

An analysis of factors influencing the development of women in the homesteads

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ABSTRACT

The empowerment of women is very challenging, but if empowered they can become a great resource in the development process if they are properly mobilized and organized. Even though many women oriented programmes with an objective of empowerment of the women in agriculture and allied sectors were initiated, the development of women is hindered by certain factors which include cultural, social, economical factors. Hence, this study aims at identifying the factors that influence the development of women in agriculture and allied sectors. The study was conducted in 120 homesteads in Kollam district. The results shows that out of various factors, the positively influencing factors for women were provision of equal medical facilities, freedom to pursue education and take up jobs, inherit properties of their parents and freedom to vote in elections.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally the roles of women were confined to household chores only. The empowerment of women is very essential and at the same time very challenging as they can become a great resource in the development process if they are properly mobilized and organized. Development is not an isolated activity and it implies progress from a lower state to a preferred higher one (Pradip, 1984). In this present era, the status of women in India has been changing due to growing industrialization,

globalization and social legislation. Advancement in the spread of education and technology motivated them to undertake higher level of professional activity along with household activities. Many women oriented programmes with an objective of empowering women in agriculture and allied sectors were initiated, but their ability to involve in these developmental activities are hindered by many factors such as social, cultural and political factors. According to Habib *et al.* (2005) the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors affect origination and success of women entrepreneurs. Even

though the situation has been getting better slowly, however, there do still exist certain barriers which hinder the development of women farmers. An understanding of these factors is very important for the success of the programme. Hence, the present study is conducted to identify the positively as well as the negatively influencing factors of development. This will help the policy makers to plan and implement the development programmes more effectively.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in randomly selected 120 homesteads of Kollam district during 2017-2018. Ex post facto research design was used in this study. Two Agro Ecological Units of Kollam district were selected based on maximum vegetable production. From each AEZs, 3 Panchayaths were selected and 20 homesteads were selected randomly from each Panchayaths. Thus, the total sample size is 120 homesteads. The selected Panchayats were namely: Nedumpana, Veliyam and Ummannoor Panchayath from AEU 9 (South Central Laterites) and Kadakkal, Chithara

and Piravanthur Panchayat from AEU 12(Southern and Central Foot Hills).

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

To identifying the factors that influence the development of women in agriculture and allied sectors suitable structured schedule was developed. The influencing factors were studied under 3 subheadings namely community norms, political factors and economic factors. As it was a yes or no type of schedule, a score of one and zero was given for yes and no, respectively and percentage analysis was done. Based on the percentage obtained the factors are categorized in to positively influencing and negatively influencing factors of development.

A glance at Table 1 highlights that the most positively influencing factors for women under community norms were, they had the provision to pursue education and take up jobs (100%), they were allowed to inherit properties of their parents (100%), they reported that they get equal medical facilities (100%). Ninety per cent of the respondents had the freedom to dress in any

Sr. No.	Influencing factors	Women (n=120)		Men (n=120)	
		F	%	F	%
Community norms					
1.	Are you allowed to stay outside home for late hours?	0	0	120	100
2.	Are you allowed to take up jobs outside your community?	80	67	120	100
3.	Are you allowed to marry outside your community?	0	0	0	0
4.	Are you allowed to dress in any manner you wish to?	108	90	120	100
5.	Are you allowed to pursue education and take up jobs?	120	100	120	100
6.	Are you allowed to inherit properties of your parents?	120	100	120	100
7.	Are you allowed to travel distant places alone?	20	17	120	100
8.	Are you allowed to have equal medical facilities?	120	100	120	100
9.	Are you allowed to have entertainment of your choice?	35	29	120	100
10.	Are you allowed to take part in social meetings and gathering	90	75	120	100
Economic factors					
11.	Are you paid equal wages for the same amount of work?	0	0	120	100
12.	Are you given incentives timely?	60	50	60	50
Political factors					
13.	Are you allowed to vote in elections?	120	100	120	100
14.	Are you allowed to enjoy the benefits of political interventions?	20	17	72	60
15.	Are you allowed to enjoy the democratic rights?	101	84	110	92
16.	Are you allowed to take up political powers in the society?	3	2.5	28	23.36

manner as they wish, 75 per cent of them were allowed to take part in social meeting and gathering and 67 per cent of the female respondents were allowed to take up jobs outside their community. Only 29 per cent of women had the permission to choose entertainment as they wish. The most negatively influencing factors were they did not have the permission to stay outside the home for late hours, marry outside from their community and were not allowed to travel distant places alone. In the case of men, all the factors coming under community norms except denial to marry outside from their community were positively influencing.

On previewing the economic factors women were of the opinion that they did not get equal amount of wages for the same amount of work done as that of men workers, 50 per cent of both men and women reported that they did not get the incentives timely. So unequal wages and lack of timely incentives were the negatively influencing factors for women and unavailability of incentives on time was the negatively influencing economic factor for men respondents. While considering the political factors, both men and women were allowed to vote in elections and allowed to enjoy the democratic rights of a citizen (84 % for women and 92% for men) and this can be considered as a positively influencing factor for both men and women. But the percentage shows that both men and women felt difficulty in taking up political powers (for women and men 2.5 % and 23.36%, respectively) and to enjoy the benefits of political interventions (*i.e.*, 17 % women and 60 % for men).

From the table we can conclude that out of various factors, positively influencing factors for women were they were allowed to pursue education and take up jobs as they wish, allowed to inherit properties of their parents, they get equal medical facilities also they were allowed to take part in meeting and social gathering, allowed to take up jobs outside their community, they were allowed to vote in election and allowed to enjoy the democratic rights of a citizen. Negatively influencing factors were they were not allowed to stay outside the home for late hours, not allowed to marry outside from their community, they were not allowed to travel to distant place alone, they were not having entertainment as their choice, not getting equal wages for the same amount of work, they were not given incentives timely, not allowed to enjoy the benefits of political interventions and not allowed to take up political powers in the society. All

these factors except four have a positive influence on men. The negatively influencing factors were they were denied to marry outside from their community, unavailability of incentives in time, lack of opportunities to take up political powers in the society and enjoy the benefits of political interventions. The findings are similar to the result obtained by Danusha (2017).

The higher number of negatively influencing factors for women might be the result of the traditional structure of the society. Resistance, shyness, inhibition, conservatism are some of the cultural and social systems prevailing in the Indian society. Under these circumstances women are suffering from different social restrictions. The empowerment of women would result in overall development of society both at micro and macro level. Active participation of women in economic activities and decisions, would contribute towards overall economic development (Patel and Patel, 2016). There is a need for sincere and sustained efforts to improve status of women in India. There is an urgent need to get aware and give education about their different rights for their happy and rightful life in their families. Therefore, the authorities can develop a training package on women rights awareness especially for rural women and to judge the effectiveness of the package in increasing awareness of rural women about woman rights.

Conclusion:

Active participation of women in economic activities and decisions, would contribute towards overall economic development. The higher number of negatively influencing factors for women might be the result of the traditional structure of the society. There is an urgent need to get aware and give education about their different rights for their happy and rightful life in their families. Both women and men should be made aware of their responsibilities to promote and practice gender-equality. Therefore, the authorities can develop a training package on human rights awareness especially for rural women and to judge the effectiveness of the package in increasing awareness of rural women about woman rights.

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