



# Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala's Tourism Sector: A Study on Responsible Tourism in Malappuram District

**Alikutty T P**, Research Scholar and Assistant Professor , Department of Commerce, MES Mampad college(Autonomous),Mampad ,Affiliated to University of Calicut

**Dr. Shahanas Beegam PP**, Assistant Professor , Department of Commerce, MES Mampad college(Autonomous),Mampad ,Affiliated to University of Calicut

## Abstract

Tourism industry has a great role in the overall development of a nation. Tourism sector creates more job opportunities and leads to economic and social development of a country. Kerala is one of the most popular tourist places in the world. Its unique culture, traditions and varied demography attracts the tourists around the world. Kerala, promoted as “God’s Own Country” is blessed by nature with varied geographical features like beaches, hill stations, backwaters, national parks & wild life sanctuaries. Tourism offers many opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Kerala. They can engage with small scale income generating activities in tourism sector like hotels, textiles airlines tour operating travel services and other allied activities. Studies show that in Kerala, the participation of women entrepreneurs in tourism development activities is increasing and this has resulted in the overall development of the local community. The present study aims to know the role of women entrepreneurs in responsible tourism with special reference to Malappuram district. Malappuram is enriched with many popular tourist places. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data collected from women entrepreneurs working in Nilambur, Biyyam Kayal, Nilayoram Park Kuttippuram, Kottakkal, Ponnani,Mampuram, Padinjaraakkara beach and Kottakkunnu. These are the important tourist places in Malappuram. Most of the women entrepreneurs who are working in tourism industry in Malappuram make their livelihood from these places.

Key Words: Tourism Industry, Responsible Tourism, Women Entrepreneurs, Economic and Social Development.

## Introduction

Tourism also has another superpower: the majority of its workforce is female. With such a broad geographical reach, and a huge range of skills required, tourism has the opportunity to pull women out of poverty, equip them with skills and provide dignified, sustainable employment. In struggling nations, it is invariably the women who struggle most, as any semblance of equality falls away. Women and girls are disadvantaged from the outset by a lack of access to education, scant maternity benefits, cultural expectations about the woman's role in the home, and inherent gender bias in the workplace.

So the tourism industry holds a huge amount of potential. But as the UN World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) [2010 report](#) revealed, the details behind the statistics are not quite so equal. The majority of these women are concentrated in lower level jobs – cooking, cleaning, serving and clerical work, and for these roles they are paid on average 10 to 15 percent less than male staff. In addition, a lot of women undertake unpaid roles within tourism – supporting family businesses as invisible customer service providers, chambermaids, PAs and so on.

## Objectives of the study

1. To understand the role of women entrepreneurs in tourism industry in Malappuram district of Kerala.
2. To study the problems of women entrepreneurs in tourism industry and Propose Strategies for Enhancing Women's Participation in Responsible Tourism

## Scope of the Study

Millions of women are part of the tourism industry. The women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry contribute a lot for the development of their nation. The study will primarily focus on Malappuram district, a region with growing potential in Kerala's tourism sector. It will explore tourism-related businesses, including eco-tourism, heritage tourism, and other responsible tourism initiatives in this area. So there is a need to study their role and problems facing by them and also suggest some solutions for that.

## Methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were gathered from various journals and websites, while primary data were collected from 30 women entrepreneurs operating businesses in Nilambur, Biyyam Kayal, Nilayoram Park, Kuttippuram, Kottakkal, Ponnani, Mampuram, Padinjarakkara Beach, and Kottakkunnu. The data were analyzed using percentage analysis and the weighted average method

**Analysis of data****Table 1 Location**

Location	No. of respondents	Percentage
Nilambur	2	6.67
Biyyam Kayal	3	10
Nilayoram park,kuttippuram	3	10
Kottakkal	7	23.33
Ponnani	5	16.67
Mampuram	2	6.67
Padinjarakkara beach	3	10
kottakkunnu	5	16.67
Total	30	100

Most of the respondents are from Kottakkal (23.33%), Kottakkunnu (16.67%) and Ponnani (16.67%)

**Table 2 Type of Business**

Type of business	No. of respondents	Percentage
Coffee shop	6	20
Restaurant	2	6.67
Textiles	5	16.67
Artificial jewellery	5	16.67
Handicraft	4	13.33
Others (spice centre and vegetable shop)	8	26.67
Total	30	100

The above table reveals that most of the women entrepreneurs are engaged in textiles (16.67%) , Artificial Jewellery making (16.67%) and other business like spice centre and vegetable shops etc.

**Table 3 Native Place of Respondents**

Native place	No. of respondents	Percentage
Kerala	15	50
Karnataka	7	23.33
West Bengal	3	10
Tamilnad	3	10
Maharashtra	2	6.67
Total	30	100

Most of the respondents are from Kerala (50%) a few from Karnataka (23.33%) and some of them from Tamilnad (10%) and West Bengal (10%).

**Table 4 Marital Status**

Marital status	No. of respondents	Percentage
Married	20	66.67
Single	0	0
Widow	3	10
Divorced	7	23.33
Total	30	100

Most of the women entrepreneurs are married (66.67%). Only 23.33% are divorced and 10% as widow and no one is there as single.

**Table 5 Religion**

Religion	No. of respondents	Percentage
Hindu	17	56.66
Christian	11	36.67
Muslim	2	6.67
Total	30	100

Most of the women entrepreneurs belongs to Hindu religion (56.67%)

**Table 6 Reason for Entrepreneurial Carrier**

Reason	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Encouragement by family	2	6.67
Inspiration from family business	5	16.67
Because of family problems	7	23.3
Interested in doing business	1	3.33
For livelihood	15	50
Total	30	100

50% of the women entrepreneurs choose this carrier for their livelihood. Some of them is doing this because of some family problems and a few doing by getting inspiration from their family business.

**Table 7 Reason for choosing the location for business**

Reason	No of respondents	Percentage
Near to home	2	6.67
Marketing facilities are available	1	3.33
Tourist destination	24	46.67
Availability of raw materials	1	3.33
Availability of skilled workers	1	3.33
Other reasons	1	3.33
Total	30	100

Most of the women entrepreneurs choose the location for business because of tourist destination (46.67%).

**Table 8 Initial investment**

Investment	No. of respondents	Percentage
Below 1 lakh	2	6.67
1 -3 lakhs	6	20
3-5lakhs	19	63.33
Above 5 lakhs	3	10
Total	30	100

Most of them invested in between 3-5 lakhs (63.33%)

**Total 9 Managing of business**

Managing by	No. of respondents	Percentage
Self	3	10
Husband and self	8	26.67
By employees	9	30
All jointly	10	33.33
Total	30	100

The above table proves that women entrepreneurs are not able to manage their business by themselves. Most of them are managed with the help of husband, employees and by themselves.

**Table 10 Sources of Fund**

Sources	No. of respondents	Percentage
Own contribution	4	13.33
Loans from banks	5	16.67
Loans relatives	2	6.67
Loans from Kudumbasree	2	6.67
Loans from money lenders	17	56.67
Total	30	100

56.67% of the respondents depend money lenders for doing their business. Only 16.67% took loans from banks. Some of them acquire money from relatives and Kudumbasree. 13.33 bring their own fund.

**Table 11 Marketing and Promotional Strategies**

Strategies	No. of respondents	Percentage
Discounts	4	13.33
Store display	3	10
Word of mouth	23	76.67
Total	30	100

76.67% of the respondents use word of mouth as promotional strategy. 10% use store display.

**Table 12 Nature of Family Support**

Family support	No. of respondents	Percentage
Marketing of product	3	10
Production process	5	16.67
Procurement of inputs	4	13.33
In all matters	11	36.67
No support	7	23.33
Total	30	100

36.67% of respondents get all kinds of family support for doing their business. 36.67% getting no support from family. Other gets support for marketing product, production process and for procuring inputs.

## Conclusion

The women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry have a supporting role. Even then they are contributing for growth of our nation. They are facing some financial problems. It is better to give more importance and assistance to them. Conduct specialized training programs for women in areas like tourism management, digital marketing, hospitality services, eco-tourism, and sustainable business practices. Provide government-backed grants or subsidies for women-led responsible tourism projects, encouraging more women to take the entrepreneurial leap.

Encourage women entrepreneurs to develop tourism projects that involve local communities, such as homestays, cultural experiences, and eco-tourism. Women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry face challenges such as lack of family support, marketing difficulties, and male domination, which hinder their business growth. To address these issues, both the government and society must provide greater support. This will not only empower women but also contribute to the growth of the tourism sector, ultimately boosting national income

## Reference

1. Joseph PD (2014) conducted a study on Local involvement in tourism with special reference to women at Bekal Fort region in Kasargo , Kerala, India. Published in EPRA international journal of economic and business revie, vol2 issue 4.
2. Bharathi Auja (2012) Rural women and tourism industry : A prototype for social entreprenneurship in India ; thesis submitted u.nder Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.
3. *M. Sarngadharan, G. Raju, Tourism and Sustainable Economic Development. University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram (2000) PP 91-140.*
4. *M.C. Bose, Discovering Kerala.Prasdedda Publications, Thiruvananthapuram (1995) PP 69-98.*
5. *M.R. Biju, "Eco-Tourism in Kerala". South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies (SAJOSPS), Vol.12, No.1 (July-Dec 2004) PP 94-102.*
6. *M.R. Dileep, "Kerala Unique in Variety". Kerala Calling, Vol.37, No.24, April 2007, PP 18-21.*
7. *N. Jayapalan, An Introduction to Tourism. Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, Delhi (1984) PP 45-80.*

