



CASE STUDIES ON WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES



AMRITA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS- SHANTI ASHRAM MARCH 2025



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INTRODUCTION

For over fifteen years, the Amrita School of Business (ASB) in Coimbatore has been actively involved in studying and evaluating women-led enterprises that have received support from Shanti Ashram. Since 2009, these enterprises have been flourishing in Perur, Madukkarai and neighbouring panchayats playing a crucial role in empowering women entrepreneurs and developing local economic growth.

This study is a continuation of the research conducted annually under the guidance of Prof. Shobhana Madhavan, in collaboration with MBA students from ASB beginning in the year 2009. Through these ongoing efforts, valuable insights have been gathered to understand the progress, challenges, and success stories of these women-led enterprises. The present report aims to document their journey, highlighting the women entrepreneurs' achievements and the impact they have created over the years.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to capture the inspiring stories of successful women entrepreneurs and provide a comprehensive analysis of their enterprises. The specific objectives include:

1. **Collecting Entrepreneurial Experiences:** This study attempts to document and present the experiences of women-led businesses in an organized way, highlighting their accomplishments, challenges, and journey.
2. **Understanding Motivation and Strategy:** The study intends to investigate the tactics these women entrepreneurs have used to maintain and expand their enterprises by exploring the motivations that drive them.
3. **Evaluating Economic Viability and Achievements:** To determine the long-term viability of these businesses, a qualitative assessment is conducted
4. **Identifying Risks and Challenges:** Every business encounters risks, and the purpose of this study is to pinpoint the weaknesses and possible dangers that might limit these companies' capacity to expand or remain viable. It will be easier to create stronger support systems and solutions if these obstacles are understood.
5. **Providing Suggestions:** Based on the findings, the study intends to give suggestions that will help these firms remain sustainable.

The names of the ten women entrepreneurs interviewed in February 2025 were:

1. Ms. Nithya - *Eatery Shop*
2. Ms. Anandhi - *Beauty Parlor and Tailoring Unit*
3. Ms. Amsaveni - *Fancy Store*
4. Ms. Kavitha - *Fancy Store*
5. Ms. Anne Alphonse - *Tailoring and Cloth Unit*
6. Ms. Kumari - *Grocery Shop*
7. Ms. Jayapriya, *Fibreglass doors*
8. Ms. Priya, *Boutique*
9. Ms. Shree Devi, *Readymade garments*
10. Ms. Kalpana, *Tailoring*

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank Shanti Ashram for providing us with a valuable opportunity to interact with and gain knowledge from these remarkable female business owners. Their continuous assistance has been crucial in enabling our research.

We thank Dr. S.R Subramanian, who has been the heart and soul behind the women entrepreneurship program for over two decades. We would especially like to thank Ms Monica and Dr. Seetha, Shanti Ashram's Program and Academic Leads, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace, Leadership and Development (MGIPLD) for their advice and insights during the interview process. We were able to interact with the entrepreneurs in a meaningful way and learn more about their experiences with their inputs. We thank Shri Vijayaragavan Gopal, Head, Youth Leadership Programme, for sharing his experiences with us and Satish Kanna, for the beautiful photographs and visuals.

Through this study, the MBA students have had the exceptional chance to engage with underrepresented women who represent the spirit of entrepreneurship. These women-led enterprises place a focus on social impact and community welfare, in contrast to traditional corporations that put profit first. Their commitment to improving their families' lives and giving back to their communities demonstrates how entrepreneurship can have an important effect that goes beyond basic financial gain

THE STUDY TEAMS

TEAM A (19 February, 2025)

1. Harishh N, MBA Student, Amrita School of Business (2023-2025)
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TEAM B (10 February, 2025)

1. Varsha U, MBA Student, Amrita School of Business (2023-2025)
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3. Lalitha V. MBA Student, Amrita School of Business (2023-2025)

Nithya became a single parent after her husband left her after 10 years of marriage. Determined to support her daughter she embarked on a journey of running an eatery shop with Rs 10,000 as an investment from her mother. It is always her mother who backs her up for the financial well-being of her family.

Strategies Employed to Run Enterprise

Nithya's food cart serves as the backbone of her family's livelihood. She starts her day by preparing the batter and other dishes. She serves customers from 6 pm to 10 pm. She maintains a sustainable business by only opening in the evening, allowing a structured plan to avoid competition with nearby shops. She deliberately keeps her prices low, aiming to keep them affordable for everyone, rather than increasing prices for higher profits.

On Sundays, the shop remains open, catering especially to teens and children who visit the playground nearby. She also adapts to customer preferences by providing a variety of chutneys on different days. She manages the excess food by donating to the orphanage and being an inspiration in her community.

Economic Achievements

The business has significantly improved her family's financial status, enabling them to pay for her daughter's teacher training program. She tries to earn a minimum profit to fulfill their needs.

Future Plans / Vision

Nithya aspires to expand her business by developing her food cart, as it was her only source of income for her family during her hard times. This expansion aligns with her vision of providing good food to the customers with the motive of expanding her customer base and earning higher profits in the long run.

Comments on viability/sustainability of business

Nithya's focus on customer satisfaction has earned her confidence and independence, essential qualities for sustaining her amidst competition. She also has regular customers from nearby areas for her delicious food and serving techniques. Her dedication and hard work to her art of cooking coupled with her ambitions for growth, positions her shop for long-term success.

Gaps/Risks identified

Nithya faces a significant challenge regarding the location of her shop as it has competitors from different food verticals nearby. Moving to a new location may risk losing her loyal existing customers who are accustomed to her services. Conversely, remaining in her current location may restrict her ability to increase prices, as she prices her services according to competitor's rates.

Comments/Suggestions:

Despite the challenges, Nithya's resilience, determination and commitment to providing quality food to her community are commendable. During our conversation with Nithya her friendly and humble nature shone through. As she continues to push her limits and uplift those around her, her story stands as a shining example of hope and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Documented by: Ajay Lal and E.M Abhilash



Nithya being interviewed by the ASB team

CASE STUDY 2--: Amsaveni (Fancy Store)

Name : Ms. Amsaveni

Location: Ganesapuram

Type of Enterprise: Fancy store

Year of Commencement: 2019



Amsaveni is a determined woman who studied until 12th standard and then joined as an employee in a fancy store. She worked there for more than 25 years. Her husband is a Rotaract Club member. She had two children the first child is currently working in TCS and the second one is an autistic child who studied in a private special school until the age of 15. She resides near Rathinam College. Each morning she takes her 2nd child to school in the morning and then she goes back to her work in the evening she picks him up and then they come back home. Her daily commute takes around 35km. She also supports local children by giving them books or education-based accessories for no or low cost.

The motivation behind starting an enterprise

Amsaveni did not want to leave her autistic child alone and idle at home, so she wanted to set up a business, where her child could stay with her after school hours. In addition, she always had the motivation to start her own business from her early career. She had many years of work experience in a fancy store and she had learned everything about running the business. She decided to open up a fancy store where she could keep his son engaged and be a self-employed women entrepreneur.

Strategies employed to run enterprise

1. Experience- Since she already had an experience in the field. She was able to run the business smoothly
2. Connections- The 25 years of experience gave her a lot of connections in the same field which helped her to procure the things for the shop.
3. Residents' support- She has resided there for a long period, so the local area people know them well. Sales were easier.
4. Location of the shop: The shop is located near a private college and a small industry Hub.



Economic Achievements

Amsaveni with all her efforts and her savings over her past employment journey started the business. Since her store gave them a reasonable profit also with her savings, she educated her elder son in engineering and he is the 1st degree holder of the family. She also repaid all her debts and is now running a debt-free business.

Future Plans/ Vision

She plans to expand the shop and make some savings for her second child.

Comments on Viability/ Sustainability of Business

Since she has a great connection with the wholesalers, businesspeople and the residents she will be able to develop her business.

Gaps/risks identified

Amsaveni has gained business knowledge, but her business is indirectly dependent on the tailor shop nearby in the case of the expansion of the tailor shop it becomes a threat to Amsaveni as she is in a rented building whereas the tailor shop owns the building.

Comments/ Suggestions



Amsaveni has achieved stability over the years through her passion and hard work. The major risk she has is the shop dependency risk she can look into alternatives or have some agreement with the owner of the shop for a certain period or tenure basis.

Documented by: Harishh N and Rakshitha AP

CASE STUDY 3--: Anne Alphonse (Tailoring and Ready-mades)

Name: Mrs. Anne Alphonse

Location: Ganespuram

Type of Enterprise: Fancy store

Year of Commencement: 2021



Anne Alphonse learnt tailoring basics from her childhood. She studied up to 12th standard and got married to a railway employee. Her husband is retired now and he is earning a monthly pension. Prior to starting her own business, she worked in two private garments located in Nava India (Coimbatore) for more than 15 years. Then with the help of her mother, she started a cloth shop with tailoring near Rathinam College. She gets the readymade garments and other materials from Town Hall, Coimbatore and sell them at affordable prices to students with offers and discounts. She also subcontracts some of her stitching jobs to the local women during her busy days.

The motivation behind starting an enterprise

She did not like the 9-5 scheduled hard labour work at garment factories. She was often forced to stay overtime at the factory as the workers were all dependent on the factory for transportation. She did not find any peace of mind also she was pulled down by the loneliness of not having a child of her own. Since she had prior experience in the field of stitching and also has some business knowledge (her mother owns a petty shop) she decided to start a tailoring and readymade garment shop. She thought of having her own business where she could fully engage herself in it.

Strategies employed to run enterprise

1. Investment- She got help of her mother for the location of the shop (Her mother owns the building) and her husband's support for the initial investment into the business
2. Reinvesting for development: She reinvests her profits into business for further growth.
3. The Location: Since the shop is located near a commercial place and an educational institution, she has the benefit of having regular customers
4. No competition: In her locality, only she owns a clothing shop with a tailoring machine so most of the residents will purchase in her shop.

Economic Achievements

Her economic achievements are completely focused on the growth of her shop. She uses a business model where the investments are rotational. Focusing on investments and multiplying them is her economic achievement.

Future Plans/ Vision

Annie wants to expand her shop by owning a variety of clothes and spending some amount for the renovation of her shop including having trial rooms and glass showcases. Since her business has a long-term vision, she keeps her focus on seasonal events and preparing herself for investments. She also takes the initiative to take bulk orders like "Annual Day" functions for schools and colleges and provides attractive schemes for dresses for college students.

Gaps/risks identified

As she is new to the business, she needs more exposure to explore methods so she can achieve better performance in her investments. The rotational investments could be planned in a better way for the enhancement of her shop.

Comments/ Suggestions

Her determination to own her own shop after decades of work shows her passion towards the industry. The mindset of being determined to bring herself out of her loneliness is highly commendable. Her sincerity and her habit of starting her day with her prayers gives her strength. This will help her expand her business and make a good profit out of it.

Documented by: Harishh N and Rakshitha AP

CASE STUDY 4–:Anandhi (Beauty Parlor and Tailoring)

Name: Ms.Anandhi

Location: Sundakkamuthur

Type of Enterprise - Beauty Parlor and tailoring unit

Year of Commencement: 2021



Anandhi is 35 years old, and she belongs to Sundakamuthur. She was born in a family without many economic resources. She is a beautician and a classical dancer for more than 12 years. She is associated with Shanti Ashram from 8th standard and was also interested in doing makeup from class 6th. She has completed her education only until 12th standard because her family could not afford to send her to college. She is also learning the Tamil martial art “Silambam” and organizing classes for government school students. She does facials and makeup for school students free of cost during their Annual Day or other cultural performances. She has also learned tailoring from Shanti Ashram. Coming to the assets and liabilities, she owns a Jupiter scooter, she says that she has no loans currently. Her shop rent as of now is 7000 rupees per month. The customer base she serves is mainly wedding customers. She completed a professional course from V-Care and still continues to learn new techniques in beauty care. The message she conveyed to us when we interviewed was that “traditional arts that she was taught should not be destroyed within oneself; it must be transferred through ages”. She runs multiple businesses, including a small restaurant and dabbles in real estate business too.

The motivation behind starting the enterprise:

Anandhi was very active in dancing and interested in makeup from childhood. She mentioned about relatives not respecting her parents when she was a child due to their financial position. Her parents did not have a home of their own, and she wanted to help them own a home. She always had the desire to give employment rather than be an employee. These were her motivations behind the business.



Strategies employed to run enterprise

Anandhi maintains the basic certifications required to earn the trust of the customers. She also has experience in the domain from a very early age. She is also willing to do the service for free or at a cheap cost for customers who are financially stressed. She teaches dance and even does free makeup for children for school performances. Anandhi also provides her services by going to the customer's house. She prioritises her work and plans every minute of her day. She sleeps only 4 to 5 hours a day.

Economic achievements

Anandhi managed to build a new house for her parents. Her existing businesses are self-sustaining and she is trying her hand at expanding to other sectors as well. Her children are getting an education at the same government school she studied. She believes that they will gain more exposure in life like her only in a government school. Her beauty business has declined sharply after COVID19.

Now she has very few customers. She had times before COVID19 when she used to earn 10000-12000 rupees per day.

Future Plans/ Vision

Anandhi is currently in the plan to expand the restaurant business. She is planning to open a restaurant named SS Hotel in the next 2 months, which serves food based out of Paramakudi. The current parlour is doing moderately well. She is also interested in exploring her career related to teaching-related fields such as teaching traditional folk dances and martial arts.

Comments on viability/Sustainability of business:

The current business has regular customers from schools and nearby areas. People always keep coming back to her because of her consistent service. Her energy to do more and investment in multiple areas will help in the long run by ensuring many sources of income.

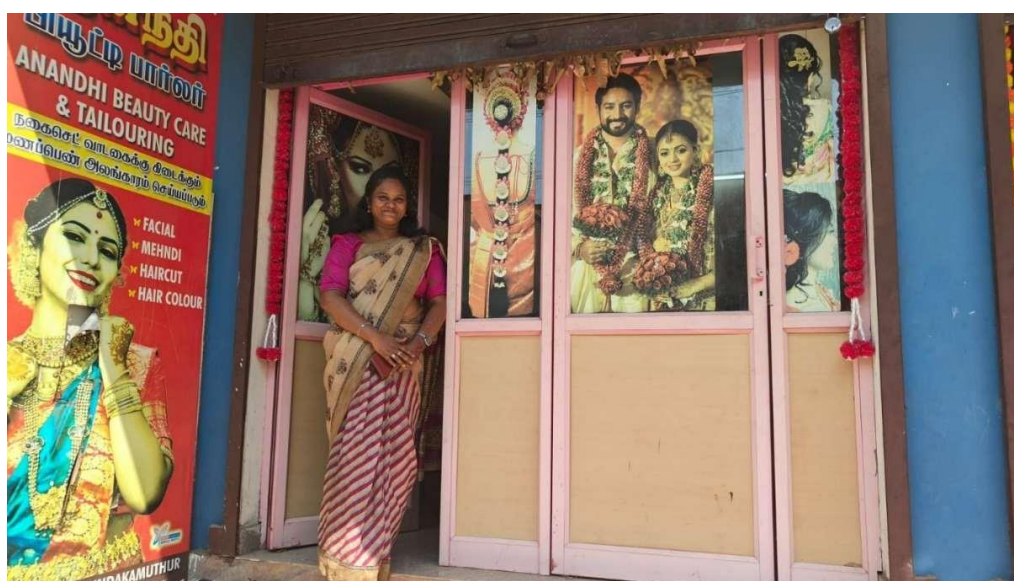
Gaps/risks identified

Getting into multiple businesses without enough planning might be risky. All the businesses that she invested has many competitors and the structure of these businesses is rapidly changing. Existing facilities for the beauty parlour would need to be renovated to satisfy future customers, as the chair and furniture are not in a very good condition.

Comments/ Suggestions

Anandhi should be vigilant and strategic about her ventures. On the other hand, her vibrancy, leadership and multitasking capabilities has been instrumental in her success. She is still very ambitious and confident about herself and the fact that she keeps experimenting is commendable.

Documented by: Abhilash E M and Ajay Lal



CASE STUDY 5—: Kavitha (Fancy Store)

Name: Mrs. Kavitha

Location: Sundakamuthur

Type of Enterprise: Fancy store

Year of Commencement: 2010



Kavitha is a hard-working woman entrepreneur who runs a fancy store. She has a son and a daughter, her husband is a temporary driver. She used to be a door-to-door sales person, and sell sarees in Milekal, Kulathupalam, and Perur. She used to walk and go by bus to sell those sarees. She also does covering jewellery business. After many years of struggling, she set up her own fancy store. She also makes custom-designed jewellery and sells it in her fancy store. She is paying a shop rent of 4000 rupees. She is keen on doing business.

The motivation behind starting the enterprise:

Kavitha was born in Anaikatti where her parents used to have a small petty shop. Having been exposed to small businesses since a young age, she had a desire to set up her own business. She did door-to-door sales for 17 years and it was very tough on her health and the family. Then, her husband suggested her to set up a fancy shop.

Strategies employed to run enterprise

Kavitha has a calm and composed personality. She has a very loyal customer base, which she developed through years of contact. Her husband is a strong pillar of support. Apart from regular stationery, she also makes her own customized products. Kavitha provides a variety of product lines in her shop. She is scaling up ensuring consistent growth in business with fewer risks.

Economic achievements

Her business is sustainable and stable. Kavitha's children are studying in a good private school. She can pay the school fees of the child, which is around Rs. 60000 per year. Kavitha says that she does not have any debts currently.

Future Plans/ Vision

She is so happy about what she was doing right now her idea was to do a fair and right business and be thankful and happy for what they are currently in. Kavitha is happy with her current business and wishes to continue it in a fair and rightful manner. She also wants to gradually expand her shop's shelf space and product variety.

Comments on viability/sustainability of business:

Kavitha's experience in her domain and strong network with her stakeholders over the years makes her business sustainable. She also continues to innovate and bring more product lines.

Gaps/ risk identified

They do not have a savings model to save their money flow, which might be risky for their daughter's higher education. Kavitha is not much aware of the custom-designed jewellery she makes and its market. Online purchase options, and quick commerce that are preferred by the new generation pose a risk to the fancy store.

Comments/ Suggestions

Kavitha and her husband have reached where they are now overcoming many challenges. Perseverance and experience over the years have kept them going. Since she is so determined and passionate about her business, with strong support from her family, she has the potential to grow further.

Documented by: Harishh N and Rakshitha AP



Kavitha and her spouse share a moment of togetherness

CASE STUDY 6:- Kumari (Grocery Shop)

Name: Ms. Kumari

Location: Kuniyamuthur

Type of Enterprise- Grocery Shop

Year of Commencement: 2012



Kumari is from Guruvayoor, Kerala. It has been 22 years since her marriage and now, she is settled in Kuniyamuthur. She owns a grocery shop here. The best-selling items of the shop are mixture (a fried snack), soap powder, and other household items. Before starting the grocery shop, she had been running ventures like tender coconut shop and chicken shop. She has been in financial burden before, but now she has no burden. She has also made investments in LIC (Life Insurance Corporations) policy, chit funds, and bank deposits. The rent for the shop is around 6000 rupees. She has a child who dreams of becoming a collector. She donates some products to the government hospital on her child's birthday.

The motivation behind starting the enterprise:

Kumari had a loan after the construction of her house. To repay her debts, she started this business. She also wanted to provide better living conditions for the family. At the same time, she also wanted to be an independent woman.

Strategies employed to run enterprise

She has prior knowledge in the field of business. The shop is located at a prime location where regular residents are there as her customers. She does not promote credit sales to her customers. She operates from early morning to late night. Peak sales happen at night. Her main strategy is to stay open beyond 10 pm when other shops shut and open early morning before other shops open.

Economic Achievements

Kumari managed to repay her debts, and her only daughter is getting educated at a good private school. After many businesses, now her husband is also helping her as a pillar of support. They bought a land and built a house in which two portions are given for rent.

Comments on viability/sustainability of business

As a grocery shop, her business is doing okay and has regular customers. Since it is a grocery shop, and she sells daily essentials the business would be keep running. She is simple and soft-spoken which makes her a popular shopkeeper in the locality. However, quick commerce and e-commerce have reduced the number of customers visiting traditional stores

Future Plans/ Vision

Kumari wants to expand her shop and give the best education to her child whose dream is to become an IAS officer.

Gaps/risks identified

As an essential selling business, she must start thinking about home delivery and diversifying her business model to address new customers. A lot of development and digital buying of groceries are becoming popular people and young customers are switching over to those options, which poses a challenge for her.

Comments/ Suggestions

Even though she has faced many struggles in her life, she has been determined to do a business. Kumari is a family centric person and is very focused on ensuring a bright future for her child. Many hardships over the years have made her a bold and independent women entrepreneur.

Documented by: Abhilash E M and Ajay Lal

CASE STUDY 7: Jayapriya (Fibreglass Products)

Name: Jayapriya

Location: Metur

Type of Enterprise: Shana Fibreglass doors, Mint and Lime cafe

Year of Commencement: 2011

Description:

Jaya Priya is an inspiring woman entrepreneur who runs Creator Shana, a statue moulding unit, with a unique distinction—her entire workforce consists of women employees. She has successfully carved a niche in the industry by combining traditional craftsmanship with innovative product development. Her mother Rita, set up the business, but Jaya Priya has expanded the product line.

Her business specializes in moulding statues, flower pots, customized doors, and other decorative structures. In addition to this, she has diversified her income streams by starting a juice shop, which she runs alongside the moulding unit.

Currently, her enterprise employs 10 women, providing them with stable job opportunities and financial independence. Jaya Priya is not just a businesswoman but also a philanthropist, as she has adopted the child of one of her employees and is funding her education.



Motivation behind starting enterprise:

Jayapriya's entrepreneurial journey was inspired by the strength and resilience of her single mother. Recognizing the need for increased employment opportunities for women, she embarked on her ventures with a strong desire to empower women in her community. This dual motivation, driven by both personal inspiration and a commitment to social impact, has likely played a significant role in shaping Jayapriya's entrepreneurial endeavors.

Strategies employed to run the enterprise:

Jayapriya employs several strategies to run her enterprise. She utilizes an order-based manufacturing model, suggesting a focus on customized or made-to-order products. She also

handles private use and chemicals, which aligns with the "Casting [Chemical]" description of her business.

Jayapriya has expanded the product line of statues of Jesus Christ and Mother Mary (started by her mother) to include pots and doors, offering customized work on these items. Notably, her ROI (Return on Investment) strategy differs from auction models, focusing on ethical and photographic documentation, indicating a commitment to transparency and perhaps a unique selling proposition. These strategies highlight a diversified approach, combining custom manufacturing, specific material handling, and a focus on ethical business practices.

Economic Achievements:

“You can start with nothing. And out of nothing, and out of no way, a way will be made.”—Michael Beckwith.

Starting from the scratch, Jaya Priya’s mother invested INR 15000 into fibre casting, started the joint venture with her husband, Nithyanandam; now five years after her daughter, Jaya Priya took over the venture, makes a profit per month and makes fifty pieces per day that enables her to employ women from a disadvantaged background.



Apart from financing the education of her two kids in private school, she also caters to the educational needs of her adopted daughter.

Future plans/Vision:

Jaya Priya (JP), plans to expand her mould casting business further into customisable portrait doors, which she believes to be a disruptive innovation in the market of 3-D doors and furnishes. She also has orders from airports for cast pillars and huge gardening pots.

JP, has also started a ‘Mint and Lime’, café near Podanur railway station, and is planning to utilise her fashion designing knowledge further. Diversification of portfolio beyond product lines to new services under a conglomerate, Jaya Priya stands tall, empowering vulnerable women around her despite their religion, caste and creed.

Comments on the Viability or Sustainability of the business:

- Despite checking the legal norms for waste management, usage of fibre clast chemicals for mould casting appears to be a threat to form the ethical aspect of the business.
- **“Continued innovation is the best way to beat the competition”** – Thomas A Edison. Jaya Priya follows this in letter and spirit with her journey from casting Jesus Christ’s moulds to pillars, decorative pots and to be patented portrait casting doors. She is still ready to jump into new challenges and succeed in the male-dominated casting business.

Gaps/Risks identified:



While Jaya Priya has built a successful enterprise, there are certain gaps and risks she should address:

- 1. Lack of Digital Presence:** Unlike large competitors, Creator Shana does not have a strong online presence. In today’s digital era, relying only on word-of-mouth may limit growth.
- 2. Competition from Mass-Produced Items:** With increasing demand for mass-produced decorative items, her handcrafted moulds face competition from large-scale manufacturers.
- 3. Safety for her workers and herself:** The moulding business uses strong chemical glues and fine fibres that could pose a health risk for her employees if they do not wear gloves and masks. Because of discomfort and the heat, employees tend to prefer working without protective gear and this could lead to health issues in the future.

Comments/Suggestions:

Jaya Priya has demonstrated remarkable leadership, innovation, and resilience in growing her business. However, to ensure long-term success, she should consider:

1. Leveraging Digital Marketing – A strong social media presence can help her reach customers beyond her local area.
2. Branding and Packaging – Custom branding for her products can enhance customer loyalty and recognition.

3. Business Automation – Implementing better inventory management and production tracking can help her scale operations efficiently.
4. Collaborations and Networking – Partnering with interior designers, event planners, and construction companies could expand her client base.

Documented by: Varsha U and Lalitha V

CASE STUDY 8: Priya (Boutique Tailoring)

Name: Ms. Priya K

Location: Kovaipudur

Type of Enterprise: Tailoring unit

Year of Commencement: 2014



Ms. Priya receiving her award

Description of the Entrepreneur

Ms. Priya is an inspiring woman entrepreneur who has successfully established and is running a tailoring unit Nethan's Designers in Kovaipudur since 2014. She is a BBM graduate who had to discontinue her MBA. She is 40 years old, married, and a mother of two children. She efficiently manages both her business and family responsibilities with the support of her husband and mother. Despite facing educational struggles early on, she never gave up on her dreams and remained committed to personal and professional growth.

Motivation Behind Starting the Enterprise

Ms. Priya always had a passion for tailoring and design, influenced by her aunt, who owned a small tailoring unit. As a young girl, she spent her weekends at her aunt's unit, trying and learning to stitching. Her intrinsic motivation and interest in fashion designing led her to pursue a professional course in R.S. Puram under the Wonder Ladies Central Government program.

Another key source of motivation was her husband's unwavering support. Her mother and mother-in-law also played a significant role by taking care of her children, allowing her to focus on her business.

Strategies Employed to Run the Enterprise

Ms. Priya started by offering stitching classes in a rented space. With perseverance, she expanded

her business to a larger space with a monthly rent of ₹25,000. Her initial investment was ₹5 lakh.

She currently employs 8 tailors - 2 male and 6 female, and owns 7 power sewing machines. She

follows an employee-friendly approach by eating meals with her employees and paying them daily wages along with piece rates. Her work hours are from 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.



Customer satisfaction is at the core of her business strategy. She has built a loyal customer base from nearby areas like Kinathukadavu, Sular, and Ramanathapuram, as well as international customers from Singapore and U.S. The primary reasons for her business success include:

- **Perfect Fit Stitching and Quality:** She ensures high precision and superior quality in her products.
- **Word-of-Mouth Marketing:** Instead of paid advertisements, she relies on customer recommendations to expand her business.
- **Use of Canvas Material:** She incorporates canvas material in her stitching, enhancing the quality of her products.

Economic Achievements

Ms. Priya's contribution to her family's financial stability is significant, as she covers 75% of the family expenses, mainly for her children's education. Her greatest achievement is her steady year-on-year business growth. She has empowered many women by training them in tailoring, some of whom have gone on to establish their own tailoring units. When her husband's business failed, she was able to support the family.

Future Plans and Vision

Looking ahead, Ms. Priya has ambitious plans for expansion. She aims to:

- Employ more women tailors, particularly those struggling financially, to provide them with stable incomes.
- Launch her own ready-made clothing brand under the name Nethan's.

Comments on Viability or Sustainability of the Business



Ms. Priya's business has strong foundations in customer trust, quality service, and word-of-mouth **marketing**. Her sustainable practices, such as employee welfare and direct customer engagement, position her for long-term success. Despite challenges like being cheated by her own

employees during the COVID-19 period, she managed to sustain and grow her business.

Gaps/Risks Identified

Lack of Digital Presence

- Currently, she relies solely on word-of-mouth marketing, which limits her reach to potential new customers. Without an online presence, she is missing opportunities to attract younger, tech-savvy consumers. E-commerce platforms, social media marketing, and a website could help showcase her work and increase sales.

Competition

- Several of her students and former customers have now become her competitors, operating similar businesses such as Colors, Crystal, and Suguna Boutique. While she does not view competition negatively, a strategic approach is needed to maintain her market position. She could introduce exclusive designs, loyalty programs, and online booking systems to differentiate herself.

Comments or Suggestions

Ms. Priya's journey from teaching stitching classes to building a successful tailoring enterprise is truly inspiring. However, concentrating on these areas will support the growth of her business.

- Since she relies solely on word-of-mouth marketing, leveraging social media and e-commerce platforms could help her reach a broader customer base.
- During COVID-19, some employees attempted to poach customers. Implementing stricter business ethics and contractual agreements could mitigate such risks.
- Her students and customers have started their own businesses, becoming her

competitors. Introducing unique product offerings and branding her business could help her maintain a competitive edge.

With her dedication, resilience, and customer-centric approach, she has not only achieved financial independence but also empowered other women. By addressing the identified gaps and focusing on business expansion, she has the potential to take Nethan's to greater heights and establish it as a recognized brand in the fashion industry.

Documented by: Varsha U and Lalitha V

CASE STUDY 9: Kalpana (Home-based Tailoring)

Name: Kalpana

Location: Sundakkamuthur

Type of Enterprise: Tailoring unit

Year of Commencement: 2015

Description:

Ms. Kalpana is an independent woman who transitioned from a career in the marketing domain to pursue a more flexible and family-oriented path. Initially, she worked as a sales executive, gaining valuable experience in the marketing field. However, she found the daily hustle of the corporate world increasingly challenging, particularly when it came to balancing her professional responsibilities with her desire to support her daughter's education. This realization prompted her to seek an alternative that would allow her to be present for her daughter while also maintaining her independence and financial security



Kalpana and her daughter showcasing their creations

Motivation behind starting enterprise:

Kalpana used to have a regular job, but she decided to leave it. She wanted to spend less time dealing with the daily stress of work and more time helping her daughter with her schoolwork. Therefore, she started her own small tailoring business from home. Now, she can work for herself and be there for her daughter at the same time.

Strategies employed to run the enterprise:

Kalpana's tailoring unit provides her with a monthly income of 10,000 rupees, which sees a surge during festival seasons due to increased demand. She prioritizes high-quality craftsmanship, a choice that has resulted in a loyal, though limited, customer base. To manage the workload, particularly during peak times, her daughter occasionally assists with specialized 'Aari and Maggam embroidery work', contributing to the family's enterprise.

Economic Achievements:

Kalpana has achieved financial stability, consistently earning over 10,000 rupees per month, which allows her to meet her family's expenses.

Future plan and Vision:

Even though Kalpana only has a small group of regular customers and always uses good materials, she wants to open a boutique. She thinks that because people know she makes nice things, she can turn her home business into a real shop. That way, more people can see her work, but she will still keep making things with the same good quality she is known for.

Comments on the viability or sustainability of the business:

Kalpana's sewing business is doing all right. She makes nice clothes, and even though she does not have many customers, the ones she has like her work. In addition, her daughter is talented at creating detailed embroidery designs, which are popular. This means Kalpana can offer something special that not everyone else can. Because her daughter helps out, she saves money on hiring someone. Therefore, even though it is a small business, her daughter's skills give her a good chance to grow, especially if more people want that fancy embroidery work.

Gaps/Risks Identified:

Kalpana faces the significant challenge of heavy competition from numerous tailoring units in her location. However, she aims to overcome this obstacle through a strategic approach. She prioritizes timely delivery of all orders, ensuring consistent on-time completion to build customer trust. Maintaining high-quality standards is paramount, with meticulous attention to detail and durable artisanship. To cater to a broad clientele, she employs a flexible pricing structure, offering affordable blouses starting at 400 rupees and extending to premium, specialized designs priced up to 10,000 rupees. Her focus on personalized service and building strong customer relationships aims to create a positive experience, fostering repeat business. Additionally, her daughter's skill in Aari and Maggam work provides a unique selling point, allowing her to offer specialized services and create distinctive products, thus differentiating her business in the crowded market.

Comments and Suggestions:

- Maintaining Aari and embroidery work in-house, when cost-effective, allows for quality control and unique offerings.
- Leveraging word-of-mouth referrals and local media advertising can significantly enhance her business's target reach.
- Kalpana's dedication, combined with her daughter's support, showcases the power of complementary strengths.

"None can stop the daring souls' incredible desire to evolve and succeed!"

Documented by: Varsha U and Lalitha V



Kalpana, her daughter and the ASB Shanti Ashram tteam

CASE STUDY 10: ShreeDevi (Tailoring and Ready-mades)

Name: Devi

Location: Sundakkamuthur

Type of Enterprise- Tailoring

Year of Commencement:2021

Description of the Entrepreneur

“The brands that are not afraid to experiment during this time (pandemic) will be remembered !” – Nicky Wang, WE Red Bridge

Reminding us the above quote, Ms. Devi, a calm and composed young woman from Sundakkamuthur, who always had entrepreneurial will within her, held her grit to learn tailoring from Shanti Ashram during COVID19. Her tailoring teacher described Devi as a shy but dedicated woman who asked doubts and was one of the brightest students, who outshone others in her home works.

Devi, decided to start an entrepreneurial venture ‘Shreedevi Readymades’, a tailoring unit cum readymade garments outlet, with her husband who quit his Machine Shop work to join his life partner. Their shop is located in a rented building at Sundakkamuthur where they pay INR 5000/month as rent. Devi’s two children who are self-sufficient have made it easier for Devi to focus on her venture. She sometimes subcontracts tailoring work to two other women. Shreedevi Readymades is strategically located near Government Hospital, where they experience steady flow of customers. She and her husband also try to impart an entrepreneurial spirit to her two sons, and the couple hopes that their children take an interest in the venture.



Motivation behind starting the enterprise:

“Having a supportive partner can literally change your life!” is true in the case of Devi, her main source of motivation to learn tailoring and employ and empower fellow beings rather than being employed is the vision and mission shared by her husband. The duo invested in a machine without even knowing how to master the machine. She decided to

ace the art of tailoring, amidst the unpredictable pandemic climate.

Strategies employed to run the enterprise:

Their strategic journey began with finding a strategic location for tailoring and readymade business, Government hospital, ticking the second P (Place in 4Ps of business and marketing). Devi ticked the first P (Price) by offering blouses with lining at a price of Rs. 250 and Salwar offered at Rs. 450 to the price sensitive customers of Sundakkamuthur who are her primary target segments.

“Make hay while the sun shines!”, is true with the innovation and adaptation she brings on to her product portfolio, which expands from: customizable women blouses and salwar suits to baby beds, feeding tops and night wears that caters to the customers who visit the maternity unit of the hospital next door.

Sourcing materials from Erode, Salem and Tiruppur where they find both cheaper and more expensive materials is another key strategy that ticks the prime checkbox of any business, operating profit.

Economic Achievements:

Devi makes enough profit to ensure her rent is paid. When she subcontracts tailoring, the women are paid a piece rate ranging around INR 150 to 200. She is able to send her two sons to a private school. She is looking forward to owning two new power-tailoring machines from their earnings.

Future plans/Vision:

Devi, is determined to own the building where they are working and to expand her readymade cum tailoring unit by splitting it up as a separate tailoring unit with segregation of tasks (cutting, stitching, embroidery works) and the other unit, customer facing ready-made venture. She shared her dream of employing and empowering, more deprived, vulnerable women; where she already helps two such women, proving *“Today is the opportunity to build the tomorrow you want!”* – Ken Poirot

Comments on the Viability or Sustainability of the business:

Devi’s readymade cum tailoring unit is sustainable, which gives her regular income to support her kids’ education and bears returns on investment to fund her future expansion plans. Their diversification into embroidery, Aari work (outsourced), baby products apart from ready-made blouses proves, **“Where there is a will there's a way!”**

Gaps/Risks identified:

Despite her efforts to communicate well and break out of her shy and introverted nature, it might pose a difficulty in expanding and attracting new customers in the heavily competitive tailoring business, which rests on continuous engagement and captive communication at par with the quality and deliverables.



Comments/Suggestions:

- In house development of Aari and embroidery work, if it remains relatively cost efficient.
- More word-of-mouth referrals and local channel media advertising can enhance the target reach of her business
- Specialization of labour, in future, post-expansion, could add on to the quality and deliverables of the product.
- Despite all the odds, Devi and her husband prove to complement each other rather than competing with one another, serving as a source of inspiration to fellow hard-working women and families, proving that “None can stop the daring souls’ incredible desire to evolve and succeed!”

Documented by: Deekshitha Aluvalla .