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Fruits and vegetables preservation: a way to economic empowerment of rural women

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Abstract

Women are backbone of any nation. Prosperity of the nation depends upon the prosperity of its women. Entrepreneurship is one of the ways for empowerment of women especially in rural areas and hence promotion of women entrepreneurs is focused highly by the Government. The Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (RMoL) is one of the efforts initiated on 4th September, 2004 to promote livelihood especially for the poor, both men and women of the state. It focuses on need based short term skill training where participants learn from hands on training/practices. The present study was undertaken to find out usefulness of fruits and vegetables preservation training programme organized under Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (RMoL) and adoption of it as an enterprise by the women. The study was conducted in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. The sample consisted of 20 women participants. The data was collected through personal interview technique using interview schedule. Frequency and Percentage were calculated for analyzing the data. The results indicated that the fruits and vegetables preservation training perceived as good and increased their knowledge, skill and efficiency about fruits and vegetables preservation. Eight respondents out of 20 had adopted it as an income augmentation activity on individual and group basis. They earned an average income of Rs. 13012.5/- individually and Rs. 7514.28/- on group basis per year. They have utilized earned money for fulfilling requirement of their family, purchase of house hold material and equipment, education of children and clearing of debts and credit. Thus it can be said that fruits and vegetables preservation enterprise proved to be a profitable venture.

Keywords: Training, Entrepreneurship, Preservation

1. Introduction

The Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods is one of the initiatives taken on 4th September, 2004 to promote livelihood especially among the poor men and women of the state. It focuses on experiential learning where participants learn from hands on training/practices. It envisaged that through need based short term skill training, a reasonable level of competence may be achieved and people may either become "employable" or "self employed". A number of training programmes on different entrepreneurial activities have been organized to improve economic status of the people under RMoL.

Fruits and vegetables preservation is one of the growing enterprises these days. Fruits and vegetables are seasonal and highly perishable. Thus to make these food available throughout the year, preservation is one technique. This is one of the area in which women are generally mastered thus RMoL also emphasized on this aspect by organising training on fruits and vegetables preservation. The present study was undertaken to study the usefulness of training programme organized under Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (RMoL) as perceived by beneficiaries and their expectations and adoption of fruits and vegetables preservation as an enterprise by the women. Study also focused on utilization of income generated from the particular enterprise by women entrepreneurs and constraints faced by them in running this enterprise.

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2. Methodology

Directorate of Extension Education, MPUAT, Udaipur is one of the organization Implementing Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods activities in the Udaipur district. Directorate

of Extension Education organised training programmes on cutting and tailoring, fruit and vegetable preservation, embroidery and needle work and food processing for women participants under RMoL scheme. Fruits and vegetables preservation training was selected for the present study. The total numbers of women beneficiaries of the training were 20. All the 20 beneficiaries were selected for the study. Interview technique was used for data collection. Frequency and percentages were used for analysis of data.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of reasons for attending Fruits and Vegetable preservation training programme
n=20*

S. No.	Reason	f	%
1	For their own interest	15	75
2	To learn new things	15	75
3	To utilize free time	13	65
4	As per the advice of friends and neighbours	11	55
5	To acquire skills	10	50

*Multiple responses

Perusal of Table 1 reveals that three fourth of the women respondents had attended training due to their own interest and desire to learn new things and to gain more experiences. Utilization of leisure time, advice by the friends and neighbours and to bring improvement in their existing skills were some of the reasons reported by 65, 55 and 50 per cent respondents, respectively.

Table 2: Opinion of respondents towards different aspects of Fruits and Vegetable preservation training programme
n=20*

S. No.	Training aspects	Satisfied f (%)	Somewhat satisfied f (%)	Not satisfied f (%)
A	Training			
1	Training time	18(90)	2 (10)	-
2	Training duration	20(100)	-	-
3	Training Materials	16 (80)	4(20)	-
4	Training Place	20(100)	-	-
5	Training Methods	20(100)	-	-
6	Training Content	20(100)	-	-
7	Practical orientation	16(80)	4 (20)	-
B	Technical Guidance	20(100)	-	-
C	Financial assistance	14 (70)	6(30)	-
D	Marketing Facilities	13 (65)	-	7 (35)

*Multiple responses

With respect to training duration, place, methods, content and technical guidance provided in the training programme all the respondents were satisfied. A good number of the respondents (90%) had most favourable opinion towards training time while 12 per cent women participants reported that training time i.e. 10 a.m. to 5 p. m. for 36 days duration was too long that affects their house hold tasks.

In case of financial assistance provided by institution during the training majority (70%) of the respondents were satisfied but some of the respondents (30%) were satisfied to some extent only. Practical orientation and materials provided during training period 80 per cent respondents were 'satisfied' while 20 per cent respondents were 'somewhat satisfied' and expressed that there should be a provision to prepare different products separately by individual participants.

Findings get decisive support from the findings of Bharti (2007) [2] that some of the respondents (28.67%) were not satisfied with some aspects of training and reported that one month duration is too long and should be reduced to 15 days only. Likewise timings of training should be from 11.00 a.m. to 4 p. m.

In support of the present findings Sharma (2007) [4]

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Usefulness of Training Programme Organized Under RMoL AS Perceived by Beneficiaries and Their Expectations

3.1.1. Reasons for Attending Training Programme

There were several reasons for attending special training by the women participants. Reasons for attending fruits and vegetable preservation training by the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of reasons for attending Fruits and Vegetable preservation training programme
n=20*

3.1.2. Opinion of respondents towards different aspects of Fruits and Vegetable preservation training programme

Data in Table 2 present information pertaining to the opinion of the respondents regarding different aspects of Fruits and Vegetable preservation training. It is clearly stated in the table that marketing facilities is only one of the criteria in which nearly one third of the respondents were not satisfied, however 65 percent participants were satisfied.

Table 2: Opinion of respondents towards different aspects of Fruits and Vegetable preservation training programme
n=20*

S. No.	Training aspects	Satisfied f (%)	Somewhat satisfied f (%)	Not satisfied f (%)
A	Training			
1	Training time	18(90)	2 (10)	-
2	Training duration	20(100)	-	-
3	Training Materials	16 (80)	4(20)	-
4	Training Place	20(100)	-	-
5	Training Methods	20(100)	-	-
6	Training Content	20(100)	-	-
7	Practical orientation	16(80)	4 (20)	-
B	Technical Guidance	20(100)	-	-
C	Financial assistance	14 (70)	6(30)	-
D	Marketing Facilities	13 (65)	-	7 (35)

emphasized that the mushroom cultivation training was more theoretical in nature and practical experiences provided were very less. She further reported that training needed technical assistance, marketing facilities, and timely supply of raw materials as these were becoming hindering factors in their wish of expansion of mushroom units

3.1.3. Overall opinion of respondents regarding Fruits and Vegetable preservation training

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their overall opinion regarding training on Fruits and Vegetable preservation
n=20*

S. No.	Opinion regarding training	f	%
1	Very Good	3	15
2	Good	17	85
3	Average	-	-

Overall opinion of respondents regarding Fruits and Vegetable preservation training is presented in Table 3. It is apparent from the table that the responses of all the participants with respect to Fruits and Vegetable preservation training were positive. Majority of women (85%) perceived that training

programme was good whereas fifteen per cent women were of the view that training was very good.

3.1.4. Benefits perceived by respondents through Fruits and Vegetable preservation training

There had been marked improvement in the life style of the respondents after attending training programme. The detail information about the benefits perceived by respondents through Fruits and Vegetable preservation training is given Table 4. Except one woman almost all of the respondents felt that training increased their knowledge and they learned to prepare apple jam, papaya jam, mixed fruit jam, rose syrup, keri pudina syrup, khas syrup, mango fruiti syrup, lemon syrup, amla syrup, tomato ketch up, mango pickle green chilli pickle, lime and chilli pickle, lasoda pickle, lime pickle, keri lasoda pickle, amla pickle, amla candy, chatani, amla pachak, lemon syrup and keri pickle. During enquiry it was found that sixteen women used to prepare mango pickle and 12 women lemon pickle before attending training. Tomato ketch up was the other item prepared by nine women. Lack of information about preparation of preservative items was one of the reasons for not preparing preservative items before attending training. With respect to time of initiation, majority of women initiated in to this venture in 2007 and more than one fourth respondent started in 2008. It was also found that all adopters were running entrepreneurial activity at their home. Five women were running their enterprise on group basis and two respondents were running their enterprise on individual basis. It was also found that women of group spent 3 to 4 hours for 22 to 25 days in preparation of different preservative items. Individual respondents involved 2 to 4 hours daily for 25 days in preservation enterprise.

Table 4: Benefits perceived by respondents through Fruits and Vegetable preservation training programme

n=20*

S. No.	Perceived benefits	f	%
1	Increased knowledge	19	95
2	Learned to prepare new things	19	95
3	Acquired efficiency	12	60
4	Helped in establishment of self enterprise	8	40
5	clarification of doubts related to enterprise	6	30

*Multiple responses

A study conducted by Agarwal and Patra (2000) also confirms the above findings. The study inferred that while emphasizing the importance of training programme reported that training in rural craft such as toys making, weaving and basket making is essential for women to make them self employed and for securing better economic status.

3.2. Adoption of Entrepreneurial Activities Envisaged Under Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods by Women

Regarding the adoption of fruits and vegetables preservation as an income augmentation activity it was found the only 8 women had taken up it as an income generating activity initially. One woman had discontinued it due to shifting of her residence so she was not able to manage with group activities. This activity had been running on both group and individual basis

Twelve women did not start this enterprise after receiving training because of lack of finance & time and problem in marketing of the product. Lack of self confidence and support by family members were another reason for non adoption of an enterprise.

Different items were prepared by preservation techniques of fruits and vegetables during the training. it was found from the investigation that most of the respondents (95%) learned and acquired proficiency in preparation of apple jam, mixed fruit jam, rose syrup, keri pudina syrup, green chilli pickle, lime and chilli pickle, amla syrup, tomato ketch up, papaya jam, khas syrup, mango fruit syrup, lasoda pickle, lime pickle, keri lasoda pickle, amla pickle, amla candy, chatani, amla pachak, lemon syrup and keri pickle. During enquiry it was found that sixteen women used to prepare mango pickle and 12 women lemon pickle before attending training. Tomato ketch up was the other item prepared by nine women. Lack of information about preparation of preservative items was one of the reasons for not preparing preservative items before attending training. With respect to time of initiation, majority of women initiated in to this venture in 2007 and more than one fourth respondent started in 2008. It was also found that all adopters were running entrepreneurial activity at their home. Five women were running their enterprise on group basis and two respondents were running their enterprise on individual basis. It was also found that women of group spent 3 to 4 hours for 22 to 25 days in preparation of different preservative items. Individual respondents involved 2 to 4 hours daily for 25 days in preservation enterprise.

Regarding preparation of different preservative items for family members it was found that 5-6 women were preparing amla pickle, tomato sauce, rose syrup, mango fruit syrup, amla syrup, keri pudina syrup for their family consumption. Whereas lime pickle, mango pickle, amla candy, lime and chilli pickle, green chilli pickle, amla pachak, chatani were prepared by 3-4 respondents for their family use. Two women were preparing papaya jam, apple jam, khas syrup and mixed fruit jam.

It was found that cent percent respondents were preparing tomato ketch up for commercial purpose while six respondents were engaged in preparation of rose syrup, lemon syrup, mango fruit syrup for entrepreneurial reasons. Similarly keri pudina syrup, mango pickle and lime pickle were prepared by five women for selling. Some of the respondents were engaged in preparation of amla products like amla pickle, amla syrup, candy, pachak, etc.

3.3. Income generation and its utilization by women entrepreneurs

3.3.1. Income Generation from Fruits and Vegetable Preservation Enterprise

The findings of the study reveal that initially there were 6 women engaged in group activities but after 2 to 3 months she had drop out with the group due to shifting of her residence. Perusal of Table 5 shows that on an average individual respondents were producing 357 kg. of product while women working in a group were preparing 145.71 kg. of preserved products annually.

Table 5: Income generation from Fruits and Vegetable preservation enterprise

n=7*

Ownership	Average quantity of product prepared (kg)	Average expenditure (Rs/ yr)	Average annual income (Rs./yr)	Net profit (Rs./yr)
Group basis	145.71	5550.00	13064.28	7514.28
Individual basis	357.00	13912.50	26925.00	13012.50

The average annual income from this enterprise was Rs. 26925/- and 13604.28/- in case of individual and group production, respectively. Similarly, the cost of production of processed products on individual basis was Rs. 13912.5 whereas, the

respondents running enterprise on group basis had invested Rs. of 5550/-. Women of Fruits and Vegetables preservation enterprise have been earning average profit of Rs. 13012.5/-on individually and Rs. 7514.28/- on group basis per year.

Table 6: Range of annual profit earned from Fruits and Vegetable preservation enterprise

n= 7

S. No.	Profit range (Rs.)	f	%
1.	12,000-13,000 (individual)	1	14.28
2.	13,000-14,000(individual)	1	14.28
3.	More than 14,000(group)	5	74.28

Data Presented in Table 6 depict that women performing entrepreneurial activity in group (74.28%) were earning net profit ranging Rs. 14,000/- . Whereas in case of individual owners one women was earning profit ranging of Rs. 13,000/- to 14,000/- per year and another one women (14.28%) earned profit ranging Rs.12,000- 13,000/- per year.

3.3.2. Utilization of income by women entrepreneurs

The utilization pattern of income by the respondents (Table 7) indicates that majority of the respondents (85.71%) have utilized money to fulfill requirement of their family viz. food, clothing, shelter etc. Similarly 57.14 per cent women utilized it for purchase of house hold material and equipment. Children education is also one of the area in which women were spending their income as reported by 42.86 per cent respondents. Same number of the respondents (42.86%) has utilized money for promotion of established enterprises. Savings of earned income was done by 28.57 per cent women for future needs. Some of the respondents (14.29%) were using their earned income for clearing of debts and credit.

The results are in conformity with the study of Verma (2006)

[7] who reported that majority of the respondents (94%) utilized the money to fulfill family requirements. Nearly half of the women utilized the money for establishing their enterprise, 19 per cent utilized it for education of their children and 7 per cent women opened bank accounts and saved the additional income for future requirement.

Findings are also supported by the findings of Upadhyay (2007) [6] that majority of the respondents (92%) utilized income to fulfill the family requirement and most of them (73%) saved it for future. More than half of the respondents (53-55%) spent the income for purchase of agricultural inputs and raw materials.

Table 7: Utilization of income by women entrepreneurs

n=7*

S. No.	Area of use	f	%
1.	To fulfill family requirement	6	85.71
2.	Purchasing of household material and equipment	4	57.14
3.	For children education	3	42.86
4.	For promotion of established enterprise	3	42.86
5.	Savings	2	28.57
6.	For clearing debt/ credit	1	14.29

*Multiple responses

3.4. Constraints Faced By Fruits and Vegetable Preservation Entrepreneurs

Information related to constraints faced by Fruits and Vegetable preservation entrepreneurs is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of constraints faced by Fruits and Vegetable preservation entrepreneurs

n = 7*

S. No.	Problems	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Problems related to grading and packaging	7	100
2.	Marketing Problems	7	100
3.	Inadequate advertisement	5	71.48
4.	Avoidance of household task	4	57.14
5.	Lack of time	4	57.14
6.	Problems related to raw material	3	42.8

*Multiple responses

Perusal of the table depicts that main problems perceived by all the women engaged in this enterprise were problem of grading and packaging and marketing. In an informal discussion it was found that women needed the help of any organization for establishing linkages for launching of the product in the market. Less than three fourth of the women (71.48%) reported that due to inadequate advertisement and less publicity their product were not as popular as products of established brands. Lack of time and avoidance of house hold work were the other difficulties perceived by more than half of the women (57.14%). More than 42 per cent of the respondents were facing problem in procuring raw material at right prices. Women expressed that raw material for this enterprise available at right cost during the seasons. Hence, as per the seasonal availability they had to manage their enterprise.

Findings are in line with findings of Randhwana and kaur (2006) [3] who stated that most of the problems faced by women entrepreneurs were personal and technical in nature. Most frequently experienced personal problems included over burdening with responsibilities, lack of time for recreational activities and excessive stress and tension and dual responsibilities. Singh and Garg (2003) [5] reported that major problems faced by rural entrepreneurs were non availability of

raw material, lack of training facility, finance and marketing problem.

Although women faced some problems in running this enterprise but they perceived it as a beneficial venture. However, if efforts are made to overcome these problems women can run this enterprise more smoothly and can fetch good profit.

4. Conclusion

The fruits and vegetables preservation training organized by Directorate of Extension Education, MPUAT, Udaipur under RMoL scheme was satisfactory and helped women to increase their knowledge, acquire proficiency and establishment of an enterprise on fruits and vegetables preservation. The established fruits and vegetables preservation enterprise proved to be profitable venture in terms of income generation. Therefore, it could be suggested that more and more women should linked with RMoL which would be helped farm women to empower themselves.

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