

## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF MICRO-SMALL, AND MEDIUM WOMEN ENTERPRISES IN KERALA

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to measure the social sustainability of micro-small and medium-women enterprises. For measuring the social sustainability of women enterprises, social sustainability through human activities outside the enterprises and social sustainability through employee relationships and HRM practices inside the enterprise were incorporated. Data were collected from 793 registered women entrepreneurs through an interview schedule. The sample size for Micro enterprises is 396, small 333 and medium 64. The sampling technique followed is stratified random sampling. From the study, it is inferred that both inside and outside social sustainability factors affect the social sustainability women enterprises.

### Keywords

*MSMEs, Women Enterprises, Sustainability, Social Sustainability*

### I.INTRODUCTION

Sustainability refers to the ability to continue over a long period. Sustain means maintain, support, uphold or endure (Onions et al., 1964). Sustainability means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Placet et al., 2005). The principle of the three Pillars of Sustainability says that, for the complete sustainability problem to be solved, all three pillars of sustainability must be sustainable. The three pillars are social sustainability, economic sustainability and environmental sustainability (Purvis et al., 2019). Social sustainability is about identifying and managing business impacts both positive and negative on the people. Micro- Small and Medium Enterprises are usually characterised by limited resources and these resources are essential to developing competencies to ensure the

sustainability of the firm (Mukherji, 2009). The sustainability of Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises mainly depends on the performance of entrepreneurs. Effective utilisation of resources such as time, finance, human resources and natural resources leads to sustainability. Sustainability is attained with the help of competitive resources and efficiencies. Micro-Small and Medium enterprises have been broadly classified into two categories they are Manufacturing enterprises and Service enterprises.

The State Government is responsible for the primary development and promotion of MSMEs. The Central Government support the State Government through various initiatives. Women represent around half of the total world population. Women were restricted to the four walls of the home in traditional cultures, where they took care of the household responsibilities. Women participate in an extensive variety of tasks in modern societies. Women entrepreneurs are those women, who innovate, initiate or adopt a business activity. There are a large number of Micro-Small and Medium women enterprises operating in Kerala. It consists of a wide variety of manufacturing enterprises, service enterprises and enterprises running with both activities. This study focuses on the sustainability of Micro-Small and Medium women enterprises, especially on social sustainability.

## **II.LITERATURE REVIEW**

Rachayeeta and Priti (2016) have studied “A Comparative Study on Skill Deficiency of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises in Odisha”. They pointed out that one of the major issues which need immediate attention is related to the education policy, the educational system needs a thorough reorientation. They opined that skill-based education should be implemented in place of traditional education to produce efficient manpower. Aparna Rajshekharyya Hawaldar ( 2017) in her study “An Evaluation of Sustainable Financing Option for Social Enterprises in India” found that raising funds has been one of the important problems faced by social enterprises. The study also found that social enterprises faced a large number of challenges internally and externally. Atfiereine E Pereira (2018) in his study “ Performance Evaluation of Micro Enterprises Initiated Under Kudumbashree In Kerala” rightly commends that the implementation of kudumbashree considerably protects poor people and marginalises them in the backward areas of Kerala state. This study identifies that the first and most prominent effect of the development of the plan is that the unity and solidarity of the beneficiaries have been considerably improved. Dr G.

Vedanthadesikan and Mrs V.A. Malarvizhi ( 2018) in their paper “Sustainability of a Micro Enterprise – A Case Study” analysed the factors which affected micro-enterprises to keep them sustainable. The study found that the quality of the product is the most important factor in attaining sustainability. Likewise, innovation is necessary to maintain sustainability. Binija George (2018) conducted “A Study on the Problems of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises in Kerala” to examine the relative intensity of the finance, production and marketing problems across micro, small and medium enterprises operating in three different locations in Kerala and to also analyse the factors influencing various problems, strategies to overcome such problems. The result of the study shows that the most intensive problem perceived by the MSMEs was related to marketing followed by finance and production. Tulus Tambunan (2019) in his study “Recent Evidence of the Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Indonesia” analysed that MSMEs were relatively weak compared to their larger counterparts. The study also analysed that most of the MSME enterprises were engaged in retail trade, handicrafts, footwear, repairs and maintenance, food and beverages, tobacco, textiles and garments. It also found that most women entrepreneurs are likely to engage in small-size businesses because they avoid heavy work.

Kanwal Bisma (2019) in his study “Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship with special reference to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Rajasthan” analysed the impact of entrepreneurship on women economic empowerment, women psychological empowerment and women social empowerment. The study reported that the majority of women entrepreneurs are incompetent because of that the economic, psychological, and social empowerment of women entrepreneurs is low. Mensah, J (2019) in his study “Sustainable Development: Meaning, History, Principles, Pillars, and Implications for Human Action Literature Review”. The study contributes to the intelligibility and articulacy of the disclosure on sustainable development by providing more concise information on sustainable development meaning, evolution, associated key concepts, dimensions, the relationship among the dimensions, the principles and their implications for global, national and individual actions in the quest for sustainable development. Geetha Kotikelapudi (2020) in her research “Development of Women Entrepreneurship in Vizianagaram District a Study concerning Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises”. The study found that the overall technology environment of the MSMEs of women entrepreneurs is supportive and the majority of the women entrepreneurs depend on the mechanical method. The study reveals that most women entrepreneurs are satisfied with the overall support from the Government. Vera

Agustina et al., (2021) in their study analysed the business competency level in rural areas and utilised ICT facilities in Bandung and MSME competency level using ICT in rural and urban areas. The study suggests that the improvement of the competency of mentors and the quality of assistance needs to be improved.

From the literature review it is evident that there are many studies on women enterprises, Micro, Small and Medium enterprises, and problems of micro, small and medium women enterprises have been conducted. No specific study has been conducted to study the social sustainability of micro, small and medium women enterprises, especially in Kerala. Therefore, there exists a clear-cut gap in this area of study and hence the present study seems to be relevant.

### **III.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The Micro-Small and Medium women enterprises sector of the Indian economy encompasses almost all the products including a large number of services. Women enterprises provide good opportunities for both self-employment and wage employment. Among the three pillars of sustainability such as socio, economic and environmental sustainability issues, only the social sustainability of women entrepreneurs is considered for this study, because social sustainability is concerned with society. A socially sustainable firm will help satisfy the needs of people from inside and outside of the enterprise. Sustainability programmes are important for conserving society. Hence, a methodological study on the Social sustainability of Micro Small and Medium Women Enterprises is very relevant today. This study helps to identify the social sustainability factors which affect women enterprises in Kerala.

### **IV.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Sustainability is very important for keeping resources for future generations. Women entrepreneurs are playing a significant role in the economy. Their contributions to our society, economy and environment are too big. Women entrepreneurs are predominantly found in the Micro-Small and Medium industries. It is found necessary to evaluate the performance and problems of women entrepreneurs. A review of sustainability measures taken by women entrepreneurs will form an important part of the research. Hence it is decided to conduct a study on the social sustainability issues of the Micro-Small and Medium women entrepreneurs in Kerala, especially in manufacturing and service enterprises.

## **V.OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The present study entitled “ Social Sustainability of Micro Small & Medium Women Enterprises in Kerala” has been conducted to attain the following objective.

1. To measure the Social Sustainability of Micro-Small and Medium Women Enterprises in Kerala

## **VI.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology explains the research design, population, sample size and sampling technique. The present study is descriptive and analytical. The descriptive research design is used in this study to describe the various parameters of Micro-Small and Medium (MSMEs) women enterprises in the manufacturing, services and both sectors regarding the impact of social sustainability. The study also analyses the social sustainability of Micro-Small and Medium women entrepreneurs in Kerala.

The population of the study consists of Micro-Small and Medium women enterprises in manufacturing, services and both manufacturing and service-oriented enterprises registered under the District Industries Centres of Kerala during 2010-2020. Based on that the present study identified a total of 36,647 women enterprises registered with DICs in Kerala during the period 2010-2020 and they are engaged in the business of micro-small and medium-scale enterprises. The sample size for Micro enterprises is 396, small 333 and medium 64. The sampling technique followed is stratified random sampling. One set of well-formulated interview schedules was used for collecting the opinions of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. Both primary and secondary data were been used for the study.

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **Business Profile of Women Entrepreneurs**

For analyzing the profile of women entrepreneurs selected for the study the business factors that are directly associated with women entrepreneurs are identified and analysed. The business factors that are directly associated with women entrepreneurs include their type of business, nature of business, place of functioning, stages of business, number of employees, type of

activity undertaken, nature of the building, title of property of building and time spent by women entrepreneurs per day for the enterprise were considered.

Table No:1

*Business Profile of Women Enterprises*

| Category                    |                     | Frequency | Per cent | Valid Per cent | Cumulative Per cent |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------|----------------|---------------------|
| Type of Business            | Start-up            | 506       | 63.8     | 63.8           | 63.8                |
|                             | Succession          | 198       | 25.0     | 25.0           | 88.8                |
|                             | Take Over           | 68        | 8.6      | 8.6            | 97.4                |
|                             | Joining Partner     | as 21     | 2.6      | 2.6            | 100.0               |
|                             | Total               | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Nature of Business          | Manufacturing       | 256       | 32.3     | 32.3           | 32.3                |
|                             | Services            | 220       | 27.7     | 27.7           | 60.0                |
|                             | Both                | 317       | 40.0     | 40.0           | 100.0               |
|                             | Total               | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Place of Functioning        | Urban               | 310       | 39.1     | 39.1           | 39.1                |
|                             | Semi-Urban          | 144       | 18.2     | 18.2           | 57.3                |
|                             | Rural               | 339       | 42.7     | 42.7           | 100.0               |
|                             | Total               | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Stage of Business           | Introduction        | 28        | 3.5      | 3.5            | 3.5                 |
|                             | Growth              | 729       | 91.9     | 91.9           | 95.5                |
|                             | Maturity            | 36        | 4.5      | 4.5            | 100.0               |
|                             | Total               | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Number of Employees         | Below 5             | 220       | 27.7     | 27.7           | 27.7                |
|                             | 5-10                | 330       | 41.6     | 41.6           | 69.4                |
|                             | 10-15               | 120       | 15.1     | 15.1           | 84.5                |
|                             | Above 15            | 123       | 15.5     | 15.5           | 100.0               |
|                             | Total               | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Type of Activity Undertaken | Food Processing     | 79        | 10.0     | 10.0           | 10.0                |
|                             | Coir                | 38        | 4.8      | 4.8            | 14.8                |
|                             | Textiles            | 37        | 4.7      | 4.7            | 19.4                |
|                             | Wood                | 7         | 0.9      | 0.9            | 20.3                |
|                             | Handloom            | 4         | 0.5      | 0.5            | 20.8                |
|                             | Beauty Parlor       | 36        | 4.5      | 4.5            | 25.3                |
|                             | Supply of Materials | 17        | 2.1      | 2.1            | 27.5                |
|                             | Tailoring           | 7         | 0.9      | 0.9            | 28.4                |
|                             |                     |           |          |                |                     |

| Category                          |                             | Frequency | Per cent | Valid Per cent | Cumulative Per cent |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|----------------|---------------------|
|                                   | Food Processing and Service | 75        | 9.5      | 9.5            | 37.8                |
|                                   | Textiles and Tailoring      | 52        | 6.6      | 6.6            | 44.4                |
|                                   | Others                      | 441       | 55.6     | 55.6           | 100.0               |
|                                   | Total                       | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Nature of Building                | Permanent Structure         | 783       | 98.7     | 98.7           | 98.7                |
|                                   | Semi-Permanent              | 10        | 1.3      | 1.3            | 100.0               |
|                                   | Total                       | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Title of Building Ownership       | Own                         | 478       | 60.3     | 60.3           | 60.3                |
|                                   | Rented                      | 313       | 39.5     | 39.5           | 99.7                |
|                                   | Leased                      | 2         | 0.3      | 0.3            | 100.0               |
|                                   | Total                       | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |
| Time Spend Per Day for Enterprise | 4-8 hours                   | 71        | 9.0      | 9.0            | 9.0                 |
|                                   | 8-12 hours                  | 498       | 62.8     | 62.8           | 71.8                |
|                                   | Above 12 hours              | 224       | 28.2     | 28.2           | 100.0               |
|                                   | Total                       | 793       | 100.0    | 100.0          |                     |

Note. Source: Primary Data

### Social Sustainability of Micro-Small and Medium-Scale Women Enterprises in Kerala

The social sustainability of Micro-Small and Medium scale women enterprises in Kerala has been analysed with the different social sustainability factors such as social sustainability through human activities (outside the enterprise) and social sustainability through employee relationships & HRM practices-(inside the enterprise).

#### I) Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside of the Enterprise)

##### One-Sample t-Test

Descriptive statistics was used to determine whether the Micro-Small and Medium Scale Women Enterprises in Kerala can able to obtain social sustainability through human activities (outside the enterprise) are statistically different from the average mean score (i.e., hypothesized/ population mean). A large t-score indicates high differences and a small t-score depicts more similarity between the hypothesized/population mean and also mean score related to social sustainability through human activities of Micro-Small and Medium Scale Women Enterprises in Kerala.

Table No:2

*Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside the Enterprise)-One-Sample t-Test*

| Variable   | Mean  | SD    | t-value | p-value  |
|--|-------|-------|---------|----------|
| Health Factors   | 4.270 | 0.866 | 41.453  | <0.001** |
| Improving Living Standards                             | 4.320 | 0.734 | 50.630  | <0.001** |
| Public Participation                                   | 4.290 | 0.670 | 54.260  | <0.001** |
| Respecting and Protecting Consumer Rights              | 4.450 | 0.548 | 74.403  | <0.001** |
| Overall Social Sustainability through Human Activities | 4.334 | 0.560 | 67.004  | <0.001** |

Note. Source: Primary data

\*\* Significant at 1% level

The opinion of women entrepreneurs owning Micro-Small and Medium Scale Women Enterprises in Kerala revealed that all the social sustainability through human activities such as Health Factors, Improving Living Standards, Public Participation and Respecting & Protecting Consumer Rights are significantly different from the average level ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Table 2). The analysis is based on overall social sustainability through human activities (outside the enterprise), the study exposed that, the majority of the women entrepreneurs owning Micro-Small and Medium Scale Women Enterprises in Kerala strongly agreed that overall social sustainability through human activities helps to improve social sustainability of women enterprises ( $\bar{x} = 4.334$ ) and the t-test is significant at 1% level.

## II) Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside the Enterprise)

### One way-ANOVA

For Categories of Enterprises (such as Micro, Small and Medium) based intercomparison, the Post Hoc Multiple Comparison Test, Duncan has been applied.

Table No:3

*Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside the Enterprise) - Oneway-ANOVA*

| Variable       | Category of Enterprises |      |                   |      |                   |      | F-value | p-value  |
|----------------|-------------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------|----------|
|                | Micro                   |      | Small             |      | Medium            |      |         |          |
|                | Mean                    | SD   | Mean              | SD   | Mean              | SD   |         |          |
| Health Factors | 4.20 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.97 | 4.28 <sup>a</sup> | 0.76 | 4.72 <sup>b</sup> | 0.45 | 10.056  | <0.001** |

| Variable   | Category of Enterprises |      |                   |      |                   |      | F-value | p-value  |
|--|-------------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------|----------|
|  | Micro                   |      | Small             |      | Medium            |      |         |          |
|  | Mean                    | SD   | Mean              | SD   | Mean              | SD   |         |          |
| Improving Living Standards                             | 4.23 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.80 | 4.36 <sup>a</sup> | 0.67 | 4.66 <sup>b</sup> | 0.48 | 10.538  | <0.001** |
| Public Participation                                   | 4.22 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.75 | 4.29 <sup>a</sup> | 0.56 | 4.72 <sup>b</sup> | 0.45 | 15.726  | <0.001** |
| Respecting and Protecting Consumer Rights              | 4.39 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.59 | 4.45 <sup>a</sup> | 0.50 | 4.83 <sup>b</sup> | 0.38 | 18.333  | <0.001** |
| Overall Social Sustainability through Human Activities | 4.26 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.57 | 4.34 <sup>a</sup> | 0.54 | 4.73 <sup>b</sup> | 0.39 | 20.416  | <0.001** |

The opinion of women entrepreneurs owning and managing Micro- Small and Medium scale units in Kerala about Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside the Enterprise), analysis found a significant difference regarding Health Factors, Improving Living Standards, Public Participation, Respecting & Protecting Consumer rights and Overall Social Sustainability through Human Activities are significant at 1 per cent level ( $p < 0.01$ ) (Table No 3). Based on Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) the opinion of women entrepreneurs from Medium scale enterprises significantly differed from Micro and Small scale enterprises in terms of Health Factors, Improving Living Standards, Public Participation, Respecting & Protecting Consumer rights, and also in case of Overall Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Table No 3).

### III) Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside the Enterprise)

#### One-way ANOVA (Nature of Business)

For the Nature of Business (such as Manufacturing, Services and Both) based intercomparison, the Post Hoc Multiple Comparison Test, Duncan has been applied.

Table No: 4

*Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside the Enterprise) – One-way ANOVA*

| Variable   | Nature of Business |      |                   |      |                   |      | F-value | p-value  |
|--|--------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------|----------|
|  | Manufacturing      |      | Services          |      | Both              |      |         |          |
|  | Mean               | SD   | Mean              | SD   | Mean              | SD   |         |          |
| Health Factors   | 3.99 <sup>a</sup>  | 1.15 | 4.21 <sup>b</sup> | 0.72 | 4.55 <sup>c</sup> | 0.55 | 32.538  | <0.001** |
| Improving Living Standards                             | 4.25 <sup>a</sup>  | 0.85 | 4.19 <sup>a</sup> | 0.77 | 4.47 <sup>b</sup> | 0.56 | 11.895  | <0.001** |
| Public Participation                                   | 4.18 <sup>a</sup>  | 0.77 | 4.32 <sup>b</sup> | 0.47 | 4.37 <sup>b</sup> | 0.69 | 6.021   | 0.003**  |
| Respecting and Protecting Consumer Rights              | 4.44 <sup>b</sup>  | 0.56 | 4.27 <sup>a</sup> | 0.55 | 4.58 <sup>c</sup> | 0.49 | 22.747  | <0.001** |
| Overall Social Sustainability through Human Activities | 4.21 <sup>a</sup>  | 0.62 | 4.25 <sup>a</sup> | 0.54 | 4.49 <sup>b</sup> | 0.48 | 22.495  | <0.001** |

Source: Primary Data

The opinion of women entrepreneurs owning and managing Manufacturing, Services and Both units in Kerala about Social Sustainability through Human Activities (Outside the Enterprise), the analysis found a significant difference regarding Health Factors, Improving Living Standards, Public Participation, Respecting & Protecting Consumer rights and Overall Social Sustainability through Human Activities significant at 1 per cent level ( $p < 0.01$ ) (Table No 4). Based on the Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) the opinion of all women entrepreneurs from Manufacturing, Services, and Both units significantly differed from each other in terms of Health Factors and Respecting & Protecting Consumer Rights (Table 4).

#### IV) Social Sustainability through Employee Relationships and HRM Practices – (Inside the Enterprise)

Social sustainability through employee relationships and HRM practices (Inside the Enterprise) was analysed with the help of different social sustainability variables such as employee

relationship and HRM practices such as Well Assigned Individual Roles, Labour Productivity and Manpower Training. The social sustainability through employee relationships and HRM practices (Inside the Enterprise) analysed under different dimensions are shown below.

### 1. Social Sustainability through Employee Relationships and HRM Practices – (Inside the Enterprise)

#### *One- Sample t-Test*

Table No: 5

*Social Sustainability through Employee Relationships and HRM Practices-(Inside the Enterprise)-One-Sample t-Test*

| Variable  | Mean  | SD    | t-value | p-value  |
|---|-------|-------|---------|----------|
| Well Assigned Individual Roles  | 4.430 | 0.518 | 77.810  | <0.001** |
| Labour Productivity   | 4.340 | 0.575 | 65.579  | <0.001** |
| Manpower Training   | 3.970 | 1.010 | 26.998  | <0.001** |
| Overall Social Sustainability through Employee Relationship and HRM Practices (Inside the Enterprise) | 4.246 | 0.576 | 60.930  | <0.001** |

Note. Source: Primary data

\*\* Significant at 1% level

The analysis is based on employee relationships and HRM practices (Inside the enterprise), the study exposed that the majority of the women entrepreneurs owning Micro-Small and Medium Scale Women Enterprises in Kerala strongly agreed that overall social sustainability through Employee Relationships and HRM practices will improve social sustainability inside the enterprise ( $\bar{x}$ =4.246) and the p-value is significant at 1percent level.

### V) Social Sustainability through Employee Relationships and HRM Practices (Inside the Enterprise) – One way ANOVA (Category of Enterprises)

For the category of the enterprise (such as Micro- Small and Medium) based intercomparison, the Post Hoc Multiple Comparison Test, Duncan has been applied.

Table No :6

*Social Sustainability through Employee Relationships and HRM Practices-(Inside the Enterprise) –One-way ANOVA*

| Variable  | Category of Enterprises |      |                   |      |                   |      | F-value | p-value  |
|---|-------------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------|----------|
|   | Micro                   |      | Small             |      | Medium            |      |         |          |
|   | Mean                    | SD   | Mean              | SD   | Mean              | SD   |         |          |
| Well Assigned Individual Roles  | 4.38 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.53 | 4.43 <sup>a</sup> | 0.50 | 4.73 <sup>b</sup> | 0.45 | 13.278  | <0.001** |
| Labour Productivity   | 4.28 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.54 | 4.33 <sup>a</sup> | 0.57 | 4.70 <sup>b</sup> | 0.71 | 15.184  | <0.001** |
| Manpower Training   | 3.95 <sup>a</sup>       | 1.07 | 3.84 <sup>a</sup> | 0.95 | 4.73 <sup>b</sup> | 0.45 | 22.250  | <0.001** |
| Overall Social Sustainability through Employee Relationship and HRM Practices (Inside the Enterprise) | 4.21 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.60 | 4.20 <sup>a</sup> | 0.51 | 4.72 <sup>b</sup> | 0.49 | 25.480  | <0.001** |

Source: Primary Data

\*\* Significant at 1% level

The opinion of women entrepreneurs owning and managing MSME units in Kerala about Social Sustainability through Employee relationships and HRM practices (Inside the Enterprise), the analysis found a significant difference regarding Well Assigned Individual Roles, Labour Productivity, Manpower Training and Overall Social Sustainability through Employee relationships and HRM practices (Inside the Enterprise) (significant at 1 per cent level) ( $p < 0.01$ ) (Table No. 6). Based on the Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) the opinion of women entrepreneurs from Medium Scale Enterprises significantly differed from Micro and Small Scale enterprises in terms of Well Assigned Individual Roles, Labour Productivity, Manpower Training, and Overall Social Sustainability through Employee relationships and HRM practices (Inside the Enterprise).

## FINDINGS

**1. Startups are emerging trends in women enterprises.**

The analysis found that the majority of the women enterprises are coming under the type of startups (63.8 per cent) and less number of women entrepreneurs are under the category of joining as a partner (2.6 per cent).

**2. Both manufacturing and service enterprises play a major role.**

The study exposed that the majority (40.0 per cent) of the Micro-Small and Medium women enterprises are doing both manufacturing and services-oriented activities.

**3. Rural areas play a significant role**

The majority of the micro-small and medium women enterprises are located in rural areas (42.7 per cent).

**4. Women Enterprises are in the growing stage**

The study exposed that the majority of women enterprises are in the growth stage (91.9 per cent).

**5. Human resources plays an inevitable role**

It is clear from the analysis that the majority of women entrepreneurs have 5 to 10 employees (41.6 per cent).

**6. Wood processing enterprises are low**

The study found that wood processing units are a minority among all types of activities such as food processing, coir, textiles, wood, handloom, beauty parlour, supply of materials, tailoring, food processing and services, textiles and tailoring and others.

**7. Most of the women enterprises are functioning in pucca houses**

It is clear from the analysis that the majority of women entrepreneurs are conducting their business activities in pucca buildings (98.7 per cent).

**8. Most of the women entrepreneurs have their building**

It is inferred from the analysis that the majority of the women entrepreneurs conduct business in their buildings (60.3 per cent).

**9. Working hours of women entrepreneurs**

The study shows that the majority of the Women entrepreneurs work 8-12 hours per day (71.8 per cent)

**10. Social sustainability of women enterprises affects human activities independently and collectively viz... health factors, improving living standards, public participation and respecting & protecting consumer rights.**

**11. The category of enterprises is influenced by human activities outside the enterprise such as health factors, improving living standards, public participation and respecting & protecting consumer rights.**

**12. Social sustainability of women enterprises are significantly affected through Employee Relationship and HRM practices such as well-assigned individual roles, labour productivity and manpower training.**

**13. Social sustainability of women enterprises in the case of category of enterprises such as Micro, Small and Medium affected by employee relationships and HRM practices.**

**SUGGESTIONS**

1. A large majority (91.9 per cent) of women enterprises are in the growing stage, the Government and other approved agencies should be provided sufficient financial support and technical support.

2. Women enterprises have played a significant role in rural development, the MSMEs should produce and render innovative products and services which will help to improve the standard of living.

3. The success of MSMEs heavily depends on human resources and should implement adequate training and development programmes for employees of MSMEs.

4. Well-assigned individual roles are the most important factor for the social sustainability of women enterprises. Every woman entrepreneur must take the necessary initiatives to assign individual roles within the enterprises.

5. Relationship with stakeholders helps to enhance the social sustainability of women enterprises. Women entrepreneurs must keep continuous relationships with stakeholders such as customers, financial institutions, suppliers, creditors and Government agencies.
6. Micro and Small-scale enterprises must take the necessary steps to improve their existing activities concerned with human resources from inside and outside of the enterprises.
7. Government and District Industries Centres must conduct innovative training and development programmes to women entrepreneurs for enhancing their skill and entrepreneurial capacity.

## CONCLUSION

The crux of the study is the social sustainability of women enterprises in Kerala. In this study, Micro-Small and Medium-sized women-owned enterprises in Kerala were examined based on their social-sustainability factors. Social sustainability of women Enterprises is measured with the help of human activities, employee relationships and HRM practices from both inside and outside of the enterprises. The tools used for the study include One-Sample t-test, One Way ANOVA and Post hoc Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT). It concludes that social sustainability factors are significant influence for the sustainability of Micro, Small and Medium women enterprises in Kerala.

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