

PERFORMANCE OF FARM WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

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It is a well known fact that women's income in a family is of paramount importance for nutritional, economic and educational upliftment of the family. Since women constitute almost half of the population in India, the burden shared by her for the socio-economic development is of two folds – one on the domestic front and the other on the economic front. However, the employment opportunities in rural areas are low because of the fact that the employment opportunities in rural areas are low because of the fact that the agriculture is of seasonal in nature. As a result of scarce employment opportunities and life supporting activities, women are tend to migrate to other areas seeking for livelihood (Leelamma, 2001).

The rural women, owing to their peculiar situation, require a different kind of set up with enriched employment opportunities through the introduction of various income generating activities at their doorsteps. Her emergence as an entrepreneur in the society depends closely upon the interlinked social, economic, cultural, religious and psychological background (Punam Kumari, 1999). It is ideal in the Indian context as the women normally hail from communities, always prefer to work in groups, wherein they can learn from each other, mutually reinforce and generally faces less social problems. This group dynamics need to be encouraged to transform women entrepreneurial talents into innovative action.

In this direction concerted efforts are being made by many institutions encouraging the group activities for improving the socio-economic condition of rural women. The enterprises coming through schemes are interesting and

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instructive without making much demand on rural women's time for domestic chores and child care, energy and financial resources. The Self Help Groups activities being practiced were easy to operate at the household level by rural women without giving up any other activities either in agriculture or allied activities. The technology employed was simple within the grasp of illiterate and average women. The success of such programmes are mainly depending on the active participation of farm women in Self Help Groups. In this direction an attempt has been made to know the level of participation of farm women in agriculture as well as the group activities. The related issues have been included in the present study. The study was undertaken with the principal objective of analyzing the role of women in agriculture and income generating activities, their knowledge on the management of scheme, the issues and challenges to take up income generating enterprises at village level.

Materials and method

The locale of the study was considered in Mysore district of Karnataka State, which was purposively selected as this was constituted on pioneering district in implementing various schemes for the upliftment of rural poor women. Ten villages were randomly selected from three taluks, practicing the enterprises such as tailoring, leaf plate making, pottery, agarbathi and bamboo works. The total sample constituted was 80. Data were collected personally by using structured interview schedule. Frequencies percentages were employed to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

It is evident from the Table-1 that the great majority (97.5 per cent) of the rural women participated in harvesting, transplanting of seedlings (90 per cent), manuring of fields (87.5 per cent), winnowing and cleaning (86 per cent), threshing (78.7 per cent), transportation and storage of the produce (77.5 per cent) and it is also evident that more than three fourth of them participated in field preparation, threshing, winnowing and cleaning. Further, it was observed that the highest participation was found in Kharif season

Table-1: Participation of women in farm activities during Kharif and Rabi Season (n= 80)

Farm activities	Kharif		Rabi	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Manuring of fields	70	87.5	35	43.63
Transplanting of seedlings	72-78	90.00	25	30.90
Harvesting	63	97.50	20	24.54
Threshing	69	78.7	15	18.18
Winnowing and cleaning	60	86.00	13	16.36
Field preparation	60	75.00	8	9.09
Transportation and storage of produce	62	77.50	26	3.00
Marketing	-	-	-	-

than in Rabi Seasons. This is because the women participate in greater numbers in Kharif season than in Rabi. Less than half (44 per cent) the respondents participated in manuring of fields than any other activities in Rabi season. The percentage of participation was still less and discouraging in other activities such as earthing up, water management, filling up gap chemical control etc. The results are in line with the findings of Nataraju (1990).

Table-2 indicated that women have participated in variety of activities. Out of which, a great majority of them (91 per cent) have participated in initial arrangement. A majority of them (80 per cent) have participation in attending meeting, collection of raw materials such as bamboo leaves, sticks etc. (78 per cent), these three activities were ranked I, II, and III respectively. Marketing of finished products (77.5 per cent), promotion of thrift activities (75 per cent) constant encouragement and motivation to other group members (74.00 per cent), transportation (72.5 per cent), to visit other villages to see the progress (60 per cent), mobilizing funds from the other sources other than bank loans (54 per cent), participation in other social organizations (51 per cent). 44 per cent of them help in assessing monthly profit and loss and a very less percentage (40 per cent) have participated in Bank transactions. This might be due to the illiteracy ground. As the percentage of illiterate

Table-2: Role performed by women in income generating activities.

(n=80)

Sl.No	Activities	Number	Percent	Rank
1	Help the group members in initial arrangements	73	91.0	I
2	Attending meetings	64	80.0	II
3	Collection of raw materials	63	78.0	III
4	Bank transactions	32	40.0	XII
5	Participation in other social organization	41	51.0	X
6	Mobilizing funds from sources other than the bank loans	43	54.0	IX
7	Help in assessing the monthly profit and loss	35	44.0	XI
8	Promoting thrift activities	60	75.0	V
9	Constant encouragement and motivation to other group members	59	74.0	VIII
10	To visit other villages to see the progress	48	60.0	VII
11	Transportation	58	72.5	IV
12	Marketing of finished items	62	77.5	VI

among women was up to 55 per cent and those, who had primary and middle school education was 20 per cent each, there were only few women who were ready to participate in bank transactions.

As far as the knowledge of women in the management of income generating scheme (Table-3) is concerned, a majority had the correct knowledge about the role of group leader, eligibility criteria, importance of group formation, skills involved, role of each member, thrift activities and objectives of Self Help Groups. The average knowledge level was found with respect to other developmental programmes, repayment procedures, selection of economic activity and bank transactions.

It is clear from the Table-3 that the women had either correct knowledge or average knowledge. But the number of women who had little or no knowledge was quite less. This shows that after their participation in group activities, they were motivated to get exposed to various aspects of management of income generating schemes.

According to the observations of Table-4, majority of the respondents indicated that lack of training (85 per cent), financial constraints (82 per cent),

Table-3: Knowledge of beneficiaries on the management of the schemes under income generation (n=80)

Farm activities	Kharif		Rabi	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Objectives of income generating activities	40	50	29	36
Eligible criteria	65	81	11	14
Role of group representatives	67	84	7	9
Role of each member	44	55	29	36
Importance of group formation	51	64	22	27
Bank transactions	26	32	29	36
Repayment procedures	30	37	44	55
Selection of economic activity	36	45	40	50
Other developmental programmes	14	18	62	77
Thrift activities	44	55	29	36
Manage mental aspects	31	39	50	62
Skill involved	51	64	28	35

poor quality of raw materials (81 per cent), high cost of production (77 per cent), lack of quality aspects (73 per cent), marketing problems (65 per cent) and lack of storage and warehousing facilities were the major constraints to express by the farm women in taking part in income generating activities and suggested these issues to be addressed for further improvement of the socio-economic condition of the rural women.

Table-4: Issues to be addressed for improvement as perceived by the farm women. (n=80)

Issues	Number	Percent
Financial constraints	66	82
Lack of training	68	85
High cost of production	62	77
Lack of quality aspects	58	73
Poor quality of raw materials	65	81
Lack of storage and warehousing facilities	51	64
Marketing problems	52	65

Conclusion

In the light of the above findings, an integrated picture of women participating in farm operations, income generating activities, their knowledge and the issue that are bothering the socio-economic stability, calls for a set of resolution and consideration.

From the study it is evident that the income generating activities create additional income and employment during off season and leisure time, which acts as a supplement to the wage earnings which may have to be strengthened and encouraged. Training programmes need to be organized and preferably be oriented to products that suit the day to day changes in consumer preferences. To encourage the sale of products a sort of community production cum marketing and storage centers should be setup, thereby farm women groups shall be made eligible to enter into the social systems which by itself get spread to all the rural areas so that the socio-economic condition of women could be improved to participate voluntarily in increased numbers and attempts to break the hard nuts of poverty. Finally she should be empowered in the overall development of the deprived women folk.

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