

**TAKING A DAY TO LEARN OR LIFETIME TO  
MASTER – EMPIRICAL EVALUATION OF  
MARKETING EFFORTS OF WOMEN MICRO  
ENTERPRISES UNDER FAMILY PROSPERITY  
(KUDUMBASHREE) MISSION IN KERALA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Micro enterprises play a significant role in the economic development of a nation by stimulating entrepreneurial skills, generating employment and contributing to national GDP. The growth and development of the nation in general and microenterprises in particular are impeded as these units face various marketing problems. This paper attempts to scan the marketing problems of micro enterprises currently functioning under Kudumbashree mission in Kerala. It indicates that the marketing problems has arisen mainly due to competition, limited size of the market, weakness of the products, high pricing, incapable distribution network and inadequate promotion which needs to be addressed.

**Keywords:** Micro enterprises, Kudumbashree, gender equality, marketing in small business and women entrepreneurship.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship is vivacious statement in terms of a nation's economic development. According to the survey conducted by Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Recent economic survey 2016-17 has also revealed that Indian economy will record a growth of 6.75 and 7.5 per cent in FY 2017-18.

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) reports the position of India among largest start-up base in the world as third, this being substantiated with figures of 1400 new startups out of 4750 in 2016. Despite the tremendous progress India has made, the economy has failed to achieve its goal in alleviation of poverty. Unemployment is one of the major hindrances in nation's journey to a developed economy. Women folk are the prime victims of poverty and

unemployment. In the w-20 summit formed by a group of female leaders from G-20 countries, the significance of setting up of women owned micro enterprises in developing countries was emphasized. It was highlighted that 70 percent of women owned enterprises are either unserved or underserved by the financial institutions (Press Trust of India, 2015). In this backdrop, policy makers have a strong cognizance that only through empowerment of women a nation can foster its economic development. Poverty alleviation through creation of micro enterprises and livelihood development has been an important strategy of the government for over a decade.

Kerala, a small state of India, with approximately 2.76 percent of India's population as per 2011 census data, contributed only 3.78percent of India's GDP in 2014-15. However, the census of Indian states 2011 reveals that Kerala is the highest literate state in the country with 93.91percent of literacy rate and has the highest sex ratio with 1084 females per 1000 males. It has achieved social and educational development comparable to most Western nations and has been acclaimed worldwide for its Kerala model of development though this achievement is not yet matched by industrial growth or economic development. Kudumbashree, meaning family prosperity, is one of the flagship programmes of the government of Kerala and the program is centered on woman empowerment which has been successful in giving hope to millions of impoverished women and their families in Kerala. Originally launched in 1998 for wiping out poverty at the grass root from the State, Kudumbashree is today one of the largest women-empowering projects in India. The program, that has about four million members and covers more than half of the households in Kerala, has succeeded in addressing the basic needs of the less privileged women, providing them a more dignified and independent life.

Kudumbashree views development of micro enterprises as an opportunity for providing gainful employment to the people below poverty line, thereby improving their income and standard of living. Kudumbashree considers micro enterprises as a growth engine that triggers development process. Through the operation of microenterprises, Kudumbashree cherishes the expectation that asset management ability of the poor women will increase along with their profit margin and wages. The Community Based Organization is the lifeblood of "Kudumbashree".

Micro enterprises have emerged as a highly vibrant and dynamic industry and are the hub of many economic activities in India. These enterprises have showed remarkable progress in terms of employment opportunities, income generation, output and export. The government extends handholding support and makes budgetary allocations to these enterprises due to its contribution towards the eradication of poverty at the grass root level in general and women in particular. But these efforts would be meaningless if these enterprises are tied up in marketing problems. The pace of the development of micro enterprises also hinges on the soundness of marketing practices and policies. Though marketing mobilizes latent economic energy and productive capacity an economy already possesses, the capability of micro enterprises in attaining this is still skeptical. This makes the study on the ability of micro enterprises under Kudumbashree in applying the tools and techniques of marketing which helps in widening and diversifying the market by creating awareness, providing information, generating conviction and impelling to action, imperative.

The Kudumbashree Mission has been marketing its products under various brand names such as Green Leaf (food products), Splash (Detergent and cleaning lotion),

Golden Dew (Cosmetics) and Femina (readymade). Their webpage launched with the sole intention to sell a wide array of products, including curry powder, breakfast puttu powder, wheat flour, snacks, pickle, soap, juice, garments and vegetables is expected to become the highlight of the marketing efforts of micro enterprises under Kudumbashree, which otherwise would be confronted with the bottlenecks that lack of financial support to encapsulate wider marketing campaigns.

In spite of these specialized home-made products and marketing efforts in the form of online portals etc., the success of marketing of micro enterprises under Kudumbashree mission in Kerala is skeptical. It is this context the marketing efforts of microenterprises under Kudumbashree mission in Kerala is evaluated.

The study addresses the following questions

- i. To identify the marketing challenges in different regions faced by micro enterprises under Kudumbashree mission in Kerala.
- ii. To what extent do the geographical market characteristics of different regions in the state affect the marketing efforts of micro enterprises under Kudumbashree mission?
- iii. To examine whether disparities in marketing challenges exist among the regions or between regions.

## 2. EXPERIMENTAL

The present study was based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from the members of Kudumbashree units in Kerala who are associated with running of micro enterprise units under Kudumbashree project in Kerala. A structured questionnaire was administered among the respondents and the responses obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. The secondary data mainly in sketching the profile of the Kudumbashree project were collected from website of Kudumbashree project of Government of Kerala, various journals, publications of Govt. of Kerala, Govt. of India, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Industry and annual reports of Kudumbashree etc.

The present study is empirical in nature and covers those Kudumbashree micro enterprise units in Kerala which are in operation currently. The state of Kerala with 31261 microenterprises under Kudumbashree scheme was divided into three regions geographically as southern, central and northern zones. Further, the districts with highest numbers of micro enterprises in each region were identified as Thiruvananthapuram in Southern zone, Ernakulam in Central Zone and Kozhikode in Northern Zone. A sample size of 93 each, were selected randomly from each of the three districts, aggregating to 279 micro enterprises units that were subjected to analysis. The sample size, from population of the three districts identified, was calculated at 95percent confidence level and a confidence interval of 10. Equal representation of the three districts was ensured and hence 93 each were selected randomly from the three districts identified. Results and discussions.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study has focused on the marketing problems of micro enterprise units under Kudumbashree mission in Kerala. The socio-economic background of respondents and profile the microenterprises units to which they are associated are shown in table 1.

**Table (1): Socio Economic Background of Respondents**

		Respondents		Cumulative	
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Districts	Thiruvananthapuram	93	33.33	93	33.33
	Ernakulam	93	33.33	186	66.67
	Kozhikode	93	33.33	279	100
	Total	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>
Location	Urban	132	47.31	132	47.31
	Rural	147	52.69	279	100
	Total	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>
Nature of Operation	Manufacturing	140	50.18	140	50.18
	Services	139	49.82	279	100
	Total	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>
Nature of Organisation	Group	155	55.56	155	55.56
	Individual	124	44.44	279	100
	Total	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>
Educational Qualifications	Primary	59	21.15	59	21.15
	Secondary	77	27.6	136	48.75
	Graduate	66	23.66	202	72.4
	Post Graduate	77	27.6	279	100
	Total	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>
Tenure of Operations	More than 5 years	60	21.51	60	21.51
	3 to 5 years	77	27.6	137	49.1
	2 to 3 years	74	26.52	211	75.63
	Less than 1 year	68	24.37	279	100
	Total	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

One third each of the total respondents were from Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts of the state of Kerala, while a higher representation (52.69 percent) of rural units was ensured, with the rest 47.31 percent being urban units. Though not distinctively apart, manufacturing units (50.18%) accounted slightly more than service (49.82%) units. The majority (55.56%) of micro enterprises units were owned as a group while only 44.44 percent were owned by individuals who were members of the neighborhood group. It was interesting to note that 27.6 percent each

of the respondents were either post graduates or have secondary qualifications. Only 21.15 percent were having primary qualifications, while 23.66 percent were found to be graduates. The majority of units under study (27.60%) had been in operations for 3 to 5 years, while the units that had been operating for 2 to 3 years were also significant at 26.52 percent. Only 21.51 percent of the units studied were having more than 5 years of operational experience and 24.37 percent of units surveyed were in their infancy stage i.e. having less than a year of operational experience.

With a view to identify marketing problems, the respondents were asked to rate on a five point scale; from strongly disagree to strongly agree, whether the performances of their unit are affected by marketing problems. The analyses of responses whether the Kudumbashree units faced marketing problems are tabulated district wise in table 2.

**Table (2): District wise Existence of Marketing Problems**

Count	REGION			Total	%
	Thiruvananthapuram	Ernakulam	Kozhikode		
Strongly Disagree	16	6	18	40	14.34
Marketing Disagree	10	10	11	31	11.11
Problems Neutral	7	8	8	23	8.24
Agree	29	31	30	90	32.26
Strongly Agree	31	38	26	95	34.05
Total	93	93	93	279	100
<b>Measures of Association</b>					Value
Phi Coefficient					0.176717
Cramer's V					0.124958
Contingency Coefficient					0.174021
<b>Test Statistics</b>			df	Value	Prob
Pearson X2			8	8.712876	0.3671
Likelihood Ratio G2			8	9.5593	0.2973

It was observed that while 34.05 percent strongly agreed that marketing problems exist, 32.26 percent agree to that. Around 14 percent and 11percent either strongly disagree or disagree respectively while 8percent neither disagree nor agree with the statement that production problems do exist in their micro enterprise unit.

The following null hypothesis is tested using Pearson's chi square test.

$H_{01}$ : There is no association between the marketing problems and districts/region.

The greater than 0.05 p value of Pearson Chi square, fails to reject the null hypothesis that, there is no association between the two variables at 5 percent significance level. Similarly, likelihood ratio also fails to reject the null hypothesis that association exists between marketing problems and regions.

The effect sizes which measures association namely phi ( $\Phi$ ) and Cramer's V which in this case stood at 0.17 and 0.12 respectively indicated a minimally acceptable weak relationship. The contingency coefficient also shows moderate relation in the 5 x 3 table which is acceptable.

The factors that confront market namely competition, geographical size of the market, product, pricing, physical distribution issues and promotion may differ from region to region. With a view to asses these aspects the following null hypothesis was tested using one-way ANOVA. Table 3 depicts the results of ANOVA test.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference between districts as far as marketing problems are concerned.

**Table (3): Test for Equality of Means - (MARKETING\_PROBLEMS Categorized by REGION)**

Method	df	Value	Probability	
Anova F-test	(2, 276)	3.627514	0.0279	
Welch F-test*	(2, 182.426)	4.018391	0.0196	
*Test allows for unequal cell variances				
<b>Analysis of Variance</b>				
Source of Variation	df	Sum of Sq.	Mean Sq.	
Between	2	14.30824	7.154122	
Within	276	544.3226	1.972183	
Total	278	558.6308	2.009463	
<b>Category Statistics</b>				
Districts	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.	S E of Mean
Thiruvananthapuram	93	3.526882	1.478773	0.153342
Ernakulam	93	3.913978	1.230552	0.127602
Kozhikode	93	3.376344	1.488463	0.154346
All	279	3.605735	1.417555	0.084867

The null hypothesis that there are no significant differences between districts had to be rejected, at 5 percent significance level, since the probability of ANOVA F test was lesser than 0.05. Moreover, the robust test of equality of means namely Welch's F Test statistic of 4.018 at 2, 182, 426 degrees of freedom with a probability of 0.0196 also rejects the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences between districts as regards marketing problems faced by Kudumbashree units.

Having found that there is significant difference in marketing problems between districts, in order to decide the method of post hoc analysis to be conducted, the equality of variances of marketing problems categorized by regions is analyzed using Levene's test. The results are shown in table 4.

The null hypothesis that the variances are equal fails to get rejected at 5percent significance level, since the p value of Bartlett statistic exceeds 0.05. However, Levene's test reject the null hypothesis that the variances are equal with its p value lesser than 0.05. The Brown and Forsythe Test is a test for equal population variances. It is a robust test based on the absolute differences within each group from the group median. It is a suitable alternative to Bartlett's Test for equal variances, which is sensitive to lack of normality and unequal sample sizes. The test does not assume that all populations are normally distributed and is recommended when the normality assumption is not viable. The Brown and Forsythe Test, better known as the Modified Levene Test, can be adopted especially when the non-normality of data is implied. The Brown-Forsythe statistic, with a p value greater than 0.05, also fails to reject the null hypothesis that the variances are equal.

**Table (4): Test for Equality of Variances of Marketing Problems**

Method	df	Value	Probability	
Bartlett		2 4.082034	0.1299	
Levene	(2, 276)	6.989357	0.0011	
Brown-Forsythe	(2, 276)	2.11362	0.1228	
Category Statistics			Mean Abs. Median	
Districts	Count	Std. Dev.	Mean Abs. Mean Diff.	Diff.
Thiruvananthapuram	93	1.478773	1.277142	1.139785
Ernakulam	93	1.230552	0.944849	0.903226
Kozhikode	93	1.488463	1.310209	1.182796
All	279	1.417555	1.1774	1.075269

Bartlett weighted standard deviation: 1.404344

Since the Kruskal-Wallis test on the ranks is recommended, in case of non-normal data with equal population variances, this non parametric test on independent samples was performed. The test of equality of median of marketing problems is shown in table 5. With p value (0.0404) of Kruskal-Wallis (tie-adj.) statistic lesser than 0.05, the null hypothesis that the distribution of marketing problems is same across categories of district is rejected at 5 percent significance level (see table 5).

**Table (5): Test for Equality of Medians of Marketing Problems**

Method	df	Value	Probability
Med. Chi-square	2	3.479519	0.1756
Adj. Med. Chi-square	2	2.90891	0.2335
Kruskal-Wallis	2	5.919024	0.0518
Kruskal-Wallis (tie-adj.)	2	6.419156	0.0404
van der Waerden	2	7.195892	0.0274

**Category Statistics**

REGION	Count	Median	> Overall Median	Mean Rank	Mean Score
Thiruvananthapuram	93	4	31	136.629	-0.065812
Ernakulam	93	4	38	155.7796	0.155894
Kozhikode	93	4	26	127.5914	-0.162887
All	279	4	95	140	-0.024268

Since variances of the two series are equal and the number of observations being the same in both the series, the Tukey's HSD method was adopted for post hoc analysis. The results of Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc analysis is shown in table 6.

It was observed from the post hoc analysis that, there is no significant difference between Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam districts as well as between Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode districts as far as marketing problems were concerned. The significant differences were between Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts.

**Table (6): Multiple Comparisons – Post Hoc Analysis (Tukey's HSD) - (Marketing Problems)**

Dependent Variable: Marketing		95% Confidence Interval				
(I) District	(J) District	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Thiruvananthapuram	Ernakulam	-0.3870968	.20594	0.1465	-.8724	.0982
	Kozhikode	.15054	.20594	0.7453	-.3348	.6358
Ernakulam	Thiruvananthapuram	0.3870968	.20594	0.1465	-.0982	.8724
	Kozhikode	.53763*	.20594	0.0257	.0523	1.0229
Kozhikode	Thiruvananthapuram	-.15054	.20594	0.7453	-.6358	.3348
	Ernakulam	-.53763*	.20594	0.0257	-1.0229	-.0523

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The homogeneous subsets relating to marketing problems are shown in table 7.

**Table (7): Marketing– Homogeneous Subsets**

Tukey HSD			
District	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Kozhikode	93	3.3763	
Thiruvananthapuram	93	3.5269	3.5269

Ernakulam	93	3.9140
Sig.	.745	0.147
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.		
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 93.000.		

It is obvious that Kozhikode is different from Ernakulam since the mean of the former does appear only in subset 1 while that of latter appears only in subset 2.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Our results show that majority of women entrepreneurs engaged in operation of micro enterprises under Kudumbashree project in Kerala either strongly agree or agree to the fact that marketing problems do exist. Only a very significant minority feels that no such marketing problems exist in their micro enterprise unit. It was also found that association exists between marketing problems and regions as is obvious from the Pearson's chi square and Likelihood ratio which failed to reject the null hypothesis of no association between marketing problems and regions. Significant difference between districts as regards marketing problems faced by Kudumbashree units were observed as per ANOVA tests, and the null hypothesis that the variances are equal got rejected at 5 percent significance level as per results of the Brown and Forsythe Test, better known as the Modified Levene Test. The non-parametric test of equality namely Kruskal-Wallis test also rejected the null hypothesis that the distribution of marketing problems is same across categories of district. The Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc analysis test revealed that, there is no significant difference between Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam districts as well as Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode districts as far as marketing problems were concerned. The significant differences were only between Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts. Our findings are thus in tune with that of earlier studies which highlights the heavy reliance placed by microenterprises on local markets for procuring inputs and selling outputs makes the products less competitive (Deepika & Sigi: 2014) and the questions on the sustainability of a business-led model in the absence of state subsidy in the longer run and the way it stimulates women empowerment as well as female entrepreneurship (Kumar & Jasheena: 2016) . as well as concerns about the sustainability of the project on account of the faulty practices (Shihabudheen:2013) and factors influencing women entrepreneurship and steps taken by the government for upliftment of Indian women entrepreneurs (Sharma: 2013).

The Study on Micro Enterprises under Kudumbashree mission in Kerala revealed that such units face a gamut of marketing related problems which needs to be addressed. It implies the governmental support for women entrepreneurs in sustaining the business led model envisaged by Kudumbashree mission in eradication of poverty, income generation of women folk and their social and economic empowerment. Apart from the marketing support currently provided in the form of monthly markets, participation in national and international trade fairs, state trade fairs conducted, home

shops and food fests, potential of widening geographical size of the market and redefining of weaknesses in product, pricing, physical distribution and promotion strategies has to be contemplated seriously and adequate intervention is necessary so that the districts shall be able to handle marketing problems as per the natural requirements of the region..

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