreneurial training needs of the selected women in Thiruvananthapuram District?
2. What is the impact of entrepreneurial training programmes on women?
3. What is the extent of skill development possessed by the trainees?
4. What is the extent of entrepreneurship adoption by the trainees?
5. What are the reasons for establishing enterprise by the trainees?
6. What are the reasons for not establishing enterprises by the trainees?

Hence, the present study “**An Action Research on the Impact of Entrepreneurial Training Programmes for Selected Women in Thiruvananthapuram District of Kerala**” have been framed with the following objectives;

1. To identify the socio- economic profile of the selected women in Thiruvananthapuram district.
2. To assess the entrepreneurial training needs of the selected women.
3. To prepare training module and impart entrepreneurial training programmes for the selected women.
4. To assess the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) of the selected women before and after the entrepreneurial training programmes.
5. To assess the impact of entrepreneurial training programmes after the training programmes
6. To assess the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) of the selected women.

## **Hypotheses**

Hypotheses of the present study are described below;

1. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between socio- economic variables and the interest of women to involve in entrepreneurial training programmes.  
H<sub>a</sub>: There is relationship between socio- economic variables and the interest of women to involve in entrepreneurial training programmes.
2. H<sub>0</sub>: The entrepreneurial training needs of the women do not vary in terms of nature of enterprise.  
H<sub>a</sub>: The entrepreneurial training needs of the women vary in terms of nature of enterprise.
3. H<sub>0</sub>: Entrepreneurial knowledge, attitude and practice of women has not improve after attending the entrepreneurial training programmes.  
H<sub>a</sub>: Entrepreneurial knowledge, attitude and practice of women has improve after attending the entrepreneurial training programmes.
4. H<sub>0</sub>: The trainees do not get motivated to engage in entrepreneurship after exposure to the entrepreneurial training programmes.  
H<sub>a</sub>: The trainees do not get motivated to engage in entrepreneurship after exposure to the entrepreneurial training programmes.