

## Problems of rural women entrepreneurs in agriculture based enterprises

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Theni district of Tamil Nadu with one hundred women entrepreneurs managing agriculture based enterprise viz., vegetable processing, coir product making and mushroom cultivation. The important problems perceived by women entrepreneurs in mushroom cultivation were lack of regular market, losses due to perishability, lack of storage facilities, lack of knowledge on value addition, difficult procedure of spawn production and lack of awareness about nutritional value of mushroom. In vegetable processing, the problems viz., lack of single window service, lack of knowledge on modern technology, high competition, high cost of inputs, difficulty in preservation, tedious procedure for getting credit, delayed payment from buyers and lack of storage facilities were perceived by the respondents. The constraints faced by the women entrepreneurs in coir product making were lack of skilled workers, high competition, high cost and poor quality of raw material, excessive stress and challenge, limited chances of direct marketing and inadequate knowledge on value addition.

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial activity has a direct bearing on the country's economic growth. Constituting nearly 50 % of the population, women have a specific role to play in this area. The planners and policy makers are aware of the crucial role of women in economic development and making efforts to encourage greater participation of women in areas of activity, which were traditionally not open to them.

Agriculture is considered a least profitable venture due to the pressure on land, uncertainties of monsoon and fragmentation of land. Hence, most of the farm women prefer to enter into entrepreneurial career. Agriculture based small scale micro enterprises provide a wide spectrum employment opportunities for farm women. But many of the women entrepreneurs are unable to make satisfactory progress due to so many problems they are facing in establishing and managing their enterprises.

Keeping this in view, the study was undertaken to analyze the problems perceived by the women entrepreneurs in starting and managing the agriculture based enterprises.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Theni district of Tamil Nadu. A sample of 100 women entrepreneurs was selected from three blocks in consultation with the officials of Tamil Nadu

Women Development Corporation (TNWDC) and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). Out of 100 respondents, 43 were vegetable processing entrepreneurs, 23 were coir product makers and 34 mushroom cultivators. The respondents were asked to rank the problems perceived by them in their concerned enterprises. The method suggested was used to convert the ranks given by the respondents into numerical scores. Based on the mean score, the problems were again ranked.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Problems in mushroom cultivation and marketing:*

The problems perceived by the women in mushroom cultivation enterprise are presented in Table 1.

Sr. No.	Problems	Mean score	Rank
1.	Lack of regular market	71.88	I
2.	Perishability of commodity results in losses	65.17	II
3.	Lack of storage facilities	56.58	III
4.	Lack of knowledge on value addition	46.05	IV
5.	Difficult procedure of spawn production	36.02	V
6.	Lack of awareness among people about nutritional value of mushroom	27.26	VI
7.	Lack of transport facilities	8.41	VII

### Key words :

Mushroom cultivation, Vegetable processing, Women entrepreneur, Coir making

Accepted :  
October, 2008