



## PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF AKSHAYA ENTREPRENEURS

<sup>1</sup> Sruthy Anilkumar & <sup>2</sup> Dr. B Sindhu

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Pavanatma College, Murickassery

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor & Research Guide, Pavanatma College, Murickassery

### Abstract

AKSHAYA project one of the landmarked ICT project by Kerala State Information Technology mission. Akshaya e-centre Project started with the noble aim of making at least one member in each of the families E-literate. Present study was an attempt to identify the problems and challenges faced by Akshaya entrepreneur's in Idukki district of Kerala. Hence, 50 respondents were selected from Idukki district through convenience sampling technique. This study was a qualitative approach, hence, various statistical tools were used to analyze the data from respondents.

**Keywords: Akshaya, Problems, Entrepreneurs**

### I. Introduction

Akshaya project officially launched in 2002, by setting up more than 600 sites in Malappuram district of Kerala, with the goal that one person in every family to be computer literate in the district. After the first phase, Malappuram district is said to be India's first e-literate district. Akshaya marks the beginning of a drive to 'Bridge the Digital Divide' by enabling thousands of ordinary citizen's access relevant information in the local language over the Internet. Akshaya was started with creating the micro entrepreneur in each Panchayath. (K, 2014). Akshaya was considered as an entrepreneurial employment opportunity for women as well as men. Therefore, it is relevant to study the problems faced by entrepreneurs for running an Akshaya centre. The present study aims to identify the problems faced by Akshaya entrepreneurs in Idukki district.

### II. Review of Literature

(KAS, 2017) attempts to investigate the Convergence of Government service delivery system through E-Governance in Rural Karnataka State. The study was conducted in selected three Taluks such as Hunsur, Periya Patna, and K R Nagar in Rural Mysore district. It mainly focused on the awareness and perception of selected respondents towards Atalji Janasnehi Kendra. The findings of the research revealed that awareness level of respondents is too low, and they access the Government service only at Taluk headquarters, therefore they face the problem of distance from the service center and thereby increase in cost. Moreover, they face extra cost because of incorrect document availed from the center. Therefore, government should take necessary steps to improve e-Governance performance.

The findings of the study made by (Arun Kumar P S, Alvin Abraham, Girish S, 2015) revealed that majority of the citizens happy with the e-governance system.

FRIENDS and Akshaya have an important role in rural areas, because they provide better public utility services through a single window system. The study revealed a comparative result that FRIENDS owned by Government itself and deals with departmental payment in Governments and universities. While the other term Akshaya managed and owned by a single person and delivering many public utility services such as e-district, UID enrolment, e-literacy, rural empowerment and economic development. Further, they noticed that Akshaya was not properly worked because they have the problem of lack of fund.

**(S, 2017)** Wrote a descriptive article titled an empirical study on Genesis, Growth and Status of Akshaya Telecentres. The study aims to identify the demographic profile and present status of Akshaya tele centre entrepreneurs in Kerala. He found that there is an equal proportion of both male and female as an entrepreneur. Half percentage of respondents are working between 40 to 59 hours a week. Their motives to be an entrepreneur was personal growth, social status, personal achievement and building satisfactory work relationship in the society. He also points out that most of the telecentres was managed by individuals himself and their source of capital was bank loan. Few of them reported that they face the problem of red-tapism in getting financial assistance from government.

**(Research, 2004)** prepared a presentation about Akshaya project, its objectives, operational activities, problems encountered and performance. They found that Akshaya aims at short term education to people as well as long term benefits such as mass employment generation, and e-governance service delivery in an efficient manner. The main purpose of Akshaya project was bridging the digital divide between rich and poor in terms of Information and Communication Technology. Its operational activities cover 100% e-literacy in Malappuram District, assist entrepreneurs in developmental activities, marketing support and technical guidance.

**(Dr,Shruti Singh and Dr.Rubee Singh, 2018)** outlined the impact of E-governance in India. According to the author, e-governance is considered as a full-fledged package of transparency, accountability, time boundless, cost efficiency and customer satisfaction. E-governance is a substituted approach, in which people are replaced by technology and developed an innovative administrative culture in middle management. It helps to fast, speedy and better disposal of grievance of citizen or clients. But there are some challenges involved in this implementation. They are, creation of infrastructure, sound policy, legal framework and uploading of data in local language.

### **III. Objectives of the study**

The study aims to identify the problems faced by Akshaya entrepreneurs in Idukki district of Kerala.

### **IV. Methodology**

Present study was both descriptive and exploratory in nature. It uses both primary and secondary data. However, primary data was collected from 50 Akshaya

entrepreneurs in Idukki district and secondary data were collected from various publications and websites. Convenience sampling on the basis of best judgment tool were used as the sampling technique. Mean Percent Score, one –way ANOVA and Independent sample t-test were used to test the hypothesis.

**V. Hypothesis of the study**

**H01** – Problems identified does not differ significantly on the basis of demographic factors such as Gender, Age and Educational qualifications.

**VI. Discussion**

**a) Demographic factors of respondents**

**Table No.1**

Demographic factors	Item	Frequency, percentages
<b>Gender</b>	Male	29(58%)
	Female	21(42%)
<b>Age</b>	18-26	2(4%)
	27-34	15(30%)
	35-43	25(50%)
	Above 3	8(16%)
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	Plus Two	24(48%)
	Degree/Diploma	18(36%)
	PG& Above	8(16%)

Source: Primary data

Table No. 1 shows the demographic factors of respondents in Idukki district. It portrayed that majority of the respondents are male. Again it shows that majority of the respondents included in the age category of 35-43. Further it depicted that most of the respondents are qualified plus two only.

**b) Problems faced by entrepreneurs – Table No.2**

Factor	Variables	Mean	MPS	Decision
F1	Difficulty in convincing people	3.8400	76.8	SA
F2	capital	4.2200	84.4	SA
F3	Lack of support from the government	4.0800	81.6	SA
F4	Lack of quality trainees	4.1600	83.2	SA
F5	Structure of websites	2.0400	40.8	D
F6	Citizens concern about security problems	3.5400	70.8	A
F7	Internet problem	4.0800	81.6	SA
F8	Lack of infrastructure	2.0600	41.2	D
F9	Political interference	3.0800	61.6	A
F10	Dealing with bank	2.3200	46.4	D

*SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree*

Table number 2 presents the qualitative opinion of problems faced by Akshaya entrepreneurs in running the service centre. Most of the respondents opined that F1, F2, F3, F4, and F7 are the major problems faced by them. Few of them agreeing that citizens concern about security and privacy act as the restrictive factor for implementing service delivery effectively. Structure of websites, lack of infrastructure and dealing with bank are not considered to be the problem of running service centre.

**c) Hypothesis Testing**

- Ho:** Problems identified does not differ significantly on the basis of gender.

**Independent Samples Test**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.054	.087	1.700	48	.096	.15452	.09090	-.02826	.33729
Equal variances not assumed			1.757	47.270	.085	.15452	.08794	-.02237	.33141

Here the p value is less than 0.05, hence, we reject the null hypothesis that problems does not differ significantly on the basis of gender. We can accept the alternative hypothesis that problems differ significantly on the basis of gender.

- Ho:** Problems identified does not differ significantly on the basis of age.

**ANOVA**  
mean

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.739	3	.580	7.883	.000
Within Groups	3.383	46	.074		
Total	5.122	49			

Based on the p value (0.00) we can reject the null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis that problems identified differ significantly on the basis of age. Because, p value is less than that of .05.

- Problems identified does not differ significantly on the basis of educational qualifications

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.478	2	.239	2.422	.100
Within Groups	4.643	47	.099		
Total	5.122	49			

ANOVA table shows that p value (0.100) is less than that of .05, so we can reject the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis that problems identified differ significantly on the basis of educational qualifications.

**d) Conclusion**

The Akshaya project originated in November 2002 in Trivandrum, Kerala was officially started with the introduction of rural e- kiosks centers in the districts of Thiruvanthpuram and Malappuram in May, 2003. Now it was considered as a successful programme and convert many paper works into digital environment. but there are some problems, which restricts the smooth functioning of Akshaya centres. These problems are mainly faced by Entrepreneurs of Akshaya centres. Difficulty in convincing people, lack of capital, lack of quality trainees, citizens concern about security, poor internet, and political interference are the major problems faced by Akshaya entrepreneurs.

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