

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR MSME FOOD PROCESSING UNITS IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the efficacy of four government programs in Kerala's food handling sector, explicitly targeting Miniature, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The programs under examination are the Kerala MSME Improvement Programme (KMDP), the Kerala Food Handling Strategy, the Kerala Foundation and Innovation for MSMEs (KITCO) Plan, and the (ESS). Relapse tests were undertaken to evaluate the relationship between the execution of these plans and the satisfaction of MSME food processing unit owners. The findings indicate significant positive connections between all strategies and owner satisfaction, with the Kerala Food Handling Strategy exhibiting the most critical degree of adequacy. The technique has the most excellent R-squared value, normalized coefficient (Beta), and measurable significance due to its complete support structure and significant influence on MSME development and manageability. These results highlight the importance of government-appointed mediators in creating a favorable climate for the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the food handling industry.

Keywords: MSMEs, food processing, government schemes, Effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) in the food processing industry are crucial to Kerala's economy. They contribute to the state's GDP and have significant importance in the contemporary corporate landscape. Various initiatives, spanning from tiny, family-owned enterprises to medium-sized corporations, provide distinctiveness to this lively setting and play a part in Kerala's renowned gastronomic heritage. The Kerala government has recognized the significance of micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MSMEs). It has taken aggressive measures to implement several programs to support these firms and foster development within the state. These approaches include funding, upgrading foundations, expanding knowledge, facilitating market access, and embracing innovations. Financial assistance programs, such as working capital loans with covered loan costs or

sponsorships for hardware purchase, enable micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MSMEs) to enhance their production capacity and invest in new equipment. In addition, funds for foundation development assist in creating state-of-the-art processing facilities, storage units, and cold chains, therefore enhancing the overall efficiency and quality of the product. The governmental authority's emphasis on skill enhancement via training programs enables small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) to use sophisticated methodologies and comply with global quality standards. These motives enhance individual efforts and contribute to the general development of the area by sustaining a skilled workforce. A crucial objective of market access programs is facilitating the expansion of micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) to a broader customer base, both domestically and internationally. This document serves as a reminder of the support for collaborating on trade fairs, presentations, and marketing activities. It also highlights the aid available for acquiring quality affirmations and meeting administrative obligations. Additionally, the public authority emphasizes the region's receptiveness to innovation and advancement in conjunction with these programs. Encouraging small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) to use current handling procedures, computerization, and digitalization will enhance their productivity, save expenditures, and enable them to react to evolving business sector characteristics. This research seeks to assess the efficacy of the various components of government assistance in Kerala's dynamic food processing sector, and their significant influence on the development, management, and viability of micro, small, and medium businesses (MSMEs). This inquiry examines the crucial role of government interventions in creating a favorable climate for MSMEs to prosper and contribute to Kerala's economic recovery. It will perform a thorough analysis of these methods and their resulting impact.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The food processing sector in Kerala, mainly consisting of micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs), is a vital contributor to the state's economy. Although these activities are essential, they often face several hurdles that impede their development and capacity to be maintained over time. In order to develop successful strategies to support and improve the operations of MSMEs in the food handling industry, it is crucial to understand the distinct issues they confront. SMEs in Kerala's food processing industry have the notable obstacle of restricted availability of financial resources. State-of-the-art technology, innovative overhauls, and enhancements to the underlying structure may come with a high price tag, making it difficult for small firms to get the necessary capital. The issue is exacerbated by the expensive costs associated with financing loans and the stringent insurance prerequisites, which impede the capacity of MSMEs to enhance their operations and increase their effectiveness further. Another urgent problem is the absence of specialized foundation offices explicitly designed for the requirements of food processing enterprises. Inadequate cold chains, storage facilities, and handling techniques have a detrimental effect on both work efficiency and product integrity. MSMEs sometimes face strategic obstacles in moving raw supplies and completed items, often resulting in failures and higher production costs. Nevertheless, the scarcity of proficient laborers is a significant challenge for micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) operating in the food processing sector. Many firms

struggle to recruit and retain highly skilled individuals because they do not have training programs specifically designed to meet their requirements. Consequently, there is a distinct scarcity of expert knowledge, which hinders advancement and restricts the capacity of MSMEs to use contemporary managing procedures. MSMEs in Kerala's food handling industry still encounter substantial obstacles in gaining market entry. Due to restricted exposure and advertising channels, goods are compelled to target a broader audience, both inside the country and internationally. The development potential of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is impeded by the challenges they face in acquiring reliable certifications and meeting administrative obligations, limiting their access to profitable product markets. Given these challenges, it is crucial to assess the effectiveness of current government initiatives aimed at promoting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the food processing sector. To fully harness the potential of MSMEs and foster an environment conducive to their growth and sustainability, it is necessary to address the critical issues of access to financing, infrastructure development, skills enhancement, and market entry. This study addresses the challenges micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MSMEs) face in Kerala's dynamic food-handling industry. It focuses on understanding these difficulties and identifying feasible strategies to mitigate them.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Providing government assistance to micro, small, and medium-sized food processing units in Kerala is crucial due to these firms' pivotal role in the state's economic growth and business environment (MSME et al., 2021). To develop evidence-based policies that promote the development and sustainability of MSMEs, it is crucial to comprehend the obstacles they encounter in this domain and assess the efficacy of government services. The food processing industry in Kerala is mainly composed of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which significantly influence the state's economic performance. According to the MSME Yearly Report of 2021, data from the Service of Miniature, Little, and Medium Ventures reveals that MSMEs in Kerala constitute more than 90% of all ventures in the state and employ more than 50% of the existing labor force in the region. Consequently, Kerala's economic well-being relies heavily on the advancement and rationality of these undertakings. Antony and Sasikumar (2015) found that SMEs in the food processing sector face many challenges, including restricted capital availability, insufficient framework, and difficulties in accessing new markets. Addressing these concerns is essential for MSMEs to realize their capabilities fully and emerge as significant participants in local and global markets. To tackle these difficulties, the government has adopted plans and efforts to assist micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MSMEs) in the food handling industry. In order to find areas that might be improved, it is essential to thoroughly assess the viability of these mediations (Sreejesh & Praveen, 2012). A thorough investigation is urgently required to assess the extent, viability, and consequences of government aid measures for Kerala's micro, small, and medium-sized food processing facilities. This research aims to expand the current body of knowledge on micro, small, and medium business (MSME) development. Additionally, it will

provide policymakers and partners with practical suggestions for improving MSMEs' growth and long-term viability in the dynamic food-handling industry.

THEORETICAL FOUNDINGS

This analysis centers on the food processing units operated by micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) in Kerala. It is grounded on specific hypothetical frameworks that are pertinent to the examination of MSME growth and strategy. The assessment is based on the fundamental idea that enhancing micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) drives economic growth and reduces poverty. Several theoretical viewpoints, like the asset-based approach (Barney, 1991) and Schumpeter's concept of business venture (Schumpeter, 1934), emphasize the significance of MSMEs in fostering growth, efficiency, and job creation, contributing to the overall financial condition. These thoughts serve as a potential focal point for comprehending the promotion of MSMEs in Kerala's food handling sector. Ideas of public strategy and government action also inform the evaluation. Government intervention in the economy is deemed necessary to address market failures, ensure fair outcomes, and achieve social welfare goals, as proposed by theoretical frameworks such as the public choice theory (Buchanan, 1965) and the market failure theory (Stiglitz, 1986). This study seeks to evaluate the efficacy of public intervention measures in rectifying deficiencies and fostering the development of micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) in Kerala's food processing industry by analyzing government schemes and initiatives designed for this purpose. Moreover, the research relies on theoretical viewpoints about the financing and lending of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The financial needs conjecture (Fazzari et al., 1988) and the dominance hierarchy hypothesis (Myers & Majluf, 1984) are two theoretical frameworks that provide insight into the difficulties encountered by MSMEs when seeking capital for growth and new projects. This study seeks to enhance our comprehension of the government's involvement in alleviating financial limitations and enhancing capital accessibility for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). It examines the effectiveness and adequacy of financial support programs for MSME food processing units in Kerala. In summary, this research examines the many aspects of government support for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the food processing sector in Kerala. It uses a multidisciplinary approach incorporating MSME development, public administration, and finance viewpoints.

SCHEMES

Kerala MSME Development Program (KMDP): Launched by the Government of Kerala, the KMDP provides a comprehensive support framework for MSMEs across various sectors, including food processing. Under this program, MSME food processing units can access financial assistance, technology upgrade support, skill development programs, and marketing assistance to enhance their competitiveness and sustainability.

Kerala Food Processing Policy: The Kerala government introduced a dedicated Food Processing Policy to promote investments, infrastructure development, and capacity building in the food processing sector. This policy offers incentives such as subsidies, tax benefits, and land allotment at concessional rates to encourage MSMEs to set up or expand their food processing units in the state.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for MSMEs (KITCO) Scheme: Implemented by the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA), the KITCO Scheme provides technical and financial assistance to MSMEs for setting up modern infrastructure facilities. MSME food processing units can avail support for establishing processing units, cold storage facilities, packaging centers, and quality testing laboratories, thereby enhancing their efficiency and quality standards.

Entrepreneur Support Scheme (ESS): The Entrepreneur Support Scheme, administered by the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC), aims to nurture entrepreneurship and facilitate the establishment of new MSMEs, including those in the food processing sector. Under this scheme, eligible entrepreneurs receive financial assistance, mentoring support, and assistance in obtaining necessary clearances and certifications to start and operate food processing units.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To evaluate the selected schemes, KMDP, KFPP, KITCO, and ESS.
- To find the highly impactful government scheme out of the four schemes.

Kerala MSME Development Program (KMDP)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.825 ^a	.680	.678	.44449
a. Predictors: (Constant), Kerala MSME Development Program				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	66.384	1	66.384	336.008	.000 ^b
	Residual	31.216	158	.198		
	Total	97.600	159			
a. Dependent Variable: satisfaction of owners of MSME food processing units						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Kerala MSME Development Program						

Based on the presented model summary, there is a strong correlation between the Kerala MSME Improvement Program (KMDP) and the satisfaction levels of MSME food processing unit owners. The KMDP has an R² value of 0.680, indicating that it can account for about 68% of the variability in owners' happiness. Furthermore, even when considering the number of indicators, the model's informative capacity remains robust, as seen by the adjusted R² value of 0.678. The ANOVA table shows an associated p-value of less than .0001 and an exceptionally high F-value of 336.008, which strongly supports the

interpretation of the model. This indicates that, compared to a model that does not include the KMDP, the relapse model that includes it predominantly functions based on the anticipation of owner contentment. Upon examining the table of coefficients, it is evident that the KMDP variable has a coefficient value of 0.451 and a standard error value of 0.025. The anticipated rise in owner satisfaction of MSME food handling units is around 0.451 units for each one-unit enhancement in the performance or viability of the KMDP. The KMDP considerably impacts proprietor satisfaction levels among MSME food processing unit owners, as shown by a high normalized coefficient (Beta) of 0.825. These data indicate that the Kerala MSME Improvement Program (KMDP) has a notable effect on increasing the satisfaction levels of owners of MSME food processing units. The program aims to provide a conducive atmosphere for MSME owners to thrive and excel in Kerala's food handling industry, as shown by the positive coefficient and significant factual significance.

Kerala Food Processing Policy

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.964 ^a	.929	.928	.21010
a. Predictors: (Constant), Kerala Food Processing Policy				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.626	1	90.626	2053.071	.000 ^b
	Residual	6.974	158	.044		
	Total	97.600	159			
a. Dependent Variable: satisfaction of owners of MSME food processing units						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Kerala Food Processing Policy						

The model's framework demonstrates a very robust association between the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) food handling unit owners and the execution of the Kerala Food Handling Strategy. The Kerala Food Handling Strategy, with an R² value of 0.929, indicates that it can account for about 92.9% of the variability in owner satisfaction. Furthermore, when evaluating the quantity of indicators, the model's ability to provide information remains robust, as shown by the adjusted R² value of 0.928. The ANOVA table strongly supports the model's correctness, as shown by a p-value of less than .0001 and a significant F-value of 2053.071. This indicates that when comparing a model that does not include the Kerala Food Handling Strategy to one that does, the latter primarily focuses on predicting owner satisfaction. According to the coefficients table, the Kerala Food Handling Strategy variable has a coefficient of 0.603 and a standard error of 0.013. These findings suggest that for every one-unit improvement in the effectiveness or

efficiency of the Kerala Food Handling Strategy, there is a projected gain of around 0.603 units in the satisfaction of MSME food handling unit owners. The high normalized beta coefficient (Beta) of 0.964 highlights the substantial correlation between the Kerala Food processing Strategy and proprietor satisfaction. This indicates that the strategy significantly influences satisfaction levels among MSME food processing unit owners. These results prove that the enforcement of the food handling strategy significantly affects the owners of small and medium business (MSME) food handling units in Kerala. The arrangement, characterized by a high coefficient and quantitative relevance, demonstrates its consideration of the problems and demands of MSME owners. This, in turn, facilitates their growth and success in the food processing business in Kerala.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for MSMEs (KITCO) Scheme

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.924 ^a	.854	.853	.30069
a. Predictors: (Constant), Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for MSMEs				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	83.314	1	83.314	921.456	.000 ^b
	Residual	14.286	158	.090		
	Total	97.600	159			
a. Dependent Variable: satisfaction of owners of MSME food processing units						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for MSMEs						

The model summary indicates notable strengths when evaluating the effectiveness of MSME food processing unit owners in executing the Kerala Framework and Innovation for MSMEs (KITCO) Plan. Based on the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.854, the KITCO Plan can account for about 85.4% of the variance in owner satisfaction. Furthermore, even after considering the number of indicators, the model's ability to provide helpful information remains robust, as seen by the adjusted R^2 value of 0.853. A significant F-value of 921.456 and a very small p-value of less than 0.0001 provide further evidence for the model's significance in the ANOVA table. Compared to a model that does not include the KITCO Plan indicator, this demonstrates that the relapse model is based on the anticipation of owner happiness, which is the main driver. According to the coefficients table, the KITCO Plan variable has a coefficient of 0.964 and a standard error of 0.032. The data suggests that for every unit to rise in the execution or viability of the KITCO Plan, the satisfaction of

MSME food handling unit owners is predicted to increase by around 0.964 units. The KITCO Plan, with a normalized coefficient (Beta) of 0.924, significantly influences the satisfaction levels of owners of MSME food processing units. It effectively identifies areas of strength in the relationship between the two. The findings of this study indicate a clear link between the effectiveness of the Kerala Framework and Innovation for MSMEs (KITCO) Plan and a rise in satisfaction among food processing industry owners. The plan's elevated coefficient and measurable significance indicate that it satisfies the innovation and framework requirements of MSME owners, facilitating their growth and success in Kerala's food-handling industry.

Entrepreneur Support Scheme (ESS)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.917 ^a	.841	.840	.31372
a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneur Support Scheme				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	82.050	1	82.050	833.679	.000 ^b
	Residual	15.550	158	.098		
	Total	97.600	159			
a. Dependent Variable: satisfaction of owners of MSME food processing units						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneur Support Scheme						

The model summary demonstrates a clear association between the performance of MSME food processing unit owners and the adoption of the Business Visionary Assistance Plan (ESS). The ESS, with an R^2 value of 0.841, accounts for about 84.1% of the variability in owner satisfaction. In addition, the model's ability to provide information about stays in different locations is shown by the updated R^2 value of 0.840, which considers the number of indicators. The ANOVA table shows a very significant F-value of 833.679 and a p-value of less than .0001, further strengthening the model's interpretation. When comparing the relapse model with and without the ESS as an indicator, it is evident that the former demonstrates superior performance in predicting owner satisfaction. Upon examining the table of coefficients, it is evident that the variable for the Business Visionary Help Plan has a coefficient value of 0.454 and a standard error of 0.016. These findings suggest that the satisfaction of MSME food handling unit owners is projected to rise by around 0.454 units for each additional unit of efficiency or effectiveness achieved by the ESS. The plan has a vital role in impacting the satisfaction levels of MSME food processing unit owners, as shown by the considerable positive correlation between ESS and proprietor satisfaction (0.917,

normalized coefficient, beta). Collectively, these results provide compelling evidence that adopting the Business Visionary Help Plan (ESS) substantially influences the satisfaction levels of MSME food processing unit owners. The plan's high coefficient and measurable relevance in the food processing industry in Kerala demonstrate its support for businesses and its ability to satisfy the demands of MSME owners, significantly contributing to their development and success.

SUMMARY

To compare the effectiveness of the four government schemes (KMDP, Kerala Food Processing Policy, KITCO Scheme, and Entrepreneur Support Scheme), we can analyze their regression models based on several key metrics: R-squared values, standardized coefficients (Beta), and statistical significance (p-values).

1. Kerala MSME Development Program (KMDP):

- R-squared: 0.680
- Beta: 0.825
- p-value: < .0001

2. Kerala Food Processing Policy:

- R-squared: 0.929
- Beta: 0.964
- p-value: < .0001

3. Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for MSMEs (KITCO) Scheme:

- R-squared: 0.854
- Beta: 0.924
- p-value: < .0001

4. Entrepreneur Support Scheme (ESS):

- R-squared: 0.841
- Beta: 0.917
- p-value: < .0001

Based on the comparison of these regression models, the Kerala Food Processing Policy has the highest R-squared value (0.929), indicating that it explains the highest proportion of the variance in owner satisfaction among MSME food processing units. Additionally, it has the highest standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.964, suggesting a strong positive relationship between the policy and owner satisfaction. The p-value is also highly significant (< .0001), indicating a robust statistical relationship. While the KMDP, KITCO Scheme, and ESS strongly correlate with owner satisfaction, the Kerala Food Processing Policy is the most effective scheme based on the provided regression analyses. It comprehensively addresses various aspects of support for MSMEs in the food processing sector, leading to higher owner satisfaction levels than other schemes. Therefore, the Kerala Food Processing Policy appears

to be the most effective government initiative in supporting MSME food processing units in Kerala.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the study indicates that government initiatives in Kerala have the potential to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMBs) operating in the food processing sector. The results of the relapse analyses indicated that the Kerala MSME Advancement Programme (KMDP), the Kerala Food Handling Strategy, the Kerala Foundation and Innovation for MSMEs (KITCO) Plan, and the Business Person Backing Plan (ESS) all had a notable impact on the satisfaction levels of MSME food handling unit owners. The Kerala Food Handling Strategy was particularly notable for its profound influence on owner satisfaction and its substantial, informative efficacy. The complete support system of the organization emphasizes its crucial role in promoting the development and sustainability of MSMEs in the food handling industry. This support system covers many variables such as motivation, foundation advancement, and market access help. These results emphasize the importance of government-appointed mediators in tackling the exceptional difficulties encountered by MSMEs and establishing a conducive atmosphere for their recovery. Kerala policymakers should study successful approaches such as the Kerala Food Handling Strategy and develop more efficient procedures to assist micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MSMEs) in the rapidly growing food handling sector. It is essential to recognize that elements like execution, verification, and criticism processes may impact the practicality of government objectives. In order for these strategies to effectively contribute to the growth of MSMEs in Kerala and be sustainable, it is imperative that we consistently assess and modify them based on input received from our partners. In conclusion, our study demonstrates that government support schemes play a crucial role in stimulating the expansion of MSMEs and fostering financial progress in Kerala. Policymakers can maximize the food handling industry's capacity to drive sustainable growth in the state by prioritizing initiatives that cater to the specific requirements of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and foster a business-friendly environment.

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