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Women empowerment through value addition in agricultural produce

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Abstract

Majority of the farming families in Punjab have marginal to small land holdings and their income is also very less. To enhance the income level and living standard of those farming families there is an urgent need to provide their family members particularly women an occupation based training like preservation of seasonal fruits and vegetables, which not only provides them an occupation but also develop entrepreneurial characteristics amongst them. These trainings are also useful for rural women as they can add more value to the seasonal fruits and vegetables by making Pickle, *Murabbaa*, *Chutney*, Jam, *Sharbat* etc. These trainings enhance their family income by around 30-40 thousands /annum. They fetch more prices of their raw produce after processing, moreover during peak production times. Instead of direct marketing, they did value addition of their produce and then sell them, it increased the value and prices of their products by many folds. After giving them training they are motivated to go for self marketing of their produce at domestic and village level. About 200 farm women have received training in the year 2013-14 and nearly 64 of them have adopted this at commercial and domestic level. These trainees were imparted training on preparation of *Pickles*, Jam, *Chutney*, *Murabaa*, and Squashes etc. They were highly satisfied with the training they received. Similar way these trainings can change the life style and income level of farming families comprehensively.

Keywords: Vocational, Training, Farm Women, Rural, Fruits, Vegetables.

1. Introduction

Family farming is one of the most predominant forms of agriculture world-wide, both in developing and in developed countries. In India, there are distinct male and female roles in the rural economy. Women and girls engage in a number of agro-oriented activities ranging from seedbed preparation, weeding, horticulture and fruit cultivation to a series of post-harvest crop processing activities like cleaning and drying of vegetables, fruits and nuts for domestic use and for marketing. A disproportionate number of those dependent on land are women: 58% of all male workers and 78% of all female workers, and 86% of all rural female workers are in agriculture. Female-headed households range from 20% to 35% of rural households (widows, deserted women as well as women who manage farming when their men migrate). Although the time devoted by both women and men in agricultural activities may, in several communities and agricultural situations, be taken to be almost equal, women are dominant within the domestic tasks. Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities, but the nature and extent of their involvement differs with variations in agro-production systems (Nagaraja, 2013) [3].

There are community-based differences regarding women's participation in agriculture, therefore location, cropping patterns, ethnic affiliation and economic and educational background also have implications for the specific division of labour within a given family unit. In addition to their role in agricultural production, women are gainfully employed in agri-based allied activities like dairying, animal husbandry, poultry, goatery, rabbit rearing, beekeeping, floriculture, horticulture, fruit preservation, post-harvest technology, value added food products, etc.

There is need to design programmes which could gainfully utilize the services and skills of women in relation to their involvement in agri-based allied activities. This would also help in generating self-employment and rural entrepreneurship. Some of the ventures would include agri-service centers' sale of quality seeds and other agricultural inputs; advisory services and

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consultancy; village-level marketing; multipurpose warehouses and controlled atmosphere storage; hiring of implements; micro propagation; hatcheries for fishery; production of bio-fertilizers; bio-control agents; beekeeping; livestock feeding and health management and artificial insemination; value addition to fruits and vegetables, food processing, food preservation and testing units; post-harvest management units; social agro-forestry; agri-horticulture; cultivation and management of medicinal and aromatic plants; utilization of crop residues; mushroom cultivation; poultry; piggery; goatery; agri-based handicrafts; child health care centres; use of renewable and unconventional sources of energy; low cost household equipments and appliances, value addition etc. Entrepreneurship skills can help in building confidence and self-awareness through income generation. Various activities can be taken up by rural women for income generation while being at home and by organizing themselves in Self Help Groups (SHGs) (Anonymous, 2001) [1]. SHG is a small voluntary association of women, preferably from the same socioeconomic background. It has transferred the real economic power in the hands of women and has considerably reduced their dependence on men. This has helped in empowerment of women and building self-confidence (Ghadoliya, 2005). Usually, women's representation is greater in allied agriculture than in grain production, and poor households require the greater involvement of women in income-generating activities than financially stable ones. Therefore, to enhance the income level and living standard of those farming families there is an urgent need to provide their family members particularly women an occupation based training like preservation of seasonal fruits and vegetables, which not only provides them an occupation but also develop entrepreneurial characteristics amongst them.

2. Methodology

2.1 Locale and sampling

All Krishi Vigyan Kendras under Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, organized short term, long term and vocational training courses for farm women and rural school dropouts girls. The study was conducted in Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hoshiarpur. A list of farm women and rural girls who had received vocational trainings in the year of 2013-14 was procured from the KVK, Hoshiarpur. Total 200 farm women and rural girls were received vocational trainings.

2. Collection of data

The data were collected by interviewing the farm women and rural girls personally with the help of structured interview schedule.

3. Analysis of data

The data were tabulated on the master sheets for further processing and analyzed with the help of the necessary statistical techniques.

4. Results and Discussion

1. Socio economic profile: - Data in Table 1 reveals that majority of the farm women i.e. 53.00 per cent belongs to 25-35 years of age group and 21.00 per cent of them were from age group of above 35 years. Most of the farm women were married (76.00 %) and belonged to joint family (89.00 %). Nearly 60.00 per cent of the farm women had more than Rs. 3,00,000 of annual income.

Table 1: Socio Economic Profile of the Respondents (n=200)

Particulars	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
15-25 yrs	52	26.00
25-35 yrs	106	53.00
35 yrs and above	42	21.00
Marital status		
Unmarried	152	76.00
Married	48	24.00
Family type		
Nuclear	22	11.00
Joint	178	89.00
Annual income (Rs.)		
>1,00,000	39	19.50
1,00,000-3,00,000	118	59.00
3,00,000 and above	43	21.50

2. Training received by farm women

All the respondents received different vocational trainings from KVK Hoshiarpur. Data in Table 2 depicted that More than half of the farm women 55.00 per cent received vocational training on preservation of seasonal fruits and vegetables, followed by training on decorating fabric with painting, printing and dyeing of cloth (35.00%) and making furnishes for home and preparation of toys and games for children (5.00 % each).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Training Received From KVK Hoshiarpur (n=200)

Title of the training	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Decorating fabrics with printing tie and dye and fabric painting	70	35.00
Preservation of seasonal fruits and vegetables	110	55.00
Making furnishing for homes	10	5.00
Preparation of toys and games for children	10	5.00





3. Adoption of enterprise

After receiving vocational trainings from KVK farm women started some income generating activities as small scale enterprises for their financial growth. A group of 28 farm

women started making of Squashes and *Sharbat* followed by 25 farm women who started making of *Pickles*, Jam and *Sharbat* at small scale (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on The Basis of Their Adoption of Enterprise (n=200)

Particulars	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Making of pickles	13	6.50
Making of <i>Pickles</i> , Jam and <i>Sharbat</i>	25	12.50
Making of Jam	7	3.50
Making of <i>Chutneyes</i>	9	4.50
Making of <i>Chutneyes</i> and <i>Murabbaa</i>	22	11.00
Making of Squashes and <i>Sharbat</i>	28	14.00
Making of <i>Sharbatas</i>	10	5.00
Not adopted	86	43.00

Chutneyes and *Murabbaa* were made by a group of 22 farm women whereas, a group of 13 farm women started making of

pickles. A group of 10, 9, and 7 farm women started making *Sharbatas*, *Chutneyes* and jam respectively.



Table 4: Increase in Family Income after Adopting Enterprises

Annual income (Rs.)	
Before	After
>1,00,000	1,20,000
1,00,000-3,00,000	1,20,000-3,50,000
3,00,000 and above	<3,50,000

4. Increase in income

All the farm women were very happy and satisfied with their own enterprise they have started. Nearly 60.00 per cent of farm women were belong to medium i.e. Rs. 1, 00,000 to 3, 00,000 categories before the training but after receiving training their annual family income has been increased by Rs. 20,000-50,000 (Table 4). The farm women whose family annual income was about Rs. 3,00,000 or more than this earned extra Rs. 50,000 annually.

Vocational training can play a key role in helping girls get jobs and become self-dependent. Other vocational training programmes help girls build a wide set of soft skills, and

increase their family income. These trainings helping them to gain financial independence (Dunning, 2013)

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Woman has been as important as man. In fact, the status, employment and work performed by women in society are the indicators of a nation's overall progress. Without the participation of women in national activities, the social, economical or political progress of a country will be stagnated. Rural women can play a significant role by their effectual and competent involvement in entrepreneurial activities. They have basic indigenous knowledge, skill and potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. Income generating activities are effective instrument of social and economic development to generate employment for a number of farm women within their own social system and best tool for rural women as it adds to the family income. A successful intervention for empowering women necessitates several elements – an important one is imparting of new skills: the consequence of women assuming new roles is also support

through training for enabling them to perform these roles. Trainings have to make women recognize clearly how society structures their perceptions. The training programme must promote critical analysis in women and encourage them to think independently and challenge unequal gender relations and exploitation.

6. References

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