



Development of Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Andhra Pradesh

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KEYWORDS :

1. INTRODUCTION:

Women's role in economic development, in most countries of the world, cannot be undermined. In the Third World Countries, especially, where agriculture still constitutes the main source of livelihood and the main area of work for most people, women's contribution is quite high. Boserup found that in such economies there is a high rate of participation of women in the agricultural production. The strategies undertaken for the development of agriculture in these economies were more concerned with the increase in productivity through mechanization of the agricultural production process and neglected the sex specific composition of the rural labour force. Overtime, men gained from the technical changes that came about in agriculture while women were marginalized. One study puts female unemployment at six to seven times that of man. They remained mostly as low paid casual labourers.

Historically, a woman is primarily associated with the home, is expected to look after domestic chores and her typical role is that of a housewife and mother. Whether women work in the fields or factories, in mines or manufacturing industries all of them are expected to be home-makers. The rural women's question in India has been particularly a perennial question throughout history. These women are burdened with cumulative inequalities as a result of socio-cultural and economic discriminatory practices. Most observes while trying to unravel this puzzle point to historical precedent. Past discrimination arose from presumptions of women's inferiority and natural productivity to domesticity that persists till today. These women have been under the subjugation of men from time immemorial because of the sheer physical strength of men. The continuation and perpetuation of the domination of men is easily affected through economic control, the dictates of religion, the compulsion of customs and social practices. Thus, the low status of women is the direct consequence of the dominion exercised over them by men, which gave way for discriminating practices.

India's female population, as per 2001 census, is 496 million and constitutes 48.26 percent of the total population. In the rural areas, 30 lakh women have lost jobs in agriculture and livestock. Women have lost 1,47,000 jobs in the textiles sector during 1995-2001. Female under employment is also increasing at a faster rate than for men. India has 397 million workers, out of which 123.9 million are women. 106 million of these workers are in the rural areas and the remaining 18 million workers in urban areas. The organized sector, women workers in India are even more dismal-almost 96 per cent of the women workers are in the unorganized sector. The female work participation rate has increased overall from 19.7 per cent in 1981 to 25.7 per cent in 2001. In the rural areas it has increased from 23.1 per cent to 31 per cent and in the urban areas it has risen from 8.3 to 11.6%. There has been a significant increase in women employed in petty retail trade, hotels and restaurants in the last decade as part of survival strategy of poor urban households. These are typically low paying jobs where women work for long hours without any special benefits and face harassment. This is one factor why in India women's participation in the labour force has been relatively low and stagnant while in most countries it has been increasing, during the last few decades.

Yet another disadvantage to female agricultural workers is the male-female wage differential. Despite the legislations like the Minimum Wages Act and Equal Pay for Equal Work, wage discrimination

against women is wide spread in India, especially in the agricultural sector. Agricultural work is seasonal in nature. During the off season women in agriculture have to struggle hard to find alternate source of income. In drought prone area their plight is worse and they migrate to urban areas in search of work. Sometimes only male members of the family migrate leaving behind women and children to find for themselves in extreme conditions.

Most of the problems of rural women emanate from poverty compelling them to live a life of hardship and drudgery. The government of India, since independence, is making concerted efforts to bring women into the mainstream of development through its various programmes and scheme. But the improvement in rural women's condition is painfully slow. The First Five Plans emphasized on the welfare of women. It was only in the Sixth Five Year Plan that there was a shift from welfare to development. The International Women's Decade 1975-85 had its impact on the planning process in India. The Ninth Plan took a major step by incorporating "Empowerment of Women" as one of the main objectives of development during the plan period. The year 2001 was declared as the Women's Empowerment Year, and India has already adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women. During the Ninth Plan a special Women Component Element was introduced under which more than 31 percent of the funds in women related sectors were specifically earmarked for women's programmes. Several other initiatives have been launched to provide comprehensive package of up-gradation of skill through training, extension of input and market linkage in the traditional rural sectors.

Several institutions have been involved in imparting training and helping women to take up viable entrepreneurial trades. These include social welfare departments, special departments for development and welfare of women, Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR), state agriculture and extension departments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's). In this background the present paper has been made to examine the viable entrepreneurial trade for women in agriculture and understand the constraints faced and identify the linkages and support system needed for enhancing the viability and feasibility of the trade.

The ICAR launched the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) in Home Science in the year 1983 in State Agricultural Universities Human Capital of Rural Women. The agro based technologies undertaken by the Home Science department under AICRP include preparation of processed food items like jams, jellies, energy drinks, poultry management preparation of handicrafts using natural fibres, etc. The impact of the project was very encouraging in some districts and average in some. Therefore, purposively selected East Godavari District for the present study in preparation of coir products. There 182 members of women workers engaged in coir industry in the sample villages. Among these total women one third consisting of 60 members are selected purposively for the study. We selected two villages viz., Gokhavaram and Kalvacherlu from this district and from the two villages selected 60 women entrepreneurs in coir products, 40 trained and 20 untrained. Thus on the whole we selected 60 women entrepreneurs by simple random sampling method from the lists obtained from the respective KVK's and Coir Board Organizations. The study year was 2010-11.

2. BRIEF PROFILE OF THE SELECTED DISTRICT:

East Godavari district is one of the developed districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh located on the east coast. The district has good potential for development of industrial activities due to abundance of raw material such as agricultural produce, forest produce, minerals, livestock and fisheries production. The district contributes about 10 percent of the total food grain production of the state. The district is blessed with an average annual rainfall of 1218 mm, which is higher than state average. The cropping intensity is 135 percent. Main crops grown in the district are paddy, sugarcane, pulses, cotton, tobacco, to-pioca, etc. The coconut is also major plantation product in the district.

The district has organization of around 46,000 women groups under DWCRA and has scope for taking up micro enterprise for them. As a part of this, two special Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) projects are under implementation in the district-one for the development of coir and the other for 'Fashion Designing' with a project outlay of Rs.25.00 crore and Rs.23.97 crore respectively. The coir project is under implementation in 22 mandals covering all the mandals in Konaseema area and Fashion Designing Project in 57 mandals of the district. The Coir Development Project is expected to benefit 28,000 women while Fashion Designing Project will benefit 13,680 women.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE WOMEN:

The distribution of sample women by social class indicate that 55.84 percent belong to OBC's (Other Backward Castes), 31.66 percent belong to the 'general category' Scheduled Castes (SC's) from only 12.5 percent and none belong to Scheduled Tribes (ST's). Majority of the women (40 percent) are in the age group of 25-35 years, 34.17 percent are between 35 to 55 years of age, 22.5 percent are in the age group of 15-25 years and 3.33 percent are above 55 years. About 68 percent women are married, 15 percent are widowed, 5 percent are

divorced and 12 percent are unmarried. Literacy levels are very low among the sample women. About 73 per cent are either illiterate or have primary level of education, 25 percent have secondary level of education and less than one percent have graduation level of education.

About 50 percent reported having subsidiary occupation but for cent percent of the sample women the enterprise is their main occupation. In the total sample 12.50 percent households have neither home-stead land nor farm land.

4. ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY OF THE SAMPLE WOMEN:

The women entrepreneurs in coir products were trained by the KVK in East Godavari District. The women were trained in the preparation of coir rope and coir mats. Coir is the locally available raw material. The women use simple equipment viz., coir motorized ratt, which was designed and developed by the KVK. None of the sample women own the machine. They work in groups in the KVK premises, voluntary agency premises or rented sheds using common machines. Majority acquire the raw material from the Coir Board or local private coir industry on buy back policy. Very few purchase the material from the local traders and sell in the local market.

5. PRODUCTIVITY AND COST OF PRODUCTION OF COIR PRODUCTS:

Now it is of interest to examine the productivity and cost of production of coir products of sample women. To start a micro enterprise in coir products, one needs some simple machinery and some space to work. This forms the fixed capital. The machinery used is simple and needs little space. But since the machine costs around Rs.1.25 lakhs, none of the sample women could afford to buy it. They work in groups on common machinery.

TABLE – 1 PRODUCTIVITY AND COST OF PRODUCT FOR THE COIR PRODUCTS ENTREPRENEURS

	Quantity of		Cost Production (Rs.)					
	Raw Coir used Kgs	Output Produced (Kgs)	Coir	Colours	Power	Transport	Rent	Total Cost
Trained Avg. per women entrepreneur per month	127.00	110.00	811.00	15.00	81.44	30.80	21.60	959.84
Avg. per 100 kgs of raw Coir	100.00	86.55	638.58	11.81	64.12	24.25	17.00	755.77
Untrained Avg. per women entrepreneur per month	65.00	55.00	436.00	6.66	41.60	14.00	26.00	524.26
Avg. per 100 kgs of raw Coir	100.00	83.69	670.76	10.25	64.00	21.53	40.00	806.54

The productivity and the cost of production for trained and untrained sample women entrepreneurs is given in Table-1. The trained women are using on an average 127kgs of raw coir per month and they are producing an output of 110 kgs i.e., per 100 raw coir, the output is 86.55 kgs. The scale of activity of the untrained women is comparatively low. They are using on an average 65 kgs of raw coir per month and producing 55 kgs of output i.e., per 100 kgs of raw coir, the output is 83.89 kgs. The productivity of the trained women is slightly better than the untrained women. The average quantity of raw material i.e., coir used by the trained women is 127 kgs per month. The price of raw coir is about six to seven rupees per kg. The sample women of Kalvacherla village who acquire the raw material from the KVK or Coir Board are paying Rs.6.00 per kg, while the women in Gokha-

varam village who acquire the raw material from coir industry are paying Rs.7.00 per kg per month cost of production for the trained women is as follows. The cost of coir is Rs.811 for the 127 kgs average that trained women used, average cost of colours is Rs.15.00 and the expenditure towards power is Rs.81.44, Rs.30.80 for transport and Rs.21.60 for rent. The total cost of production for each trained women entrepreneur using 127 kgs of raw coir amounts to Rs.959.84. At this rate the total cost per 100 kgs of raw coir is Rs 755.77. The untrained sample women entrepreneurs are paying higher price for raw coir as most of them acquire the raw material from the coir industry and the expenditure towards rent is also high. As a result the total cost per 100 kgs of raw coir is Rs.806.54, which is higher by Rs.50.77 compared to the trained women.

TABLE – 2 NET INCOME FROM THE COIR PRODUCTS ENTERPRISE

	Quantity of Output (kgs.)	Sale Price per Kg	Total Income (Rs.)	Total Cost of Production (Rs.)	Net Income (Rs.)
Trained Avg. per women entrepreneur per month	110.00	16.48	1811.48	959.84	851.64
Avg. per 100 kgs of raw coir use	86.85	16.48	1431.29	755.77	675.52

	Quantity of Output (kgs.)	Sale Price per Kg	Total Income (Rs.)	Total Cost of Production (Rs.)	Net Income (Rs.)
Untrained Avg. per women entrepreneur per month	55.00	16.20	906.40	524.26	382.14
Avg. per 100 kgs of raw coir used	83.89	16.20	1382.51	806.54	575.97

6. INCOME FROM THE COIR PRODUCTS ENTERPRISE:

It is also interest to analyze the income from the coir products. The quantity of output produced by the trained women entrepreneurs in a month is 110 kgs. The sale price per kg of output is about Rs.16-17. The total income is Rs.1811 and the net income per women in a month is about Rs.852 (Table-2). The net income per 100 kgs of raw material is around Rs.675. For the untrained women the net income per 100 kg of raw material is Rs.576 lower by 100 of the trained women. This is because the untrained women's productivity is lower, the cost of production is higher and the sale price is also little lower.

7. IMPACT OF THE ENTERPRISE ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

The impact of the women's enterprise on the household income of the sample households is presented in Table-3. The impact of the women's enterprise on the household income of the sample households is quite impressive. The contribution of the income from coir products enterprise is 28.03 percent in the total household income. The comparison of the per capita incomes of the sample households with the poverty line income indicate that the per capita incomes in the selected enterprise groups are well above the poverty line income even without the income from the enterprise. Majority of the sample women from all the enterprises reported that there was an improvement in the assets and comforts in their households and they were able to provide better educational facilities to their children due to the enterprise.

Table – 3 Share of Income from Women's Enterprise in Total Annual Household Income – Total Sample

Particulars	Coir Products	
	Rs.	Percent
Farm Income	108280	9.34
Income from Annual Husbandry	51000	4.40
Wage Income	414400	35.74
Income from regular employment	102000	8.80
Petty Trade / Small Business	136600	11.78
Other Sources	22090	1.90
Total Household Income Excluding Income from Women's Enterprise	834370	71.96
Income from Women's Enterprise Annual	325000	28.03
Total Household Income Including Income from Women's Enterprise	1159370	100.00
Per capita Income without including Income from Women's Enterprise	469.83	-
Per Capita Income including Income from Women's Enterprise	652.80	-
Poverty line for Rural A.P.	294.25	-

8. MAIN BENEFITS FOR WOMEN:

1. Almost all the sample women expressed that their self esteem increased after taking up the entrepreneurial activity and majority reported that their role in the family decision making increased.
2. Social respect. As the women's income increases and they become well trained and well educated, they gain social respect villages are coming to centres, taking their advice and using their services.
3. They were able to take decisions regarding children's education, children's marriages, purchasing of assets in the households, etc.
4. Employment in their village.
5. Self respect. Working with technology makes them feel proud and
6. As they are all SHG/DWCRA members majority of them developed leadership qualities and they were able to interact with several persons related to their entrepreneurial activity.

9. MAIN PROBLEMS:

The following are the main problems are faced by women entrepreneurs:

1. The expected encouragement is not materializing at village level.
2. There should be demand for the products they make. In the absence of local demand at least there should be some agency to buy their product or facilitate the marketing.
3. About 52.0 percent of the sample women are reported that there is local demand for their product but 48.0 percent answered is the negative. Though there is local demand, the women selling in the market on retail forms only 12 percent in the total. Forty four percent expressed that they have difficulty in marketing the product.
4. About 32 percent reported difficulty in procuring the raw material.
5. When asked whether women face problems in entrepreneurial activities 48 per cent reported in the positive and 52 percent in the negative. Those who felt that there are problems complained of marketing problems, procuring raw material.

10. CONCLUSION:

The contribution of rural women to the economy is quite significant. Over 80 percent of the working women in rural areas are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The usually perform drudgery prone activities and do not get equal wages with male workers. Given a chance women agricultural workers prefer to take up alternate economic activities. The Government is also laying stress on empowering rural women by identifying alternate economic activities. The present study reveals, the enterprises taken up by the women are found to contribute significantly to the household income. Despite the fact that there is improvement in their socio-economic position, these women do face problems especially in marketing their products. As the sample women are all DWCRA members they do not face problem for their working capital. If they can get bank loans, some women prefer to start the enterprise on their own on a larger scale. Hence, it may be concluded that women entrepreneurs need help in improving their forward and backward linkages.

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