Chapter 7
Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

The study is an analysis of the development measures, adopted by the government and various other financial institutions in Kerala, in the promotion of women entrepreneurship. The results obtained are presented in the form of tables and figures in chapters 4, 5 and 6. The fourth chapter deals with the socio-economic and business profile of women entrepreneurs. The fifth chapter is a probe into the role played by the Government and various financial institutions in developing women entrepreneurship, and chapter six deals with the various problems faced by women entrepreneurs. This chapter is a recapitulation of the analysis, findings and recommendations.

The broad objective of the study was to find out the efficacy of the various women entrepreneurship promotional measures being promoted by the government and financial institutions in the state and to identify the shortfalls if any.

Specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To spot the reasons for the slow growth of women entrepreneurship in Kerala.
2. To find out the motivational factors behind women entrepreneurship and also to know the type of supports, received by the entrepreneurs from the government, financial institutions, family members and community.
3. To inquire into the specific problems, confronting the women entrepreneurs in the state and also to study the performance of women entrepreneurs.
4. To suggest appropriate measures to overcome the common problems and issues faced by women entrepreneurs in the state.
As part of the research the researcher has visited several women entrepreneurs and also had parleys with officials connected with women entrepreneurial promotional institutions. The insight gained from the above endeavors the researcher got the inference that the efforts taken by the promotional agencies are not at all effective for nurturing women entrepreneurial ventures in the state. As the findings of the various research studies included in review of literature were inconclusive, the following 13 null hypothesis have been formulated for this study.

There is an implicit link between the broad objective of the study and the first six hypotheses of the study. The status of women in Kerala will reveal that even though the indicators in social development are enviable a proportionate level of achievement is not found in the economic front, especially in the cadres of employees and entrepreneurs. In order to understand what are the reasons for the slow growth rate of women entrepreneurs in kerala an entrepreneurship success index was prepared to calculate the level of success achieved by the women entrepreneurs. And it was analyzed to see whether there is any relation between the slow growth of women entrepreneurship in Kerala with respect to age category, education, assistance availed from Government and Financial institutions, experience before the establishment of the enterprise, business awareness, district to which they belong, reasons for entering entrepreneurship and nature of enterprise. Hypotheses 7 to 13 pertain to the objective 1.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between women entrepreneurs from various districts on the awareness of governmental agencies.
2. There is no significant difference in the entrepreneurs belonging to different districts with respect to training programmes attended.
3. There is no significant difference between the amounts availed from entrepreneurship development promotional agencies and success rate.

4. There is no significant difference between trained and non-trained entrepreneurs in terms of success rate.

5. There is no significant difference between the skills developed before and after attending the training programmes.

6. There is no significant difference in the business performance indicators of the entrepreneurs before and after attending training programmes.

7. There is no significant difference between the success rates of entrepreneurs with respect to experience before the establishment of the enterprise.

8. There is no significant difference in success rate of entrepreneurs with respect to business awareness.

9. There is no significant difference in success rate of entrepreneurs with respect to the district to which they belong.

10. There is no significant difference in success rate of entrepreneurs with respect to age category of the respondents.

11. There is no significant difference in success rate of entrepreneurs with respect to education.

12. There is no significant difference in success rate of entrepreneurs with respect to reasons for entering entrepreneurship.

13. There is no significant difference in success rate of respondents with respect to the nature of enterprise.

**METHOD USED**

At the time of embarking upon the research study, a meticulous examination of the district wise details of women owned SSI units in the state was ascertained. Accordingly the North Malabar regions have comparatively less number of such women entrepreneurial ventures and also the number of live units are less in the north Malabar region. Therefore an analysis regarding the districts where more number of women entrepreneurial ventures registered under DIC was done. And so
the districts of Malappuram, Calicut, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasargod were excluded from the universe for the study and simple random sampling (Lottery method) was resorted to select the number of districts from the remaining 10 districts for the detailed study. Six revenue districts of the Kerala state constitute the universe for the study. (Trivandrum, Idukki, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kottayam).

For selecting the sample women entrepreneurs for the study, the list of the names and addresses of registered units was collected from the District Industries Centers (DICs). According to the data of the industrial records, there were 53204 units registered in the name of women as on 31st March, 2006.

The main criteria for selecting units for the detailed study were:

a. The women entrepreneurs, who registered their units on or before 31st March, 2006 were selected.

b. Those units where the owned women entrepreneurs have a definite say and active involvement were chosen for the detailed study. Therefore, judgment sampling technique was used in conformity with the afore mentioned criteria for selecting the sample.

c. Care was taken to ensure that only those productive units received various assistances such as training, subsidy, loan from Government and financial institutions were only selected as the sample.

Intensive interviews were carried out personally by the researcher over a period of five months on the basis of a comprehensive schedule, appended to the thesis. The collection of data was a hectic task as the list available from the District Industries Centers did not tally with the number of existing women entrepreneurs. So in the cases of units which were unidentifiable, not existing, or were as such only for name sake, the next one from the list was taken. And in consequence, stratification of the various categories of enterprises was not possible as originally planned. The Government and financial institutions from where the sample women
entrepreneurs availed themselves of various assistances have been selected as sample organizations for the study.

The researcher had visited and acquainted with the officials of those government and financial institutions from where the selected respondents had availed themselves of various assistances. Again for collecting the details from the officials separate structured questionnaire was prepared for the purpose. The total number selected on this basis consists of 23 government officials and 18 from financial institutions.

7.1 The findings of the study in line with the objectives are summarized below:

7.1.1 **To find out the efficacy of the various women entrepreneurship promotional measures being promoted by the government and financial institutions in the state and to identify the shortfalls if any**

To overcome the impediments and constraints and to motivate both the prospective and the existing women entrepreneurs in Kerala, different government agencies as well as non-governmental organizations are offering support in various ways- in terms of financial assistance, by providing scarce raw materials, skill development training facilities and marketing support etc. However, due to the inadequacy of the means of creating awareness among the respondents, the major portion of these incentives and facilities remain unutilized; only a few women entrepreneurs are found to avail of the services offered by these agencies. The district wise distribution of the respondents according to the awareness of government agencies was analyzed and the results of the chi square test shows that there is no significant difference between the women entrepreneurs on the awareness of governmental agencies with respect to the district to which they belong. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted. The purpose of it was to understand whether there is any variation in the levels of assistance provided to women entrepreneurs in various districts in Kerala.

It can be seen that 68.66 per cent of the respondents were aware of the government agencies that extend support to women entrepreneurs. Among them only 29.33 per cent were well informed about them. While 25 per cent of them said
that they had only a myopic idea about the availability of such schemes, and 31.33 per cent of the respondents admitted their total ignorance in the matter. It is pertinent to mention here that even amongst those who were aware of the existence of such schemes, very many of them admitted that they were not fully conversant with the nature and content of these schemes of assistance. Lack of adequate promotional efforts on the part of support agencies could be the major reason behind the ignorance of a big chunk of the respondents regarding the various schemes of assistance.

It is found that existing and potential women entrepreneurs are not fully making use of the available Government schemes including latest technological support through agencies instituted for the purpose. Even few respondents who are making use of the assistance do not go beyond receiving financial help. This should be a learning lesson for the entrepreneurial support organizations that their job is not only to disburse the assistance under various schemes but also to motivate the potential entrepreneurs to avail of these benefits. The district wise data of the assistances availed shows that 64.66 per cent of the respondents had utilized training facility. Those who have utilized financial assistance constitute 43.33 per cent. And the women entrepreneurs who had utilized other services include 18 per cent. The chi square test reveals that there is no significant difference between the respondents on availing of various assistance with respect to the districts to which they belong. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Even though a variety of schemes are offered by the various support agencies, most of the units under study have utilized only financial assistance in the form of loan and subsidy. The reasons are many. Some women are not aware of the formalities to be compiled with before availing of the assistance; some did not need any assistance at all; and some needed assistance but stayed away because of the protracted formalities associated with the processing of applications for assistance. The procedures for providing assistance should be simplified by minimizing the formalities, streamlining the procedures and through expeditious decision making. The aid giving agencies should ensure that the applications for assistance are not turned down for flimsy reasons.
Chapter 7
Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

It is found that from the various assistances offered by the Government supportive agencies, training facility was utilized by 64.66 per cent. PMRY training was attended by 36 per cent, 26.8 per cent of them EDP, 20 per cent of them skill up gradation, 17 per cent of them have attended Vocational training. Even that was to satisfy a mandatory precondition attached to the availing of loan facility. From this, we can understand the fact that most of the respondents are attending training not to develop their entrepreneurial skill but only for availing of the loan facility. And for getting a loan sanctioned from banks for entrepreneurial activity, a certificate of having undergone EDP training is indispensable. The district wise data of the type of training programmes attended by women entrepreneurs was calculated and the chi–square test shows that there is no significant relationship between the type of training received and the districts to which they belong. Null hypothesis is accepted.

It was seen from the study that even though 64.66 per cent of the respondents had attended some sort of training, an analysis of its impact revealed that the training programme conducted by the promotional agencies for the women entrepreneurs was not at all effective. A comparison of the various skills developed in women entrepreneurs before and after attending the training programmes was analyzed, to understand whether the training programme helped them to improve their skills. The Chi square test reveals that there is significant difference among Women Entrepreneurs regarding Drawing up financial statements, Human resource management, Finance and cash flow, Business failure and cause, Creative problem solving. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference in Managing the growth of the business, Sustainable competitive advantage and Legal aspects of the business. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Most of the trainees did not utilize the knowledge received through the training as they did not start any business enterprise. Though a number of EDP agencies are engaged in imparting training to the prospective and aspiring entrepreneurs, it appears that sincere effort is not being made to ensure that the objective of EDPs is fulfilled. In the absence of any specific evaluation of these programmes it is difficult to quantify their outcome. In simple words, there is a need to have a retrospective look into how many participants have
actually started their own enterprises after completing the training. This calls for an evaluation of EDPs. Most of the respondents in this study have stated that the Procedure adopted for the Selection of the Participants should be based on the potential of the participants. In spite of the spurt in EDP activity, it is observed that by and large these efforts have been confined to certain areas, and the approach, in general, has been somewhat haphazard. The programmes conducted by the various agencies vary in duration, selection procedure, course content, etc. The selection procedures generally adopted are screening of applications and personal interviews. Another feature of these programmes is that motivational training is not given with desirable emphasis and the follow-up of the trainees is not adequate. There is a certain imbalance between the supportive activities i.e. the financial assistance and the stimulating activities i.e. entrepreneurial development. To know whether there is any difference in the business performance of women entrepreneurs after attending training four indicators was identified and chi square was used to test the variables. The chi square test reveals that there is no significant difference between the Annual sales / Turn over, Value of capital assets, Profitability of the business and Satisfaction of the customers of the entrepreneurs before and after attending training programmes. So the null hypothesis is accepted.

Wilcoxon matched –paired test was performed to compare the skills and business performance indicators before and after attending the training programme. wilcoxon test was done for each row and in the case of skills developed through training programme; Drawing up financial statements, Human resource management, Business failure signs and causes, Finance and cash flow, Managing growth of the business, Creative problem solving, Legal aspects of the business- All these rows are significant i.e. training make a difference. With regard to business performance indicators -Value of capital assets, Profitability of the business, Satisfaction of customers, Sustainable competitive advantage are non significant (P value >0.05) with respect to before and after training. i.e. training does not make any difference in Value of capital assets, Profitability of the business, Satisfaction of customers.
Though women have taken keen interest in the EDPs, it has been observed that many female candidates even after completing the EDP successfully failed to start their own ventures for the following reasons.

1. Lack of adequate follow up support from these institutions.
2. Lack of co-ordination between the executives of promotional agencies and women entrepreneurs.
3. Poor improvement in technical skill.
4. Poor infra structural facilities
5. Heavy burden of documentation and formalities
6. Arbitrary changes in the administration of laws by the government.
7. Unnecessary intervening of politicians and administration.
8. Social environment is not conducive to the development of women entrepreneurs.
9. Narrow mindedness of the women.

Only 28.33 percent of the women entrepreneurs have no awareness of financial institutions. It is pertinent to mention here that among 71.65 per cent of the units who are aware about the various financial institutions assisting women entrepreneurs only 30.66 percent in Kerala have complete awareness. Majority of the respondents had approached the public sector banks. Only a nominal percentage of them approached the various financial institutions supporting women entrepreneurship.

It is clear from the study that 77 per cent of the respondents had availed of only financial support. While 2.66 per cent had got development support and 6 per cent had availed of all the facilities provided. Nearly 14.33 per cent of the units have not taken the benefit of any type of assistance.

The total amount availed from financial institutions 1,66,71,120 . Chi square test was conducted to understand whether there is any difference between the availing of assistance by the respondents of different districts. The result of the Chi
Square test shows that there is no significance difference between the amounts availed from financial institution with respect to district to which they belong.

However, a network of financial institutions already exists to meet the varied needs of industries. Most of them satisfy the needs of large and medium industries viz. KFC, KSIDC. In financing the SSI sector SIDBI has been playing the role of apex financial institution. Besides SIDBI, KFCs, NSIC, - are also providing financial, marketing, and technological support to them. Most of the entrepreneurs in the sample were evasive in giving the correct picture of financial matters. The amount of assistance availed by the women entrepreneurs from various government agencies supporting women entrepreneurship was analyzed. The total amount availed in 50, 46,000. To know whether there is any significant difference between the respondents belonging to different districts with respect to amount availed Anova was performed. Result of the test reveals that there is no significance difference between the amounts availed from government agencies and the district to which they belong. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

These promotional institutions assist all and sundry in setting up small units with an attitude of indifference or over-ambitious objectives. But they fail to provide adequate working capital, raw materials, training, and power supply nor do they help women entrepreneurs in finding marketing outlets for the sale of their products. This situation has arisen because of the absence of a meaningful coordination among the concerned agencies. It was found in the study that the assistances provided by the government are mainly financial aimed at inducing women to start new units. Several government entrepreneurial programmes and schemes focus on women. Propounded by different departments and initiated at different times, most of the schemes share a lot of common features. However, by their definition many financiers and business angels are reluctant to fund such low production, low capital, low risk ventures.

The amount of capital required to start and operate a small industry unit is low and because of this, people without any entrepreneurial aptitude or talent often
venture into this field. Assistance given without proper scrutiny and systematic follow up often cause money to be wasted by the recipient units. In spite of the fact that programmes of assistance have been there for long, many units still appear to be in the dark about the crucial aspects of these programmes.

Accepting the fact that a number of DIC s has played a useful role, it should be said that the general tendency is to carry out their activities in a routine fashion. With an impressive array of functions on the rolls, several units have not been able to accomplish the desired objectives, partly due to lack of commitment on the part of the staff to their new tasks. The problems of securing raw materials in time and finding lucrative markets for the products remain to be solved.

In spite of an impressive structure of institutions for providing technical assistance, a large proportion of the small enterprises in the sample for study indicated that the right type of information for technical improvements when they actually faced specific problems in their day to day operations could not be secured from them. The problem appears to be more acute in the case of those in the sector – which do not have direct contact with these institutions. It is suggested that DICs which are accessible to most entrepreneurs, should assume the greater responsibility for dissemination of information on technical improvements.

Almost all public sector banks run special schemes to fund women entrepreneurs and yet it proves to be difficult for women to avail of loans easily. This is partly because of the mindset of bank officials who believe that women by their very nature are incapable of making decent sales. Inadequate awareness about these schemes on the part of the recipients’ is another reason for their slow uptake.

The experience of women entrepreneurs of the first generation has indicated a high degree of mortality due to inadequate inputs in technical, managerial and financial areas. In such cases, it was necessary for the bank to go beyond its traditional role as financier and become a partner in progress in the constituent unit, by a higher degree of involvement in all functional areas of the management of the
The question of the success of an enterprise is directly related to the ability to plan for tapping the benefits of an available project. The major problem, which the first generation entrepreneurs faced, related to the project planning itself. Even though there are consultancy organizations helping in the preparation of project report very few women have availed of the services. The reason may be partly due to the baseless fear of huge costs and partly due to lack of awareness of the existence of such facilities and services. Our task is to facilitate improvement in such awareness among potential women entrepreneurs and usage of such services. This needs coordination. There are some examples of successful women entrepreneurs in Kerala, but the number of women in the list of notable entrepreneurs and instances of great enterprises promoted and nurtured exclusively by women in Kerala is conspicuously low.

Another significant need of many women business owners is obtaining the appropriate assistance and information needed to propel the business to a higher level of growth. In the study it was revealed that the needs of women entrepreneurs, those who were just starting their ventures, requested assistance and training in implementing the business idea, identifying initial sources of financing, and advertising/promotion. The entrepreneurs, who were already established, had a somewhat different set of needs including financing for expansion and increasing sales. The study had identified ten most desired needs of fast growth entrepreneurs:

(a) using cash flow to make operational decisions  
(b) financing growth  
(c) increasing the value of the business  
(d) compensation for self and associates  
(e) hiring, training and motivating for growth  
(f) succeeding in a rapidly changing world  
(g) successful selling  
(h) sales force management  
(i) management success  
(j) problems and pitfalls of growth.

The study reveals that the general approach of supporting business is ineffective in promoting female entrepreneurship. More specific support systems to provide assistance to women entrepreneurs are needed. In fact, while it is true that existing support structures do provide women with the opportunity to make contacts,
build networks and learn from the experiences of others, specific measures are still necessary. These need to deal more efficiently with the specific problems highlighted such as access to training, finance and information.

7.1.2 To spot the reasons for the slow growth of women entrepreneurship in Kerala.

Kerala is the only state in India where women outnumber the males. No state in the country has attained the level of physical quality of life index (PQL), lower infant mortality, higher life expectancy, higher literacy and so on achieved by Kerala. Despite these advantages, role of women in the economic activity is at low ebb and their contribution towards industrial development is meager. To spot the reasons for the slow growth of women entrepreneurs in Kerala was one of the objectives of the study. An entrepreneurship success index was prepared to understand the extent of success of the women entrepreneurs had achieved. The success level of women entrepreneurs based on age, education, motivation, experience before the establishment of the enterprises, business awareness, district wise, nature of units, financial assistance availed of, training programmes attended were calculated to know whether there is any relation between these variables and the success rate achieved by the entrepreneurs. It was to analyze whether these variables have a role in the slow growth of women entrepreneurship in Kerala.

7.1.2.1 Entrepreneurship Success Index

Eight dimensions; profitability, social recognition, consumer satisfaction, product or brand recognition, quality of products, capacity utilization and diversification of products were selected and included in the study. ESI was conceptualized as the aggregated score obtained by the individual entrepreneur for the selected eight dimensions. The scores achieved were calculated on a hedonic scale and the values ranged from zero to two. On the basis of that woman entrepreneurs were divided into four levels of success. Very high, High, Medium and low. The sample women entrepreneurs falling in the category very high were 16
per cent, they are entrepreneurs with very high levels of entrepreneurial qualities and who are managing their firms in an excellent manner. And high were 17.33 per cent, the entrepreneurs falling under such category somehow manage their enterprises, they have potentials to succeed, but requires some sort of help, training or funding. Medium range (16.66 per cent) entrepreneurs find it difficult to survive in this competitive field and require all sorts of help from the assisting agencies. The entrepreneurs who belonged to the low levels of success were very poor in performance and even if they are given assistance only limited chances of survival in this competitive field.

The age group of the respondents according to the success level achieved by them was calculated. The analysis revealed that age does not seem to be a bar as far as one’s entry into entrepreneurial profession is concerned. The researcher performed Anova for testing the hypothesis. The results clearly revealed that there is no significant difference in success rate with respect to age category. And the null hypothesis is accepted.

Education is always considered as an important asset of an individual in building his/her entrepreneurial career. So here an attempt has been made to test whether there is any relation between the educational qualification of an entrepreneur and the success rate achieved by them. Result of the anova test reveals that there is no significance difference in success rate with respect to education and the null hypothesis is accepted. The study reveals that formal education is not necessary for starting and running an enterprise. The fact remains that it is not the entrepreneur’s education, but his/ her entrepreneurial acumen that matters and makes all the difference in the entrepreneurial behavior and performance. We have the examples of the remarkable success of some of the illiterate and / or high school dropout entrepreneur’s world over.

In our study there are 136 entrepreneurs who had some sort of experience before the starting of their enterprise and the remaining 164 entrepreneurs did not have any experience. Here it is tried to find out whether there is any relation
between experience women entrepreneurs had and the success rate achieved by these entrepreneurs. The results of the tests clearly reveal that there is no significance difference in success rate with respect to experience. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Though previous experience helps one in starting and managing his/her enterprise, yet it is not a pre requisite as far as starting of an entrepreneurial venture is concerned. This is because of the fact that even though women had experience it is related to administration and service related areas. So such experiences may not help women while starting their own enterprises.

Entrepreneurs plunge into production without looking into the key questions- the size and nature of the market, the demand supply outlook, location and characteristics of potential customers and the level and nature of promotional efforts to harness the market potential. 65.33 per cent of the respondents had conducted market study before launching their product, and 34.66 per cent of them have not conducted. So an attempt is made to analyze whether there is any relation between the success rates of entrepreneurs who had conducted market study. Anova and T test was conducted to test the hypothesis. The Results clearly reveal that there is a significant difference in success rate with respect to market study conducted. So the null hypothesis is rejected. And it is proved that those who had conducted market study are more successful than those who did not conducted. It is obvious that one does not become an entrepreneur by the mere act of starting or owning an enterprise. More important is the nature, degree and extent of innovation that the entrepreneur introduces and that too on a continuous basis. As the startup capital required is low, many of them venture into entrepreneurial field without any clear idea or plans, this result in more number of sick units.

The women entrepreneurs were classified into four basic groups that is manufacturing or trading or servicing or manufacturing – cum –trading. Majority of the women entrepreneurs (48.33) were found to be presently operating Manufacturing. This was followed by 33.66 per cent of women entrepreneurs who were in the service sector and 9 per cent of the respondents who were engaged in
exclusively trading activity only. And 9 per cent of the respondents who were engaged in manufacturing and trading. To know the success rate of women entrepreneurs belonging to various product group Anova was conducted. The results of the test clearly reveal that there is no significant difference in success rate with respect to nature of unit. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

The study in a nutshell tries to find out the role of Government and financial institutions in the development of women entrepreneurship development. Here it is tried to analyze whether the financial assistance availed from Government agencies and financial institutions have any relation between the success rate achieved by the women entrepreneurs. To do this analysis the total assistance availed from government and financial agencies were combined and there are few people who did not receive financial support which is also included. The researcher had performed Anova to test the hypothesis. The analysis carried out shows that those who approached financial institutions and availed financial assistance are in a better position than those who availed amount from Government agencies.

Our survey reveals that 64.66 per cent of the women entrepreneurs have attended training and 35.33 per cent of them had not attended any training programme. It is tried to find out whether there is any relation between the training programmes attended by the Women Entrepreneurs and the success rate achieved by them. Result of the test reveals that there is no significance difference in success rate with respect to training attended. And the null hypothesis is accepted.

Three hundred women entrepreneurs constitute the sampling frame for the study, 50 entrepreneurs from six districts. Here it is tried to analyze the success rate of women entrepreneurs with respect to the district to which they belong. Result of the test revels that there is no significance difference in success rate with respect to district to which they belong and the null hypothesis is accepted.

From the analysis it can be seen that the variables age, education, reasons for venturing into entrepreneurial career, training attended, experience had, financial assistances availed have no role in the success rate achieved by the women
entrepreneurs. Only the respondents who had conducted market study are in a good level of success. Here is the importance of systematic planning before launching a business activity. This is what most entrepreneurs’ lack. So it is clear here that the support agencies, both Governmental and Financial institutions must give support to women entrepreneurs for preparing project report and start business with systematic planning. And in the case of amount of assistance from Government and financial institutions it is seen that women who had approached financial institutions are in a better position. The study shows that the present institutional support system is inadequate to support the sustainable development of women entrepreneurship in the state.

7.1.3 To find out the motivational factors behind women entrepreneurship and also to know the type of supports, received by the entrepreneurs from the government, financial institutions, family members, community.

7.1.3.1 Reasons For Choosing An Entrepreneurial Career

It is clearly evident from the analysis that various government measures expected to highly motivate young women into the field of entrepreneurship has motivated only by a whisker. This is certainly contrary to the expectation of the state and central governments. They have designed various women entrepreneurial measures with the great expectation that a large number of women entrepreneurs would be attracted to take up this profession. Thus the Nitty gritty of the issue encouraging women entrepreneurs to embark upon entrepreneurial ventures is mainly due to reasons other than the various governmental schemes supposed to motivate prospective women entrepreneurs.

Contrary to the above, women entrepreneurs are forced to take entrepreneurship in the absence of any other means of contributing to family income. The study also found that, family support and encouragements are the highest facilitating factors which helped women to aspire entrepreneurship. Women’s reasons for starting business are not always often driven by positive
factors but also due to negative circumstances such as low family income, lack of employment opportunities, and dissatisfaction with a current job or the need for flexible work. These factors tend to be most predominant among women within developing economies.

It has been found that women entrepreneurs, who have given first preference to achieve the goal, receive a higher level of income than the others in the field. Family compulsion is found to be more acute in the case of respondents with low level of education. To understand whether there is any significant relation between the reasons for starting entrepreneurship and the success rate achieved Anova test was done. The result of the test clearly shows that there is no significance difference in success rate with respect to reasons for entrepreneurship. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

7.1.3.2 The perception of the officials of government and financial institutions on women entrepreneurs in the state of Kerala.

Majority of the officers are of the view that it is difficult for an entrepreneur to embark on a completely new product and succeed, whether it is male or female. For a woman, the family is the most important consideration. And it is not possible for her to go with the enterprise without caring for the family. She has to take care of her children. In the case of women taking a bank loan, margin money scheme can be utilized. Even though there is Reserve Bank of India regulations for disbursing loans up to five lakhs without collateral security, the banks turn a deaf ear to them.

The officers of the concerned institutions did not agree with the view that women are unaware of the existence of various schemes of State and Central governments for the development of women entrepreneurship. They claim that they publicize the schemes in the newspapers as often as possible. Most of them are of the view that women are not interested in knowing what is going on in the world outside, and least concerned about the changing trends in the market, which together contrived to make them unsuccessful entrepreneurs.
When the women approach for loan the office looks at the feasibility and tries to check whether they are competent enough for the work. In the case of offices like KSWDC, after the disbursement of the loan, the organization is only interested in ensuring its recovery or finding out whether the recipients who have made default in the repayment of the loan. A government surety or some landed property is needed as guarantee before disbursing the loan amount. Most of them are regular in the repayment of the loan. Follow ups are made in the form of direct survey, but not regularly. An officer said that there are many schemes for the benefit of women but they are reluctant to avail of the facility owing to diffidence or social taboos. If a woman wants to start an enterprise and run it successfully, she can do it. What is needed is a strong determination and readiness to work hard.

The organizations such as the KSIDC and the KFC mainly aims at financing multi-crore projects and do not focus on small projects. No schemes are there specially meant for women entrepreneurs; same importance is given to all the categories. Mainly gives financial assistance. Most of the officers are of the opinion that majority of the parents in Kerala wants their daughter to be highly educated, but not to take up an enterprise. They always discourages even for their sons. Our society is not entrepreneurial friendly. They are not interested in wealth creation. Even if anyone starts an enterprise and makes money, what they do is that to try how to destroy that enterprise. People think home is the best place for a woman. Even concerned officers of these institutes opined to the researcher that home is the best place for a woman. If officers themselves are of this attitude then how women entrepreneurship will flourish in our society.

The researcher visited the office of the Kerala State Small Industries Association (KSSIA). It was astonishing to find that there was not a list of the women enterprises in the state, they had no idea of how much women entrepreneurs are there and about their addresses. And when I asked them about it, they just evaded the issue. The concerned officer there was of the view that competition among the units was the main reason for the breakup of women owned firms. From
the office the researcher managed to gather the address of the president of the Kerala State Women Industries Association (KSWIA). The researcher was grief – stricken to see the haphazard working of the association, meant for women entrepreneurs. The president of KSWIA, herself did not have any idea about how many women enterprises are there in Kerala at present. No meetings had taken place for the past six months. What she pointed out as the reason for the huge number of closures of women enterprises was that the women of Kerala are quarrelsome by nature. Now a women cell has been started, functioning as a wing of the Kerala Chamber of Commerce and Industry. We can expect that it would help to bring in an attitudinal change among the women and encourage them to take up entrepreneurship as a career option.

Even if they come for training or motivational programmes they bring their husbands with them. Family members have no faith in their ability. For many government offices like Kerala Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), there is no scheme specifically for women. When someone approaches them they directs them to the bank (how to get the loan etc). A cell is working there as how to prepare a project report.

In the spices board, there is no special scheme for women entrepreneurs. The board had an award for best women entrepreneur. The officer says that this year there was no one to apply for the award usually the award was given to any women who were partners/managing directors. But when it was scrutinized it was found that there was no women actively involved in business.

In coir board there is scheme for women entrepreneurs, Mahila Coir yojana. Training is provided to women for making coir. And ratt is distributed subsidized rate. Here also the problem is that after providing training and distribution of ratts there is no follow up on the part of coir board. If the board had arranged for providing raw material and any support for marketing of the products, then it would have help the women entrepreneurs to make more profit and sustained their unit.
KITCO usually conducts a large number of EDPs specifically for women (for panchayat, blocks, and municipal corporations). In the case of rural women, they need a push back all the time, to start, to finance, for marketing etc. But the officers opine that with limited funds they are not able to do hand holding services. These institutions have to maintain a closer contact with technical research centers to obtain information on a continuous basis on the adaptation of technology for the needs of small enterprises, storage of such information, and its dissemination to these units. They are just providing training programmes do not have any measures to check how many of them have started enterprise.

A popular business magazine (Dhanam) in Kerala has prepared a special article on 100 women entrepreneurs of Kerala. The researcher visited their office and interviewed the editor and the persons who conducted the study. They opined that it was really difficult for them to identify 100 successful women entrepreneurs in Kerala. The lists available from official sources were not at all useful. Because there was wide discrepancy between the records available and actual facts about the existing entrepreneurs. The same problem was faced by the researcher during the collection of data. In many cases only a unit was registered in the name of a woman, but she does not have any role to play in the actual management of the enterprise.

7.1.3.3 Socio-economic and business profile of women entrepreneurs

It is seen from the study that majority of the women entrepreneurs were married and of the age-group of 30 – 50 years. These women entrepreneurs seem to have started their business with a view to pass their time in a productive way since they had already met their commitments at the home front towards their children as they were old enough to take care of themselves to a great extent. Married women are largely attracted towards the entrepreneurial world as they have the backing of their husbands in matters of finance, technical knowhow, business skill, and above all their moral support. This family support enables women entrepreneurs to step into the male dominated arena quite smoothly.
It is noticed that majority of the respondents didn’t possess any technical qualification nor did they have any formal training in entrepreneurship. This seems to be a real impediment to the efficient management and the smooth running of their enterprises. The reason for this may be the prevailing attractive job prospects in wage employment which is less burdensome for housewives. Religion-wise distribution of the respondents reveals that 52.66 per cent of them are Hindus, while 37.33 per cent are Christians and only a few Muslim women (10 per cent) are in the field of entrepreneurship. Muslim women are found staying away from the mainstream of socio-economic life. And the rural and urban background of women entrepreneurs has almost equal representation.

It is found that women belonging to nuclear families are more emboldened to enter into entrepreneurial ventures. This may be due to more spare time they are having at their disposal. The majority of these housewives belong to the middle income group. These women are often quite diffident and reticent at the start but soon pick up confidence as and when they find that things are easier than imagined and success is within their reach. These women entrepreneurs no longer need anything more than mere encouragement from their family members including their husbands. The reason for these women taking up entrepreneurship is that they find business to be more flexible and feel confident that they can manage both job and business simultaneously. Some are motivated by an urge for achievement in life.

It was found that women belonging to the families having a business background are more prone to enter into entrepreneurial ventures than those who are new to the field. This strengthens the belief that a business family background does facilitate one’s entry into entrepreneurial world. The occupation and background of the husband or father or both provide the basis in many cases for choosing the entrepreneurial activity more than opportunities available in the environment. About 42 per cent of the husbands of women entrepreneurs are in the business field.

In the area of industrial entrepreneurship, a few silver lines on the horizon are noticed. The data shows that though women entrepreneurs are entering into more
challenging high tech product lines like electronics, software engineering and biotechnology, majority of them are in the traditional areas such as tailoring, embroidery, weaving and food processing with low investment and low income. The study clearly reveals the fact that majority of women entrepreneurs have started with low capital investment. The enterprises under study are basically micro in nature with capital investment up to Rs.20 lakhs. Only a few units have initial investments above 20 lakhs. Women prefer to have small business as most of them enter business with the sole motive of supplementing the family income. They operate only in the local areas where they have their business ventures and make small investments from their own savings. (No borrowings).

Satisfactory returns from the investment are mainly responsible for the continuance of business and it also helps its growth. Insufficient returns normally result in the closure of business and/or diversion of entrepreneurship. This tragedy is often due to the fact that they select a project which normally every one selects without having any idea of the market conditions. Projects may be unable to survive the withdrawal of external funding because of fundamental weaknesses in planning. Projects which collapse can have a very damaging effect on the people involved. The reasons for failure may include poor assessment of the market for the products, a superficial understanding of social and cultural relations among the participants, the introduction of inappropriate technologies, lack of adequate training for the participants, and lack of potential for organizational management of the enterprise.

It has been a traditional notion that women would select certain products only and therefore, many organizations have worked and formulated profiles of products which women can take up considering women itself as a constraint. Both in the urban and rural areas, the concentration of women entrepreneurs in certain professions are excessive. Excessive concentration on particular industry reduces opportunities and there is an urgent need for diversification of training and employment of women particularly in the unorthodox fields in the industrial sector.
Proximity to the house/ availability of own building was found to be a major reason for choosing the location for business activity. This may be due to wrong planning. Easy accessibility to place of residence facilitates the women entrepreneur to enter business sector. If they have their own place for business, most of the women entrepreneurs will be inclined to use that place for business. The main reason for this is that they can attend to household chores and entrepreneurial activities simultaneously. A number of prospective women entrepreneurs have selected the present location mainly because of their inability to get allocation for themselves of an adequate and appropriate place for their units to be housed. The government’s attitude, although very helpful at the macro level, does not translate into effective action so far as allotments for sheds and plots’ are concerned. If reservations for women are made, care should be taken to see that women who are dummy or namesake directors, planted for tax evasion purposes, should not get the benefits which are meant for women who are themselves in the thick of industry.

Most of the women entrepreneurs avoid taking loans for initial investment. Majority of the women do not possess the desired financial backing of their own. Their financial resources are not individual but identified as family’s resources. It is extremely difficult for a woman to own and manage a venture independently. Therefore, women’s economic independence requires the kind of venture/ project which can be managed along with the family she is to look after. It also shows their eagerness to minimize the risk. Women entrepreneurs opine that their family members expect them to do all their family duties simultaneously with those of their entrepreneurial career. Many economic projects in the study area make no or only nominal profit. In many cases they simply increase work load and stress. A major problem of these enterprises is that they not only do not generate considerable income, but often result in loss. This may be due to an inadequate awareness of the condition of the market. Besides, income generated is seldom adequate enough to compensate for the time and labour spent by women entrepreneurs.
Chapter 7
Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

The findings of the survey reveal that most of the women entrepreneurs do not treat their employees as a valuable resource and tap their potential in decision making. There is a tendency among the entrepreneurs to trust none other than family members. Even the entrepreneurs holding graduate and post graduate degrees are reluctant to permit the involvement of their employees in planning and decision making. It is evident from the survey that a very small number of women entrepreneurs consider the relevance of the human factor in taking decisions in business. Key decisions in business are scarcely taken in consultation with the employees, working in the respective departments. Usually, family members are the key decision makers and pushing down the authority to the executives is found to be quite rare. This is not an ideal management strategy. Delegation of authority and decision making power to the executives can relieve the entrepreneurs concerned to a large extent and the time so saved enables them to involve more in creative thinking.

It is found that almost 54.66 per cent of the entrepreneurs were novices in the field of business when they start their enterprises. It is also found that they have not undergone any formal training in entrepreneurship before commencing business. Large numbers of women entrepreneurs are of the view that professional management systems are good for big companies, and are not practical for the small units. They believe that a small business cannot afford professional management, machinery, simply because of its smallness. They, generally, do not attend management training programme. Management principles are universal and applicable to every type of business, big or small. A small grocery stall also could apply management techniques and accordingly introduce changes, which would significantly raise its profits and profitability.

The vast majority of the entrepreneurs, particularly women, sell their products and service in their local market, which, is mostly a limited market access. Very few of the small-scale and growth-oriented enterprises sell in regional markets. This shows that there is limited exploration of new marketing opportunities.
and lack of professionalism which should ensure better price and larger turn over. For these reasons, many of the women entrepreneurs compete with one another to capture the same small local markets, and this inevitably results in lower returns all round. The potential for market development is also limited since many of women are engaged in similar type of business. The mobility of some entrepreneurs is restricted by family and cultural barriers, and this contrives to impede their access to wider markets. Most of them sell their products directly to the consumer, and only a few markets through intermediaries such as wholesalers. In this context, it may be noted that globalization has brought in new and broader avenues for all types of products. Nevertheless, only 4 per cent of the sample respondents have taken advantage of such opportunities. This implies that regardless of the scale of the enterprises, most women entrepreneurs have common marketing problems. It is noticed that only a small per cent of the sample respondents are receiving support from the support institutions to facilitate the marketing of their products.

This reveals that the women entrepreneurial ventures are very poorly developed in the state or in other words women entrepreneurship is still afflicted with the ailments of infancy. This should be an eye opener for both the Central and State governments and it should be their endeavor to put as much inputs as possible to promote women entrepreneurship in the state. It will go a long way in solving the unemployment situation in the state and also ensure sustainable development in the state.

Often, in many cases, women are merely fonts for men to obtain concessional credit, subsidies and other incentives offered for women enterprises. But in actual case the women did not have any role to play. This is known as surrogate ownership. The women who have lent their names have done so either for their husbands or for their fathers. In such cases the real entrepreneur will be deprive of the benefits. When the researcher tried to contact them on phone, asking for appointments, they were not even ready to talk without the consent of their husbands. In the units which women did not have any role to play, the next unit was
taken from the list. They feared that it was a sort of follow up from government agencies. Duplication of the same type of enterprises is rampant among women units. Limiting themselves to certain limited areas of work. Very few women’s units opt for business expansion even when they have scope for it. To top it all about 90 per cent of the women’s units are reported to be sick.

Because women are responsible for domestic chores and the raising of children, they do not have enough free time to develop either their entrepreneurial skills to become entrepreneurs or to develop an existing business. She cannot herself fully involve in a project promoted by her. It is so much harder for them to break away from these encumbrances for a change. The lack of free time does not allow them to travel to support institutions, banks and other finance houses for advice and information on credit, to attend training programmes to acquire skills, or to seek out better customers or suppliers. This lack of free time has observed in a number of studies. Lack of time is a barrier for women in most economies, independent of the level of development. The often prevailing attitude is that the women’s place is at home and that her first priority is to look after the home and family. This is one of the main constraints for many married women to venture into entrepreneurship. This identifies the fact that women’s enterprises are taking a second place to home as one of the main weaknesses of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. The entrepreneurs did not aspire to improve the business and profitability to very high levels, as they gave priority to devoting time for the family, including children’s education, and were content with a certain desirable level of growth of the enterprise.

One of the main problems of women entrepreneurs is the poor accounting and record keeping. It sounds a common problem but its magnitude is often unrealized. It takes several months to reconstruct accounts when the tasks become unavailable because, the entrepreneur is required to submit a working capital proposal to the bank. Unorganized accounts, besides contributing to poor financial planning, cause critical delays. This is an area were entrepreneur normally flounder. Records pertaining to production, inventory, material consumption and sale are ill
maintained. During the interview it was really difficult to obtain the data pertaining to financial matters.

Women even while fulfilling the entrepreneurial roles believe that they are compromising with their real duty, and frequently express a feeling of guilt at giving into personal ambition, especially when the children are small. Even in their own eyes, justification for such activity may only lie in the fact that it helps to keep the family economy healthy. A typical woman entrepreneur, in the Kerala milieu would still want to be central to the control of life in the house, even though it may mean higher stress levels.

7.1.4 To inquire into the specific problems, confronting the women entrepreneurs in the state and also to study the performance of women entrepreneurs.

The main problems faced by women entrepreneurs have been categorized into seven main heads, i.e. Problems pertaining to finance, marketing, socio-personal, production, labor and technical problems. Limited working capital, sales on credit, Lack of collateral security and margin money to secure the money borrowed, Fear of taking more loan, Complicated lengthy procedures of loan sanctioning, Reluctance of financial institutions to extend credit to women, Unawareness about the source of borrowing was found to be the financial problems faced by respondents based on the multiple responses given by them.

It is found that a network of promotional agencies and institutions has been set up at the national and state level to promote women entrepreneurship. Various support measures in the form of policy, infrastructure, finance, training, raw material are provided by these agencies. In spite of all these developmental measures, the SSI has not been able to play their role to the full extent as envisaged in our plans. Most of them face a number of problems in managing their enterprises and also the number of women turning to entrepreneurship is also quite low. Many units get sick during the first two or three years of their inception itself, without making any
inroad into developing a market for their products. The rate of growth in the number of sick units is much higher in Kerala than the rest of the country. Most of the units that had been established long ago do not find themselves capable of undertaking expansion and modernization of their production facilities. While many have closed down, others have fallen sick and are on the verge of closure.

A close look at the causes of sickness and closure of most of the SSI will reveal the fact that the main ailment of most of the sick units is not regarding finance but marketing. These units commence production usually as planned, but when the products are put in the market, it takes too much time to get the products sold thus blocking the scarce capital resources. Lack of demand for their products is one of the most serious problems facing these industries. Owing to the small size, they lack the funds needed to stay in the market till things turn for the better. Many of them have to face stiff competition from large scale and sisterly units.

SSI is not able to use sophisticated production techniques, or involve in heavy promotion of their products. Distribution of the products also becomes difficult task for a small entrepreneur. From the marketing aspect, the main problems identified are as discussed below;

- Packaging; since packaging of the products is done on trial and error basis, the products is not appealing. Hence, competing with other established companies poses a problem in product appeal.
- Selling; Due to severe competition, they are forced to sell their products at less remunerative prices thereby incurring losses. Sometimes women entrepreneurs have to face financial problems with customers especially when durable goods are being sold on installment basis.
- Promotion; in a stiff competitive market cost of advertisements are so high that they are not able to afford to pay for the price for the same.

Because of its small size they cannot afford to employ professionals. Instead the entrepreneur herself tries to acquire basic management skills relating to important
functional areas of small enterprise management. This makes her job multi-disciplinary and challenging one.

Cash flow problems were the most commonly stated issue with "inadequate working capital for" promoting the business. Since most of these women used their own funds or funds borrowed from spouse/family to set up their business, problems associated with inadequate working capital was found among most of the enterprises under study. The chronic shortage of working capital leaves women entrepreneurs extremely vulnerable to competition and other exigencies. Most of the entrepreneurs under study are somehow regularly repaying loan amount, but banks view women applicants as high risk compared to men as they do not have faith that they will be able to repay the loan. Also family members and friends hesitate to sign as guarantors for women as they are not sure about whether the woman will be successful in her business. Obviously, the perceived availability of capital to invest in a firm also determines what kind of opportunity the entrepreneur is ready to engage in. When women do have access to credit it is often in small amounts, whether this suits their needs or not. Differential access to credit may of course be a reflection of differences in the choice of sector, educational level or the amount of loan requested. High transaction costs, the rigidity of collateral requirements and heavy paperwork are further impediments to women entrepreneurs. Sometimes, credit may be available for women through several schemes but there are bottlenecks and gaps, and the multiplicity of schemes is often not adequately listed nor is there networking among agencies. As a result, clients approaching one institution are sometimes not made aware of the best option for their requirements. In many countries, women face unequal inheritance practices and laws, discriminatory laws on ownership of property or access to bank loans, or discriminatory practices by banks. In the area of guarantees, several discouraging habits have become ingrained in financial institutions and banks, such as requiring male members to accompany women entrepreneurs for finalizing projects proposed by women, as well as almost invariably insisting on guarantees from males in the family.
Many women opined that a general lack of experience and exposure also restricts women from venturing out and dealing with banking institutions. Those who do venture out often find that transaction costs for accessing credit are inordinately high, and cannot be met with the cash at their disposal. Because of this, they are dependent on the family members for surety or collateral and hence restrict the money they borrow. This results in lower investments. Alternately they tend to find working capital at higher rates of interest. All these in turn affect the enterprise and its survival.

The respondents especially referred to the difficulties in getting adequate timely credit, particularly to synchronize with other facilities. It was stated that cuts in working capital, imposed by the bank managers restricted their ability to expand output precisely when their competitors in the field were getting financial support from other institutions to meet the increasing demand for their products.

Though 43 per cent had taken loans from a financial institution, for a significant proportion this was only a small part of their original investment and not the primary source of funds. In sum, it is interesting to note that although it often is self-reliance that motivates women to venture out on their own, they have to rely on the securities of others to raise their basic capital requirements.

The researcher felt that small industries which fared well in normal times hardly did anything to increase their sales systematically. As a result of it they suffered when the slightest depression occurred. The attitude of the entrepreneur towards selling his/her own products is a crucial factor in the success and growth of the enterprise. The ability to penetrate into new markets requires expertise, knowledge and contacts. Women often lack access to training and experience in on how to participate in the market place and are therefore unable to market goods and services strategically. Thus, women-owned SMEs are often unable to take on both the production and marketing of their goods. In addition, they have often not been exposed to the international markets, and therefore lack knowledge about what is internationally acceptable.
For marketing of the products women entrepreneurs are at the mercy of the middle men who pocket major chunk of the profit. Further they find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular. There is lack of information on changing market. In addition, for women entrepreneur there is difficulty of collection of payments. Plant, machinery and other equipment emphasize that very few women entrepreneurs have invested huge amount for their business. Others who have invested lesser amount should also be considered successful entrepreneurs since they are earning successfully.

Another problem faced by women entrepreneurs is occupational mobility glitches. Occupational mobility i.e, shifting from one product line to another, is considered by women entrepreneurs as disadvantageous. Taking a chance to venture on their own is considered a risky proposition, which could be indulged in by the family members once. Women are also financially at a disadvantage to innovate into a second product line. Many women have to borrow from men in their lives to start up the first venture. However, money for a second venture is often not as likely to be forthcoming from the same source. And they need the consent of their family members to take any decision pertaining to entrepreneurial activities.

No support system has been made to identify women entrepreneurs and solve their professional problems which they are facing in their day to day business transactions, organizations, forum and associations for women entrepreneurs are not found which may advocate the suitable reforms in laws and business practices for promoting women entrepreneur.

The high cost of technological support can be offset to some extent if technology is provided to women entrepreneurs at subsidized charges by well-meaning organizations. It is also suggested that the women entrepreneur should take care to keep themselves abreast with the latest developments in their respective fields by regularly attending training programmes and reading relevant literature.
The women entrepreneurs interviewed for this study indicate that they have had many problems to overcome in establishing their businesses. Some of these are common to all entrepreneurs and some are specific to women;

- It is found that the sort of help rendered by the Government to the existing entrepreneurs in marketing their products is neither adequate nor well-directed. Since globalization has opened up various avenues for marketing indigenous products in the global market. Constructive steps to help women in this regard from the government can do invaluable good to them. Government should consider the precarious situation of the small entrepreneur in competing with the large scale enterprises who market their products at a lower price taking advantage of the economies of scale of the business. The government can do a lot in bringing success to the ailing/ sick units.

- The handicaps of small scale production outweigh the advantages, in most branches of the manufacturing activity. As a result, the larger units are generally able to pass on a good part of their advantages in the market place in the form of lower prices, or better quality of products, giving rise to the small industry problem. One of the most important problems in the production process is the non availability of working capital, which tends to interrupt the production process. While providing the capital requirements of SSIs, the state should not confine its role to fixed capital requirements. It is more important to provide working capital needs, so as to maintain the production process smoothly. If the small scale sector should move into progress rapidly both in modernization and diversification of production, efforts should be made to improve the level of technology, by producing sophisticated machines within the country.
7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are made to develop an appropriate women entrepreneurship model for the state of Kerala.

The last objective of the study was to suggest appropriate measures to overcome the common problems and issues faced by women entrepreneurs in the state.

7.2.1 Some suggestions for consideration by promotional agencies

- In spite of the awareness programmes launched and special efforts made by the government, the proportion of women opting for entrepreneurship is quite small. Special drive programmes for attracting prospective women entrepreneurs may be made by the governmental agencies with the active cooperation of other Entrepreneurial support organizations.

- Entrepreneurial support organizations need to tap the huge reservoir of technically /professionally qualified women by offering them better schemes of assistance and ensuring their proper implementation.

- No separate data relating to women entrepreneur are maintained by the DIC. A reliable data base, especially for women entrepreneur, is imperative to assess their performance and contribution to the national economy. Therefore, maintaining of separate section for women entrepreneurs in DICs to deal with all the matters relating to women viz. promotion of women entrepreneurship, maintenance of secondary data for women SSI units, organization of women entrepreneurship development programmes, guidance, redressal of grievances, etc. would make it easier for the government and other agencies to effectively implement their policies and programmes for the promotion of women entrepreneurship.

- Information centers should be set up at strategic locations, in both rural and urban areas so that the information related to entrepreneurship (whether it is regarding training, finance, marketing or any other) is easily accessible to the
aspiring women entrepreneurs, and to those who are already in the field.

- For better and effective utilization of assistance provided by the different agencies, care should be taken to ensure that
  a. assistance is provided in time and in adequate quantities.
  b. Encourage only such units which are capable of stimulating growth and employment.

- The agencies providing assistance should ensure that the assistance is given only to genuine; really deserving entrepreneurs as otherwise the really needy will be deprived of the chance. Local administrative units, government agencies/institutions, commercial banks, etc. which extend financial support to the women’s units should ensure that the money borrowed from them is utilized for the very purpose for which it is taken. Frequent visits and inspection by the concerned officials/authorities are recommended in this context.

- The experience of women entrepreneurs of first generation has indicated a high degree of mortality due to inadequate inputs in technical, managerial and financial areas. In such cases it is necessary for the bank to go beyond its traditional role as financier and become a partner in progress in the constituent unit, by an higher degree of involvement in all functional areas of the management of the unit.

- As women generally do not own any property, the pre-condition for collateral security should be waived. The rate of interest should be further reduced for women entrepreneur. Because failure to commitments on the part of officials and red tapism prevalent in the government offices further demoralize the women entrepreneurs. A large number of women entrepreneurs have complained about the heavy burden of documentation and formalities prescribed for loan disbursement. These are discouraging factors so they should be minimized and legal assistance should be provided to female candidates for completing documentation.
To make women entrepreneurship movement a success, cohesive efforts of all the concerned institutions viz. training, financial and marketing are greatly required. They are needed to work in collaboration with each other. A single coordinating agency, which facilitates the flow of adequate working capital, technology power, and marketing of finished goods, is desirable. ‘Single Window Clearance Mechanism’ should also be made available to them. Initial supportive services will save the time, energy and money of these entrepreneurs and they would be saved from humiliation and harassment. These entrepreneurs are generally, neither in a position to hire the services nor to get the consultancy support from the specialized agencies. The inability of these entrepreneurs hampers the growth of entrepreneurship among women. Modern tools should be popularized on hire-purchase system. A system of training cum production centers and pilot workshop should be developed to encourage the use of improved techniques of production.

Most of the small entrepreneurs are aspiring for better technology to cope with the increasing challenges in production and marketing. Governmental agencies should take initiative in arranging facilities for small entrepreneurs so that, the entrepreneurial need for updating existing technology of production or in acquiring new technology becomes more feasible. Substantial increase in sales is found to have occurred in institutions, where entrepreneurs have made necessary alterations in technology of production to suit the demands of customers. Moreover, an entrepreneur should probe and exploit opportunities, out of their own efforts, for availing of technology offer from foreign organizations or larger Indian enterprises by agreeing to produce according to their specifications. They can even have arrangements with University Research departments or from other Research Organizations for obtaining better technology. Majority of the entrepreneurs do not have investments in R&D facilities, even in cases of many entrepreneurs, who have research and development facilities, any investment of a substantial nature is not made.
• Institutions like the DIC which are easily approachable for the women entrepreneurs have to maintain a closer contact with the technical research centers to obtain information on a continuous basis on adaptation of technology suited to the needs of small enterprises. There should be provision for storage of such information, and its dissemination to the units.

• Marketing is another area of full of challenge before a women entrepreneur. Cut throat competition, technologically backed products, high advertising, pricing mechanism and market driven rules of the game, make a women entrepreneur’s life difficult. Under such circumstances, a women entrepreneur can survive and grow only if she has access to timely market information, support of bureaucracy, friendly and supportive attitude from government and politicians. Through displays and exhibitions’ during festival seasons can improve sales.

• It is necessary to refer here to the setting up of trade centers to provide a variety of services for small scale units. The services which form an important advice in assistance to the units are:
  
  i. To maintain and disseminate information relating to all small scale industries of the region viz. names of firms, items produced and their specifications, machinery, installed capacities, and quantities available for exports.
  
  ii. To establish contacts between small scale units and prospective buyers in the country and abroad.
  
  iii. To undertake common advertising and display programmes and to co-ordinate and act as focal points for overall marketing programme of government, industry and voluntary associations in specified areas.

• Merely providing support and leaving the entrepreneurs to go their own way will defeat the objective of the programme. Therefore, adequate follow up and counseling of the entrepreneur is also essential both during the implementation stage and the production/running stage. This initial phase refers to the support for establishing and running an enterprise. Support by way of infrastructural
facilities, sheds, power etc and financial assistance are required. In addition, in this phase, considerable support by way of continued counseling and encouragement to the entrepreneur in the formative stages of the enterprise will be essential. If the individual lacks enough motivation and confidence, the efforts made by the concerned organizations are of no significance.

- Similarly the procedures for disbursement of subsidies and grants, allotment of industrial plots and exhibition stalls, and other benefits intended for women entrepreneurs should be made viable, transparent, and easily accessible.

- Sickness in the industrial units is a bane to the society. It blocks up the very vital and scarce resources such as capital, machinery, skill and expertise. The entire goes out of gear and remains as a black patch in the economy. It is like a virus, which spreads widely and leads to frustration. This calamity can be overcome by reformulating all the concerned entrepreneurs, Government corporations, industrial associations, financial institutions, commercial banks and other concerned officials. There is a need to find out the possibility of reviving the sick units is the need of the hour. To reduce the incidence of sickness, what is most needed is to train the entrepreneurs to identify the symptoms of sickness, diagnose its causes and introduce remedial measures before the units become actually sick.

Apart from ensuring a sense of involvement in the programmes by the latter agencies, such a policy is calculated to ensure that no bankable project, which may be subsequently set up by a trained entrepreneur, need suffer for want of institutional support.

7.2.2. In order to streamline and strengthen the flow of credit to SSIs from the various financial institutions the following suggestions have been made;

- There has been much difference in the amount sanctioned and disbursed by these financial institutions. Thus there is a need to reduce this gap between
sanction and disbursement.

- Considering the diverse support extended to SSI units throughout the state and the greater requirements of assistance, it is suggested that SIDBI and KFCs branch offices might be further extended especially to areas having a concentration of small scale units. SIDBI should provide increased credit to the SSI sector.

- Their (promotional agencies) pro-active interest in the wholesome functioning of SSIs may bring about a great change. But many of the policy makers or programme planners might have forgotten that access to ‘finance’ was a limited aspect. Only making finance available and policies regarding it may not be improving the quality of the requirements of enterprises or it may not bring the change; but it needs more. Intensive follow up work will have to be done and systematized in the process to make it accessible to entrepreneurs in formal and informal forums. Women entrepreneurs should be oriented to spend less on land and buildings which will reduce the need for initial investment.

- The role played by these institutions in the revival of sick units is quite unsatisfactory. The amount distributed by these financial institutions for the rehabilitation of sick units has been always less than one per cent. Considering the increasing problem of sickness in SSIs, it is suggested that SIDBI and KFC should increase the amount distributed for revival of sick unit as it should be 5-10 per cent of the total assistance. The units that are sick are at present expected to report to their banks and DIC centers about their status, for getting sick unit revival assistance. In practice sick units find it impolitic to reveal their status to their banks or to the department for obtaining assistance since they are not sure of getting it. It is based on the recommendations of the banks, that the revival grant is sanctioned. It is commonly believed that the proportion of revived units turning sick again, is quite large, though authentic information in this matter is neither available nor reliable.
• It is noticed that the new units accounted for the largest share of the assistance of the total amount sanctioned by them. The existing units have achieved little share for their salutary growth from these institutions. Thus, the need is to increase the amount sanctioned/disbursed to the existing units in order to rebuild their competitive strength.

• Profitability of women entrepreneurs is found to be associated with the size and scale of their business operations. Entrepreneurs may be taught to set aside a portion of their revenue for further investments and thereby improve the size and scales of operations of their enterprises. They must be taught to make investments out of every cash inflows such as, ploughing back of profits, setting aside a portion of loan availed for investments and so on. The money they borrow and earn is often diverted to unproductive channels. Small entrepreneurs are to be enlightened towards having better discipline in financial matters.

The following are some of the suggestions for making a cordial relationship between entrepreneurs and the officials of the support agencies.

i. There should be training and retraining of officials of support agencies in public relations and other similar soft skills with a view to make them more courteous and helpful to entrepreneurs in general and women entrepreneurs in particular,

ii. Change in the mindset of officials is very much desired. Their concern should be to help the entrepreneurs in getting a proposal cleared instead of finding ways to block it.

iii. Support agencies should be staffed with more number of women employees.

iv. There should be separate cells in support agencies for women entrepreneurs on the lines of NRI or foreign investor cells. These cells should be managed by women officials.
v. Women entrepreneurs should join associations which are exclusively meant for them so that they can talk to officials with some kind of authority and organizational backing. The respondents said that the fear of reprisal / backlash by a women association also make the officials courteous towards women.

vi. Women entrepreneurs should avoid dealing with lower staff and should directly talk to senior officers.

vii. Officials and entrepreneurs should stop doubting the intentions of each other.

- During data collection the respondents gave a number of suggestions for making existing schemes of assistance more attractive to women entrepreneurs. Their responses were:  
  (i) There should be a good advertisement of the schemes exclusively meant for women (ii) State finance corporations and financing institutions should permit by statute to extend purely trade related finance to women entrepreneurs. (iii) The financial institutions should provide more working capital assistance both for small scale venture and large scale ventures. (iv) Making provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women entrepreneurs at local level. v) Infrastructure, in the form of industrial plots and sheds, to set up industries is to be provided by state run agencies. Industrial estates could also provide marketing outlets for the display and sale of products made by women. (vi) A Women Entrepreneur’s Guidance Cell set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs all over the state. (vii) Training in entrepreneurial attitudes should start at the high school level through well-designed courses, which build confidence through behavioral games. (viii) More governmental schemes to motivate women entrepreneurs to engage in small scale and large-scale business ventures. (ix) Involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations’ in women entrepreneurial training
programmes and counseling (x) Every scheme meant for women entrepreneurs should have a compulsory training capsule (relevant to type of project) attached to it. This will definitely boost the morale of prospective women entrepreneurs to go in for availing of schemes of assistance. (xi) There should be a reduction in excessive paper work as most of the time these procedural wrangles dissuade the women entrepreneurs from availing of facilities and incentives from support agencies (xii) Time limit should be fixed for clearance of project proposals and other submitted documents. Generally, it has been found that these endless delays result in cost overruns, thereby making the project economically unviable at the inception stage itself. (xiii) Rules and regulations should be made easy and helpful. Support agencies should be given more autonomy so that they feel independent to simplify their obsolete and stringent rules and regulations.

7.2.3 Some suggestions for invigorating the training programmes

- Training women for entrepreneurial and managerial activities in industry should be conceived as one of the most important factors for accelerating economic growth and also for boosting women entrepreneurship. While imparting training it should be borne in mind that the fundamental factors of Industrial Management science are the same for all, be they men or women. The only dimension of change is the human dimension, instead of the man it is the women. Women should be taught how to overcome the attitudinal, environmental, institutional and financial constraints with confidence and competence. Specialized training and special efforts should be made to adjust the imparting the management training to women, taking into account their emotional and biological constitution and dual responsibility of managing the home and the enterprise.

- The researcher attended four training programmes conducted for the women entrepreneurs. Those who have business experience, education and skills
should be tapped first and then go to another stratum to cover entrepreneurs from the non-traditional class i.e. without business and industrial experience, but having the potential of becoming successful entrepreneurs. A proper course content of EDP has to be developed to meet the specific requirements of each of these three strata of entrepreneurs in proper balance, without sacrificing the efficiency criteria. Proper balance in evolving different training programmes for different strata of entrepreneurs has to be struck.

Since a significant faction of women entrepreneurs have not had adequate training, their efforts either peter out with the drying up of their limited capital, or they continue their existence at a barely breakeven level.

- Only those who are seriously interested in setting up their own ventures should be allowed to join EDPs. The women, whose family already own industrial venture and want to join EDPs to take advantage of the concessions granted to women entrepreneurs, should be discouraged.

- Training component should include skill formation knowledge on different technologies, handling of better equipments, legal aspects of running a business, preparation of feasibility reports, better marketing and communications. The content of the training programme should be planned keeping in mind the intelligence level and interest of the target group. The venue of the programme should be such that more and more women come to participate in it.

- The structure and content of EDPs, taking into account the regional variations, need to be streamlined. The programme should have a practical content and needs a lot of inter-institutional organizational arrangement to make it a success. Some of the agencies like KITCO have at their base, the inter-institutional co-operation or an institution such as EDI, Ahmadabad. Food Corporation of India, which besides conducting the programme also arranges for finance and other inputs for the entrepreneurs. The EDPs conducted in isolation would dissipate resources and talents. The issue, therefore, for effective functioning of EDPs is to have a financial agency...
strongly backing up efforts of the entrepreneurial development. Who should conduct an EDP is an important issue.

- There are various institutions, which are conducting training programmes for women entrepreneurs. But most of these training programmes are superficial in nature because no detailed subjective information is being provided in these programmes. These programmes should be reviewed and revised and specifically correlated with the training, promotion and development of women entrepreneurship. The scheme for introduction of new technologies and upgradation of the enterprise should also be expanded. The scope of specific training programmes for women entrepreneurs should familiarize them with the technical knowhow needed for setting up a unit. These programmes should be based on the detailed subjective aspect of entrepreneurship and provide intensive counseling on various aspects of business. In the programmes of training of workers and entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs should be given importance. Suitable need based training programmes should be conducted locally and in regional languages might help the cause of professionalism in business and be helpful to remove the non-professional beliefs.

- The following points need to be kept in mind while designing the entrepreneurship management training programme.

1. Gender specific training is more essential to suit socio-economic-demographic conditions.
2. Holistic approach is needed to look at the whole individual in a business perspective
3. Some women need tremendous amount of non-technical support also.
4. Some women need pre-entrepreneurial training first.
5. Total personal support and awareness is needed - counseling, stress coping skills, public speaking skills. Risk bearing ability.
• Training and Entrepreneurial development programmes help in creating and developing abilities such as management skills for SME development, financial management, marketing skills, personal interaction and human resources skills and other important business and life skills. In this regard a well-designed training and study curriculum would be a good tool to cater to the needs of all entrepreneurs and should, preferably, be open access and free for all those people who would like to take advantage of it. It is recommended that some successful women entrepreneurs should be promoted as role models whom other women might like to emulate. Audio-visual media should be effectively used to motivate women to become entrepreneurs. Screening video records of successful women entrepreneurs at colleges, and women organizations can go a long way in motivating new women to enter into entrepreneurship. This will provide other women with both practical information and an uplifting example and might help persuade those who wish to do so to take the opportunity to embark upon an Entrepreneurial career. A better linkage between institutes of entrepreneurship development and self help groups’ entrepreneurship association at state level could pave the way for speedy empowerment of women.

• It is observed that Women Entrepreneur networks are major sources of knowledge about Women Entrepreneurs and they are increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for the development and promotion of women entrepreneurship. A support system that the woman entrepreneurs would be able to access freely has to be thought of. A place where the different units of a particular industry could function together, (for example garment manufacturers together with dealers in fabrics, dyes, threads, and embroidery as well as accessory units). Policy makers must foster the networking of associations and encourage co-operation and partnerships among national and international networks and assist Women Entrepreneurial endeavors by
women in the economy in every possible way. It can also give a potential entrepreneur the impetus to start her own business. Therefore, given that a women’s approach to business management is often different from that of her male counterpart, it is imperative that support measures are designed and implemented in a manner that they can address the problems unique to women by incorporating the gender dimension.

However, these measures will not fully meet the needs of the small scale sector in regard to future demand and size of markets. In fact, variety of measures should be devised for dissemination of marketing knowledge at local levels, along with information on the entire package of assistance available to them. A long term strategy, for which seeds can be sown now, is a bold recognition of the need for bringing onto one fold women connected with all aspects of techno-entrepreneurial culture through establishment of an apex body perhaps on similar lines.

7.3. CONCLUSION

It goes without saying that the topic chosen by the researcher for a detailed study is of supreme importance and stupendous magnitude. Women now constitute a decisive force with which the future destiny of the world is inextricably blended. Its natural corollary is that it is most essential to help her throw away the fetters that an inequitable tradition has been using to suppress the enormous potential inherent in womanhood, lest universal peace and harmony should ever remain a distant dream. The best way to realize the man–woman equality and harmony, visualized in the most glorious document- Indian Constitution—is to bring her into the main stream of economic activity by extending all possible assistance to help her latent capabilities in building up a progressive modern India. In this elaborate process a day will dawn that bears witness to the scene where men and women are sitting together as equals discussing matters pertaining to every walk of life and every segment in the society. Women will be seen in numbers as large as men occupying
top positions in business as well as public affairs. Successful women entrepreneurs will be common sights in the streets and at the echelons of economy. It is hoped that the suggestions made on the basis of this research study will help the entrepreneurs in particular and policy planners in general to look into the handicaps experienced by women in the field of industry and, if all the above suggestions are implemented in right earnest then it will go a long way in making the schemes attractive to women entrepreneurs and in providing enough opportunities to the women folk to take up entrepreneurial ventures. The basic approach must be to inculcate confidence into women to create an awareness of their potential powers and to encourage them to use them for their own betterment. Under the entrepreneurial development programmes, women entrepreneurs all over the state and in the country as a whole are getting benefitted. They have achieved recognition and are making valuable contribution to the economy. But the development of entrepreneurship among women depends on various factors i.e. organization, education, stimulation and motivation etc. There is a need for motivating them through concerted and systematic efforts in the right direction. All such measures will facilitate women entrepreneurs to get into the mainstream of the socio-economic life in the country. Women entrepreneurs of Kerala, both prospective and practicing, have tremendous potential and can contribute substantially to the prosperity of our state. They should not be mixed up with other groups receiving general and social welfare benefits because there is a whole world of difference in the disabilities of different groups. Enterprises cannot be ‘created’ simply through policy measures. The role of policy makers is limited to creating a congenial atmosphere through incentives, subsidies and direct buying private entrepreneur. The incentives and signals will remain clear to the business community only if the business demography is properly documented and the changes therein are mentioned on a continuous basis. But the situation today is quite unhealthy and one is unable to find out how many small scale units are alive at a particular point of time. The study shows that the present institutional support system is inadequate to support the sustainable development of women entrepreneurship in the state. Only less than 4 per cent of the female population has
taken up entrepreneurship as a career in spite of the governmental incentives in the form of loan facilities and training programmes for women. Most of the women engaged in this trade are discontented and quite unhappy with support system in existence now. Official harassment and corruption have turned the arena into an Aegean stable. If the government does not step in with stringent measures and an impeccable will to set matters right, the future of women entrepreneurship in Kerala will be bleak. The researcher is an optimist. There is still room for hope. Can the researcher hope that her efforts to highlight the pitiable condition of women entrepreneurs in Kerala will not prove a cry in the bewilderness?