

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- **Anu Jaya Mathew & Kajal S Rahman**

“Nothing will work unless you do” – Alice Walker

INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship is a process of bringing economical and societal balance in women.

In the earlier times, the term entrepreneur was marked to men with ideas which they develop into working businesses. Women were seldom introduced and participated in such ventures. General public's feeling was not in favour of women being involved in business.

However, a very few women were involved in operating small businesses such as hostelrys, coffee shops, retail shops, etc., mostly to generate income for the family in the absence of spouses. Though these ventures were not considered as entrepreneurial, these acted as a trigger for the oncoming surge of entrepreneurship by women.

With advent of education, technology and acceptance in society, women gradually came forward with ideas of self-employed and women-owned businesses.

Purpose:

- Financial Independence
- Personal Growth
- Providing Employment
- Opportunity to work more creatively
- Confidence and Satisfaction
- Achievement, Recognition and Respect
- Benefit of being One's Own Boss.

In recent times, in Kerala, quite numbers of women entrepreneurship have emerged like various units of Self Help Groups (Kudumbashree, Janashree, Sadhu Deepthi, She Taxi etc.) and private individual and collective groups.

In this report, we are discussing the emergence of one such entrepreneurship activity, “She Taxi”.

OBJECTIVES

- To document ‘She Taxi’ as an agent of women entrepreneurship.
- To study the impact of She Taxi on women participation

METHODOLOGY

The study being qualitative in nature, adopt a case study design. The data was derived from secondary data as well as interview of key informants.

SHE TAXI

“Garlands of Wheels on the Bangled Wrists”

“SAFE, SECURE AND RESPONSIBLE”

She taxi is a distinctive model of entrepreneurship, technology- driven business model developed for the empowerment of women in Kerala.

She taxi, a taxi service for women commuters by women entrepreneurs, is an initiative of Gender Park, an autonomous institution under the Social Justice Department, Government of Kerala , owned and operated by women, for transporting women commuters exclusively. This project was conceived as a self-employment avenue. Kudumbasree mission selected the beneficiaries of the project. There were about 118 candidates who participated in the selection process in which 20 were shortlisted for the initial phase of the launch. Kudumbasree mobilised Rs. 50,000 for the beneficiaries selected for the project, they arranged bank loans and rest was contributed by the beneficiaries for the project. She Taxi project is associated with Maruti Suzuki Ltd, which is supplying the cabs and provides training to the women drivers. The Kerala State Women’s Development Corporation (KSWDC) provides financing support for the entrepreneurs.

She taxi provides livelihood for one set of women and a safe and secure mode of transport for another. The taxis owned and driven by women are meant exclusively for women commuters and men are allowed only when accompanied with women.

She Taxi’ services are available 24 x 7 and can be booked through mobile phones and online. Women travelling alone or with families can dial the customer care centre (859000543), given with a Unique Identification Code and the vehicle number on their mobile phones.

All cabs are metered and also payment can be done using credit/debit cards. They possess high security systems for the safety of the drivers as well as the passengers. A control room tracks the taxis using GPS; there are personal emergency alert switches for drivers and passengers inside the car; and mobile apps are installed for the drivers. The cabs have a map of all emergency response systems in the city and public safety officers will be available for

their assistance. The drivers are also given training in self-defence as well as good driving practices.

OUTCOME

- Self-employment and empowerment.
- Financial self-reliance and betterment of beneficiaries.
- Safety and security for women customers.
- More female entrepreneurs showing interest in the field.
- Motivation to start similar ventures, e.g. “She Bus”

CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurship provides financial self-reliance, empowerment, self-satisfaction, personal independence and growth, societal recognition and respect for women entrepreneurs.

“What I learn from talking to so many women around the world, if you can empower them with the right things, the right tools they can lift up their family. And that ultimately lifts up their community and society” – Melinda Gates