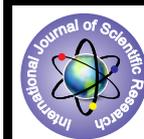


Strategies For Livelihood Promotion Of Women Self Help Groups In Indira Kranthi Patham In Andhra Pradesh



Management

KEYWORDS :

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ABSTRACT

Achieving the millennium development goal(MDG) of halving the proportion of people living in absolute poverty by 2015 will require agriculture to play a major role. Increasing agricultural productivity remains perhaps the single most important determinant of economic and poverty reduction and hence provides the key to achieve the MDG. Sustainable food production is still the primary pursuit. Economic liberalization and WTO regime pose a big challenge to Indian agriculture. The largest poverty alleviation project being implemented by Society for elimination of rural poverty (SERP, a NGO) and funded by District rural development agency (DRDA) in Andhra Pradesh is Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP). The goal of the Indira Kranthi Patham project is to reduce poverty of below poverty line households through sustainable community based women organizations by introducing livelihood interventions through institution building, human resource capacity building and community managed sustainable agriculture. A study was conducted to understand these aspects of Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) along with the problems encountered by the members of women self help groups for livelihood promotion. Based on these results, strategies were suggested for effective implementation of IKP for livelihood promotion. Various organizational, technical and extension strategies for livelihood promotion of self help groups through IKP were proposed after a thorough study of the programme. The study shows a path of movement to make women groups self reliant and thus serve as major contributors for sustainable and livelihood security. | Agriculture related science and technology have influenced the life of rural people at large and helped in reducing the food security in developing countries like India. But sustainable food production is still the primary pursuit economic liberalization and WTO regime poses a big challenge to Indian agriculture. Further, the recent spatial and sectoral changes in agri-rural environment suggest that the agriculture growth rate can be further boosted up. 65 to 68 per cent of the cultivable land area in India is in rainfed areas. There is no assured water supply because of the vagaries of nature, often crops dry up. It has therefore, become imperative to protect farmers against such losses. If such assurances are not given to farmers, they may give up farming and turn to some other vocation or employment. Andhra Pradesh has used self help groups (SHGs) extensively as a primary tool for poverty alleviation and empowerment. The basic principle behind SHG functioning is collective action with suitable support, self help groups can move on to collective action at the community level but more remains to be done for sustained poverty alleviation.

The largest poverty alleviation project being implemented by SERP and funded by DRDA in Andhra Pradesh is Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP). The goal of the Indira Kranthi Patham project is to reduce poverty of below poverty line households through sustainable community based women organizations by introducing livelihood interventions through institution building, human resource capacity building and community managed sustainable agriculture. With this background, a study was conducted to examine the progress of programme in the BPL self help groups.

Methodology

Exploratory research design was followed for the study. Mahaboobnagar district was selected as it is one of the largest districts in Telangana region with highest number of mandals under Indira Kranthi Patham. Out of sixty four mandals, two mandals viz., Kolhapur, Achampet were selected by random sampling on discussion with IKP staff.

Two villages viz., Chukkayapalli and Yenamalametla from Kolhapur mandal, Uppunutala and Gattuthumen from Achampet mandal were selected at random from each of these mandals and thus, a total of four villages were selected for the study.

Thirty women belonging to two groups were selected at random from each village. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents of eight groups were selected from the above selected villages for the study. The problems perceived in livelihood promotion and suggestions thereof were expressed by the women and recorded in terms of frequencies and percentages. A study was conducted to understand various aspects of Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) based on which strategies were suggested for effective implementation of IKP for livelihood promotions. The study shows a path of movement to make groups self sustainable and self reliant.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on problems perceived and suggestions given for livelihood promotion n=120

S. No.	Problems	F	Rank	Suggestions	F	Rank
1.	Diverse interest in groups	103 (85.83)	I	Formation of homogeneous groups with common interest	101 (84.16)	I
2.	lack of encouragement to each and every group member to participate in group activities	100 (83.33)	II	Encouragement should be given to every member in the group to participate in group activities	98 (81.66)	II
3.	Lack of capacity to formulate plans for group development	87 (72.50)	III	Capacity building of groups for formulation of plans	86 (71.67)	III
4.	Lack of a rider before & during loan utilization	79 (65.83)	IV	Provision of a rider before & during loan utilization	76 (63.33)	IV
5.	Less farming activity in the area	66 (55.00)	V	Increase of farming activity in the area	61 (50.83)	V
6.	Lack of resource persons at village level	60 (50.00)	VI	Creation of resource persons at village level	57 (47.50)	VI
7.	Lack of practical evidence of sustainable agricultural practices	48 (40.00)	VII	Practical evidence needs to be created to popularize sustainable agricultural practices	47 (39.16)	VII

S. No.	Problems	F	Rank	Suggestions	F	Rank
8.	High cost of cultivation	36 (30.00)	VIII	Decrease of cost of cultivation	33 (27.50)	VIII
9.	Lack of remunerative price for produce at IKP marketing centres	31 (25.83)	IX	Provision of remunerative prices	30 (25.00)	IX

Figures in parentheses indicates percentages

Organizational strategies

1. Group formation at grass root level needs to be done by employing participatory techniques like social mapping, wealth ranking and preference ranking. This enables to form homogeneous and common interest groups in a participatory mode.
2. Rotational leadership in a democratic way in a group empowers each and every person in the group. Through experiential learning each member acquires the skills. Practical oriented self help group visits to self reliant and successful groups enables them to understand group dynamics, team building, acquire entrepreneurship orientation and thus individual capacities of self help group members can be developed.
3. Creation of role self help group model after a thorough participatory training need assessment enables in showcasing the different technologies through demonstrations based on principle of 'seeing is believing & learning by doing'. This also facilitates in producing, sharing and saving of resources at village level there by external input dependence in agriculture can be reduced besides securing livelihoods.

Technical strategies

1. As agriculture was not sustainable in the studied area, increase in farming activity was suggested. This can be done through introduction of participatory watershed programmes. This enables pooling small farms of common interest groups which facilitates technology adoption with reduced cost and assured income. The soil productivity and fertility enhancement activities, introduction of farming systems approach on a watershed basis with inclusion of dairy, agroforestry is possible in the area to provide employment to the people. Through proper utilization of CIF and abhayahastam there is also scope for promotion of fisheries, poultry, sheep and goat rearing besides introduction of second crop in the area.
2. Cost of cultivation in agriculture can be reduced due to recycling of bi-products of various enterprises taken up on farm and through popularization of integrated crop management practices.
3. IKP staff needs to orient women to various sustainable ways and means of utilization of funds provided under the programme as it serves as a rider to them before & after loan utilization & results in purposeful utilization.

Eg: 1. Purchase of assets like agricultural implements/ soil te

ing kit and custom hiring of the same.

2. Establishment of bioenterprise / agroprocessing units.

Extension strategies

1. IKP needs to introduce minimum support price for various crops at IKP marketing centre in an effort to provide remunerative prices to the farm produce.
2. Identification of educated person with good communication skills as resource person in the village and training them in various farming techniques like soil & fertilizer testing, vaccination enables him to gain proficiency. He in turn helps in social mobilization process and the technology will be learnt effectively through social learning. They also serves as a practical evidence for technologies at village level & enables effective delivery of extension services.



Conclusion

The findings of the study are expected to be useful in future empowerment policies and programmes for women. Community organizations built up through this programme are seen as useful organizing mechanisms for mobilizing peoples collective self help action aimed at improving their own economic and social situation and that of their communities. The study shows a path of movement to make groups self sustainable and self reliant.

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