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Entrepreneurial activities and empowerment of rural women through processing and value addition

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Abstract
The present study on Entrepreneurial activities and Empowerment of Rural Women through processing and value addition was conducted in Indi and Sindagitaluks of Vijayapura district, Karnataka. The rural women (sample size) were interviewed to collected information on existing agricultural activities in study areas and their entrepreneurial activities through questionnaire. The collected data was analysed using appropriate statistical tools. The results of the study revealed that, majority of the women entrepreneurs (55%) practice vegetable marketing followed by sheep rearing and 32 per cent of the women entrepreneurs were attended training programme on cultivation and value addition in mushroom. Further, 26 per cent of the women entrepreneurs also participated in processing of fruits and vegetables training programme. Nearly half of the women entrepreneurs (53%) were producing foxtail millet malt based products. This may be due to huge local demand and good market price. It was found from the table that average production of foxtail millet rice based products produced from SHG was 4500 kg. value added products were marketed through four different modes namely direct sale by the women entrepreneurs, sale in exhibition and Melas, sold to individuals on request, sale through agents and other means such as sale in the local markets. After the intervention after training programme their annual income increased through processing and value addition of foxtail millet products. The study it is concluded that, SHG women were able to generate substantial income, which was used towards the family welfare. The training interventions by the research played a strategic role by increasing self-confidence of SHGs in undertaking small scale food processing of value added products of foxtail millet and capacity building of women at the village level.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial activities, rural women, sale in exhibition and Melas

Introduction

A nation's development depends on the health and well-being of the people who live in the country. Among the people, good health of woman is very important as women are not only the carriers of coming generation, but civilization and sustainable development rest on them. They are the best upholders of environment, ecological and social balances and because of these factors it is of great importance that women should get adequate care and attention in the matter of health, nutrition, education or matters related to their social and economic development.

Agriculture and Food processing sector is the backbone of India's economy in terms of income, employment generation and ensuring food and nutritional security. The strength of Indian food industry lies in the availability of raw materials, flexibility of product mix, consumer awareness for safe and nutritious foods and well trained technical power. With economic liberalization, there are opportunities as well as challenges ahead, for this growing sector. Indian food industry can step forward through entrepreneurship, innovative approaches on technological and marketing aspects.

Women play a very important role in the development of family, community and society at large. Women contribute to development not only through remunerated work in the production of goods and services for the market and household consumption, in agriculture, food production and family enterprise, but also through a great deal of unremunerated work (Verma, 2003) [7]. A woman entrepreneur can not only generate income for herself but also generate employment for other local women. In India high rate of illiteracy and low economic status of women underline the need of increasing their earning power by providing them income generating assets. Provision of employment opportunities and income to women is also necessary for improvement in nutritional, health, educational and social status (Godavat, 2010) [4].

Women in India are major producers of food in terms of value, volume and number of hours they work. Nearly seventy percent of all economically active women are engaged in agriculture as compared to sixty three per cent of men. In India, about 80 per cent of the female population lives in the rural areas and 86 per cent of the rural women work in agriculture and allied activities (Borah, 2014) [2] and perform a variety of roles in domestic as well as socioeconomic fronts, of which, many are of greater economic significance (Bhope and Palki, 1998) [1].

A women entrepreneur is one who innovates, initiates or adopts a business activity. Women Entrepreneur is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of entrepreneurial women (Mohan *et al*., 2013) [6].

In the process of entrepreneurship women face various problems associated with entrepreneurship and these problems get doubled because of her dual role as a wage earner and a home maker. Multiple roles of women entrepreneurs, lack of experience in planning, lack of training in enterprise, followed by inadequate working capital, lack of adequate infrastructure, either no and less access to skilled laborers, lack of advertising and branding of the products, competition from branded products and lack of skills in sales promotion are the major planning, production and marketing problems faced by women entrepreneurs (Devi *et al*., 2013) [3]. Women entrepreneurs are no different from men in terms of their personality, cognition, achievement, motivation, dependency and other related attitudes. The gap in women's participation to world's income is due to various social and personal constraints.

The status of women in a society is the indication of progress. The varied roles of women as mother, home maker and productive workers, are the sustaining force of families, communities and nation. According to 2011 census, the population of women in India is 405.1 million and in Karnataka the same is 3.4 crores and out of these 2.8 crores women belongs to rural. Thus rural women always play an important dual role in the society. Though her role in the society is very important, the rural women are often physically visible but conceptually invisible and remained marginalized. The best way to make option use of human resources is to provide them opportunities for self-development through training, which improves the existing knowledge and skill, enhances capability, and improves the competency to meet the challenges of the society and technology (Meera *et al.*, 2001) [5].

Empowering women needs a holistic approach to participate in decision making in the household, community and local domestic sector and prepare women to take up leadership position in agricultural activities. SHGs in rural India are causing a silent revolution not only in terms of providing access to micro credit to communities but also in contributing towards a greater sustainability in agriculture in various ways, including through a better use of marginalized local agro biodiversity. With this background a study on Entrepreneurial activities and Empowerment of Rural Women through processing and value addition was conducted with following objectives.

Objectives

- To elicit the existing information on small scale entrepreneurial activities among rural households.
- Promotion of small scale agro-processing entrepreneurship among rural households.
- Establish the market network for the developed products.

Methodology

The project was undertaken to study the "Entrepreneurial activities and Empowerment of Rural Women through processing and value addition. About 100 rural women from Sindagi and Indi taluk of Vijayapura district were selected randomly for the study. The rural women were interviewed to collect information on existing women self- help group in both the study areas and their entrepreneurial activities through questionnaire. The training programmes were conducted on processing and value addition of foxtail millet and lemon powder based products, and utilization of mushroom and fruits and vegetable processing. Developed products were sold in the local market, exhibited in KVK, Indi and general stores. Based on the information obtained by the SHG women entrepreneur, the collected data was tabulated and analysed using appropriate statistical tools like frequency, parentage, mean, standard deviation, etc., to draw valid conclusions.

Results and Discussion

The present study was under taken on Entrepreneurial activities and Empowerment of Rural Women through processing and value addition. The work was carried out in Indi and Sindagi of Vijayapura district, during 2020-21.

Table 1: Existing activities of the rural women in study area

Existing activities	Number	Per cent
Dairy farming	41	41.00
Sheep rearing	32	32.00
Tailoring	19	19.00
Vermicompost	01	01.00
Vegetable marketing	55	55.00

@Multiple respondents

Existing activities of the farm women in study area is depicted in the Table 1. Majority of the women entrepreneurs (55%) practice vegetable marketing followed by sheep rearing (32%). Since dairy farming and sheep rearing provides assured liquid capital return, these subsidiary activities have complementary to existing entrepreneurial activities. Indirectly, it also provides income to their existing entrepreneurial activities. Limited members of women entrepreneur's practices tailoring (19%). It is very much clear that majority of women entrepreneurs follow vegetable marketing and dairy activities as their subsidiary activity.

Similar findings from Maruthesha *et al.* (2018) reported an overall 31 per cent of the respondents were engaged in dairy farming followed by vegetable marketing, sheep rearing, etc., and only 1.5 per cent were engaged in vermicomposting before training programme on value addition in finger millet.

Similar findings on mushroom cultivation have entrepreneurial activity among SC/ST rural women as reported by Raguprasad *et al.*, (2008).

Table 2: Training programmes conducted to rural women (N = 100)

Training programmes	Number	Per cent
Processing of Foxtail millet& value addition	27	27.00
Processing of Lemon powder & Value addition	63	63.00
Processing of fruits and vegetables	26	26.00
Cultivation and value addition in mushroom	32	32.00

@Multiple respondents

Table 2 shows that training programmes conducted on different entrepreneurial activities. 32 per cent of the women entrepreneurs were attended training programme on cultivation and value addition in mushroom. 26 per cent of the women entrepreneurs also participated in Processing of fruits and vegetables training programme. Nearly 27 per cent of the women entrepreneurs attended training programme on processing of Foxtail millet & value addition, since Foxtail millet is grown in the study area. Value added products like malt, rice, sweet and spicy products etc., being handled by entrepreneurs.

Niketha *et al.* (2017) reported that training received was found to be positively and highly significantly correlated with empowerment of women. Trainings on various aspects, increased their knowledge, skill, attitude, exposure and experience thus, helped in capacity building of women. Further, all the trainings were free of cost which encouraged more participation; finallyit leads towards the empowerment of dairy women members of WDCs.

Maruthesha *et al.* (2018) also reported that majority of rural women participated in the training on value addition of finger Millet (46%) followed by training on utilization of baby corn/maize in the diet (16%), processing of fruits and vegetables (15%), processing of tomato based products (12%) and cultivation and utilization of mushroom (11%).

Table 3: Foxtail millet products produced by the rural SHG Women

Products	Total Production per year (in kg)	Number	Per cent
Foxtail millet malt	126 kg	16	53.33
Foxtail millet rice	4500 kg	22	73.33
Foxtail millet sweets	85 kg	13	43.33
Foxtail millet Spicy products	65 kg	14	46.67

@Multiple respondents

Value added products produced by women entrepreneurs are depicted in Table 3. Nearly half of the women entrepreneurs (53%) were producing foxtail millet malt based products. This may be due to huge local demand and good market price. It was found from the table that average production of foxtail millet rice based products produced from SHG was 4500 kg. One third of the women entrepreneurs were producing Foxtail millet sweets based value added products. Nearly one fifth of the women entrepreneurs producing foxtail millet spicy products. Only five per cent of the women entrepreneurs are producing sweet based value added products. The similar findings were reported by RBRC project (2010) [8], where the women SHG groups produced totally 400 kg finger millet malt and marketed at rural and Bengaluru urban for Rs. 80/kg with the earning of Rs. 32,000/month.

Table 4: Different Mode of marketing of Value added products (n=30)

Value added products	Direct sale by the Women	Exhibition and Melas	Request by Individual	Others
Foxtail millet malt	12 (40.00)	05 (16.66)	11 (36.66)	02 (6.66)
Foxtail millet rice	14 (46.66)	06 (20.00)	07 (23.33)	03 (10.00)
Foxtail millet sweets	13 (43.33)	07 (23.33)	10 (33.33)	00 (0.00)
Foxtail millet Spicy products	12 (40.00)	05 (16.66)	07 (23.33)	06 (20.00)
Snacks	17 (56.66)	08 (26.66)	03 (10.00)	02 (6.66)

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentages

Mode of marketing of value added products through different channels: From the Table 4, it was found that value added products were marketed through four different modes namely direct sale by the women entrepreneurs, sale in exhibition and Melas, sold to individuals on request, sale through agents and other means such as sale in the local markets. It was found that, fifty per cent of the women entrepreneurs sold foxtail millet based value added products mainly through direct sale by women entrepreneurs followed by sale in exhibitions and Melas organized by different institutions. Only limited number of women entrepreneurs sold their value added products through agents and other means. Since marketing is one of the areas which often decides the profitability of the enterprise due to ups and downs in the market demands.

Table 5: Economic status of SHG rural women before and after training programme (n=30)

Income group	Entrepreneurs			
	Before		After	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Low (Rs<2000)	12	40.00	07	23.33
Medium (Rs2000-3000)	13	43.33	16	53.33
High (Rs>3000)	05	16.66	07	23.33
Total	**30**	**100.00**	**30**	**100**

It was evident that from the Table 5 showed that before the intervention 43 percent of the women entrepreneur belonged to middle income group whereas 40 per cent in low income group and 16 per cent of the women entrepreneur belonged to high income group. After the intervention after training programme their annual income increased through processing and value addition of foxtail millet products. According follow up studies 53 per cent of rural women belonged to middle income group, followed by 23 per cent high income group. There was an increasing trend observed in income level of entrepreneur with regard to middle and high income group. Vijaylakshmi *et al.* (2008) [9] reported that impact of training in improving the livelihood security for rural women such as value addition helped in exposure, enhanced skill, knowledge level and encouraged women to come forward and take up value addition to generate income which directly impacted by creating opportunities for SHG families to consume finger millet based products and to enhance their livelihood by improving health, income and employment opportunities besides market linkages using different channels. Thus, the entrepreneurial activities contributed towards the reduction of poverty and unemployment of the rural SHG women.

Conclusion

The study concluded that, SHG women were able to generate substantial income, which was used towards the family welfare. The training interventions by the research played a strategic role by increasing self-confidence of SHGs in undertaking small scale food processing of value added products of foxtail millet and capacity building of women at the village level.

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