

# Factors Influencing Women Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Women Entrepreneurs in Edakkal Caves, Kerala

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**Abstract-**This study looks at the parameters affecting women's employment in Kerala at Edakkal caves, a popular tourist destination in India. This study provides an overview of the specific conditions faced by women working in cultural heritage sites. This study examines the existing literature on the disparities faced by working women in India, focusing on aspects such as inadequate family support, education, government support, social influence, religious support and finance. Using the data collected from 21 women entrepreneurs, the study investigates the influence of six key factors mentioned above, it was found that government support and religious beliefs significantly impact women's entrepreneurial pursuits at Edakkal Caves, while Family support, education, social impact, and access to finance do not show statistically significant effects. This study contributes to the understanding of women's performance in a unique cultural context. By examining the case of the Edakkal quarries, the study provides valuable insights for policy makers and organizations seeking to support and empower women working in the tourism-driven economy.

**Keywords:** *Women Employment, Edakkal Caves, Kerala, Tourism, Cultural Heritage, Government Aid, Religious Beliefs*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship has become a crucial component of the global economy, driving innovation, job creation, and economic development. Traditionally, women encountered significant obstacles in entering the business realm, such as restricted access to education, financial resources, and societal backing. Nonetheless, the past few decades have seen a notable rise in the number of women entrepreneurs globally. This increase is largely due to shifting social norms, better educational opportunities, and supportive government policies aimed at promoting gender equality in the economic sector. Women entrepreneurs bring unique perspectives and

skills to the business environment, often resulting in more diverse and inclusive approaches to problem-solving and management. However, "every region has its own social and cultural challenges affecting differently to women entrepreneurs" (Rashid and Ratten 2020, p. 37).

### 1.1. Importance of Women Entrepreneurship in Economic Growth

Female entrepreneurs are the fastest-growing segment of entrepreneurship globally and have garnered increasing attention in recent years (Cardella et al., 2020). The role of women entrepreneurship in economic growth is paramount. Businesses owned by women make substantial contributions to GDP, generate employment, and spur innovation. Research indicates that women entrepreneurs are more likely to invest in their communities, aiding local development and social stability (Ahmetaj et al., 2023). Additionally, enhancing women's participation in entrepreneurship helps to bridge gender gaps in the labor market, fostering a more inclusive and balanced economic development. In developing economies, women entrepreneurs are vital in reducing poverty by providing sustainable income sources and bolstering the overall economic resilience of their communities. The success and sustainability of women entrepreneurs are influenced by several key factors, including family support, educational background, government assistance, societal attitudes, religious beliefs, and access to finance.

### 1.2. Family

Support from family can significantly impact women entrepreneurs, providing the emotional and practical backing needed to start and sustain business ventures.

### 1.3. Education

Educational achievements are essential for women entrepreneurs, equipping them with the knowledge and skills required for effective business management. Higher educational levels often lead to greater confidence and competence.

### 1.4. Government Support

Government policies and programs, such as grants, training initiatives, and tax incentives, are crucial in helping women entrepreneurs to establish and grow their businesses.

### 1.5. Society

Societal attitudes towards women in business can either facilitate or hinder entrepreneurial activities. Societies that value gender equality and support women in leadership roles tend to have higher rates of women entrepreneurship.

### 1.6. Religion

Religious beliefs can shape women's entrepreneurial activities by offering ethical guidance and community support or, conversely, by imposing limitations on women's roles and activities.

### 1.7. Access to Finance

The availability of financial resources is critical for the launch and expansion of business ventures. Women often face difficulties in obtaining credit and investment, which can impede their business growth.

### 1.8. The Significance of Edakkal Caves in Kerala

Edakkal Caves, situated in the Wayanad district of Kerala, India, provide a compelling example of women entrepreneurship. This well-known tourist destination is distinguished not only by its historical and archaeological importance but also by the dynamic community of women entrepreneurs who operate there (P J, 2019). The caves draw a continuous influx of tourists, creating numerous business opportunities for local women to engage in entrepreneurial activities such as handicrafts, local cuisine, guided tours, and souvenir sales. These women entrepreneurs illustrate the positive impact of tourism on local economies and demonstrate how women can utilize cultural heritage sites to establish sustainable livelihoods. Examining the factors that influence women entrepreneurship at Edakkal Caves

offers valuable insights into the broader dynamics of women-led businesses in similar settings, aiding in the development of targeted strategies to support and enhance women entrepreneurship in other tourism-centric regions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The research paper by D'Cruz (2003) titled *Constraints on Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala discusses various constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala, India*. The article highlights some of the social, family and psychological factors that keep women from venturing into businesses. It also acknowledges government programs that incentivize women and other help programs but many still remain stuck.

According to the report less than 4% of females in Kerala are entrepreneurs. Some reports show that women have started up business enterprises just for the sake of qualifying for subsidies availed by the government. Even when women can get funding, it is precarious for them because they are affected by societal influence as well. The piece ends with a call for further research on how these constraints can be overcome.

2. (Dr. Santha S, 2007) In the research paper titled *A Comparative Study of Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu*, women entrepreneurs in Kerala and Tamil Nadu face similar challenges in terms of government support, funding and in the life of the position. However, the survey also found that these women felt more respected. They achieved freedom by launching their own enterprises.

3. According to Gautam and Mishra (2016) in their article *"Rural Women Entrepreneurship in India: Challenges and Motivational Factors,"* entrepreneurship is crucial for rural development as it creates job opportunities, promotes self-employment, and improves economic status in rural areas. In founding enterprises in both rural and urban regions to fight poverty, earn money, and raise their level of living. Despite legal equality, rural women in India confront severe social and cultural constraints that hinder their economic activity.

4. In the research article by Priya S & Dr. P Geetha published in the year 2020 titled *Working Environment of Unorganized Women Entrepreneurs in Palakkad District, Kerala*, the emphasis has been laid on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kerala in particular. The argument that social, family and psychological factors hinder women from engaging in business is in conformity with other literature findings. This article also supports the notion that the government policies for women entrepreneurs are ineffectual according to the research study. Despite the government's support towards women entrepreneurs through provision of incentives, the women remain challenged by cultural impediments. Conclusion: This paper contributes to the existing literature on the problems women entrepreneurs face in India thus filling the gap that was earlier existing. The study provides an emphasis on the challenges that are specific to female customers in Kerala and presents recommendations for future research on how these barriers can be overcome.

5. (Sirisha & Ramanathan, 2021) the authors of *Informal Sources of Funding and Women Entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu* made it clear in their article that entrepreneurship is a major force for economic development. Although women entrepreneurs are significant actors, they encounter difficulty in guaranteeing funding. Young businesses can be financed by informal sources of finance that are constituted by family and friends. Study also draws attention to the relationship between family structure and empowerment. Women entrepreneurs who work in nuclear settings perceive themselves as more financially and socially powerful than women working in cooperative workplaces. This supports previous studies that have identified social support networks as the source of resources that help female entrepreneurs.

6. Sebastian, S. M., & Karunakaran, N. (2020), in their research paper "*Motivational Factors and Awareness on Financial Aid for Women Entrepreneurs*," probed into the motivations and awareness of female financial aid for entrepreneurs in the districts of Kannur and Kasaragod in Kerala.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Objectives

- a. To define the demography of women entrepreneurs at Edakkal Caves.
- b. To identify the key factors influencing women to pursue entrepreneurship.
- c. To examine the role of key factors in women entrepreneurship.

#### 3.2 Sample

Through simple random sampling the data for the study was collected from the women entrepreneurs of Edakkal Caves, Kerala. Data from 21 respondents were collected, recorded and analysed.

#### 3.3 Scope

This study gives an opportunity to get insights into the key factors that are influencing the women pursuing entrepreneurship. The study also helps the decision makers to role out policies that further assist and encourage women entrepreneurship.

#### 3.4 Limitations

The study is limited to the women entrepreneurs of Edakkal caves.

#### 3.6 Hypotheses

- H01: The family support has no significant influence on women entrepreneurship.  
H02: Education has no significant influence on women entrepreneurship.  
H03: The Government support has no significant influence on women entrepreneurship.  
H04: Society has no significant influence on women entrepreneurship.  
H05: Religion has no significant influence on women entrepreneurship.  
H06: The availability of finance has no significant influence on women entrepreneurship.

## 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

1. Age Ranges: The frequency distribution table summarizes the number of occurrences for each age range based on the data provided. Here's a detailed description:
  - Age Range 18 - 30: There are 3 individuals within this age group, suggesting a relatively low representation of young adults.

- Age Range 31 - 40: This group consists of 5 individuals, indicating a moderate representation of early to mid-adulthood.
- Age Range 41 - 50: With 8 individuals, this group has the highest frequency, implying a significant portion of the dataset falls within middle-aged individuals.
- Age Range 51 - 60: There are 4 individuals in this category, indicating a notable presence of individuals approaching retirement age.

Table 1: Distribution of Business

Type of Business	Frequency
Fancy store	1
Hotel	2
Spices and handcraft	2
Drinks and beverages	1
Fruits and juices	2
Handicraft and related items	3
Juice	1
Hot chips	1
Chocolate and related items	3

SPSS Output

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Stats	Stats	Stats	Stats	Std. Error	Stats	Std. Error
PI1	21	.0476	.21822	.583	.501	2.010	.972
PI2	21	3.4286	1.88604	-.248	.501	-1.654	.972
PI3	21	2.5714	1.46872	.421	.501	-1.185	.972
PI4	21	.5714	.50709	-.311	.501	-2.115	.972
FS1	21	4.3333	.79582	-1.364	.501	2.366	.972
FS2	21	3.3810	1.16087	-.423	.501	-.819	.972
FS3	21	3.6190	.97346	-1.628	.501	1.880	.972
FS4	21	4.1905	.60159	-.071	.501	-.100	.972
E1	21	3.1429	1.35225	-.285	.501	-1.251	.972
E2	21	2.5238	1.24976	.365	.501	-1.045	.972
E3	21	2.1905	1.24976	.963	.501	-.207	.972
E4	21	3.0000	.94868	.388	.501	-1.007	.972
GS1	21	2.1429	1.31475	1.170	.501	.363	.972
GS2	21	2.6667	1.42595	.657	.501	-.935	.972
GS3	21	2.7619	1.22085	.321	.501	-.746	.972
GS4	21	2.8571	1.31475	.289	.501	-1.032	.972
SI1	21	3.1905	1.03049	-.721	.501	-1.099	.972
SI2	21	3.3810	1.28360	-.178	.501	-1.288	.972
SI3	21	2.5238	1.16701	.876	.501	.199	.972
SI4	21	3.4762	.81358	-.531	.501	-.306	.972
RS1	21	3.1429	.47809	1.530	.501	1.578	.972
RS2	21	3.1429	.47809	1.530	.501	1.578	.972
RS3	21	2.9524	.49761	-2.821	.501	1.824	.972
RS4	21	3.0476	.21822	1.583	.501	2.080	.972
WE1	21	3.7619	1.04426	-1.802	.501	3.543	.972
WE2	21	2.9524	1.20317	.290	.501	-1.370	.972

Spices, toys, sweets, and tea	1
Fresh fruits, vegetables, and honey	1
Lemon juice and buttermilk	1
Spices and coffee	2
Ice cream	1

Type of Business:

- This grouped frequency distribution table highlights the different types of businesses and their occurrences in the dataset, providing a clearer overview of the distribution. Here's a detailed description:
- Each business category is listed with its corresponding frequency, reflecting the diversity of businesses represented in the dataset.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Source: Field Survey and Primary Data of Women Entrepreneurs in Edakkal Caves Kerala in the Study Area May 2024

WE3	21	3.9524	.58959	-1.619	.501	2.419	.972
WE4	21	3.3333	.85635	-.215	.501	-.718	.972
WE5	21	2.6190	1.20317	.642	.501	-.376	.972
WE6	21	2.8095	1.28915	.700	.501	-.588	.972
WE7	21	2.6667	1.27802	.382	.501	-.870	.972
WE8	21	3.6667	.91287	-.549	.501	-.245	.972
WE9	21	3.1429	1.15264	.345	.501	-1.432	.972
WE10	21	3.9048	.70034	-.833	.501	1.964	.972
WE11	21	3.5714	.92582	-.230	.501	-.592	.972
FIS1	21	2.8571	1.23635	-.229	.501	-1.116	.972
FIS2	21	3.4286	.97834	-.311	.501	-.986	.972
FIS3	21	3.7619	.70034	-1.562	.501	2.766	.972
FIS4	21	2.6667	1.31656	.398	.501	-1.091	.972
FIS5	21	4.0476	.58959	.001	.501	.351	.972
Valid N (listwise)	21						

The table provided (Table 1.1) indicates that the kurtosis value is below 11 and the skewness value is below 3. This suggests that the gathered data is normalized and sufficiently valid for further analysis. The variance value indicates the extent of positive or negative dispersion of the collected data from the mean value.

b. Factor Analysis of variables defined

Table 2: KMO- Bartlett's Test

Source: Field Survey and Primary Data of Women Entrepreneurs in Edakkal Caves Kerala in the Study Area May 2024

*SPSS Output*

Sl.No	Variables	KMO Value	Significance	DF
1	Independent Variables	0.817	0.000	15
2	Dependent Variable	0.693	0.000	21

Factor analysis was performed to evaluate the validity of variable grouping for both independent and dependent variables, yielding KMO values of 0.817 and 0.693, respectively. These values indicate the suitability of conducting further analysis. Furthermore, the significance values for key variables

and women entrepreneurship were all 0.000, with degrees of freedom (Df) being 15 and 21 respectively.

c. Reliability Results

Table 3: Reliability Results of Variables

Source: Field Survey and Primary Data of Women Entrepreneurs in Edakkal Caves Kerala in the Study Area May 2024

*SPSS Output*

Factors	Cronbach's constant	Number of Items
Women Entrepreneurship	.947	6
Family Support	.770	2
Education	.809	2
Government Support	.938	5
Social Influence	.889	4
Religious Support	.970	2
Financial Support	.818	1

Table 3 above presents the reliability analysis, which evaluates the internal consistency of factor grouping using Cronbach's Alpha values. The findings reveal that all factors grouped in the rotated component matrix exhibit values surpassing 0.7 or 70%. This indicates that the homogeneous grouping established in the rotated component matrix, following the

*SPSS Output*

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Std coefficients(Beta)	Sig
Family Support	Women Entrepreneurship	-	.405
Education		-	.922
Government Support		.674	.030
Social Influence		-	.170
Religious Support		.781	.027
Financial Support		-	.156

a. The above value of .405 states that the variable family support has no significant impact on women entrepreneurship. Hence the null hypothesis 1 is accepted.

b. The above value of .922 states that the variable education has no significant impact on women entrepreneurship. Hence the null hypothesis 2 is accepted.

c. The above value of .030 states that the variable government support has significant impact on women entrepreneurship, with an association of 67.4%. Hence the null hypothesis 3 is rejected.

d. The above value of .170 states that the variable social influence has no significant impact on women entrepreneurship. Hence the null hypothesis 4 is accepted.

e. The above value of .027 states that the variable religious support has significant impact on women entrepreneurship, with an association of 78.1%. Hence the null hypothesis 5 is rejected.

f. The above value of .156 states that the variable financial support has no significant impact on women entrepreneurship. Hence the null hypothesis 6 is accepted.

**6. CONCLUSION**

The study on "Factors Influencing Women Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Women Entrepreneurs in Edakkal Caves, Kerala" offers

resolution or elimination of underlying factors, is valid and advantageous for further analysis.

**d. Results of Regression Analysis**

Table 4: Regression Result of Variables

Source: Field Survey and Primary Data of Women Entrepreneurs in Edakkal Caves Kerala in the Study Area May 2024

valuable insights into the various factors that shape and drive the entrepreneurial activities of women in this region. Based on the findings, several key conclusions can be drawn. Government policies and institutional support systems play a pivotal role in promoting women entrepreneurship. Initiatives aimed at providing financial assistance, training, and mentorship have shown positive impacts on the entrepreneurial landscape. However, there is a need for more tailored support programs that address the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Edakkal Caves, considering their socio-cultural and economic contexts. The religious support plays a significant role in influencing women's entrepreneurial ventures. Support from family and community, coupled with societal attitudes towards women in business, heavily impacts their entrepreneurial journey. Women in Edakkal Caves often leverage traditional knowledge and skills passed down through generations, integrating them into their entrepreneurial activities.

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