

Empowering rural women through small scale food processing unit- An approach

■ GAYATRI BIRADAR AND K. BHAVANI

Received: 25.05.2015; Accepted: 27.11.2015

■ **ABSTRACT** : Agriculture being an important occupation in India, there is huge wastage of perishable agricultural commodities. Despite India being the largest producer of the largest varieties of cereal grains and pulses, the demand for consumption is just growing owing to a large increase in population. Processing of cereal grains and pulses has a bright future ahead. The processing of the food commodities at the village level will not only check the post harvest losses but also provides additional employment (both direct and indirect) to the local people. Bidar district is considered as pulse bowl of Karnataka where in pulses like blackgram, greengram, redgram and bengalgram are major crops comprising 206717 ha area. Hence the main objective of this study was to strengthen the livelihood security by establishing 24 small scale food processing units under NAIP-3 Bidar. The research on small scale food processing unit was conducted by team of NAIP-3, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Bidar, under an ICAR sponsored project on “Livelihood Security through Resource and Entrepreneurship Management in Bidar district”, for 240 selected participants by forming 24 Community Based Organizations consisting of 10 members in each group and introduced mini dal mill, vermicelli machine, chilli pounding machine, flour mill and weighing balance. The project area included 24 selected villages of 4 clusters viz, Aurad, Bhalki, Basavakalyan and Humnabad in Bidar district of Karnataka state. The average income of food processing group was 32,640/month/group/ during season by generating an employment opportunity of 190 man days for 240 members. Thus helping women to empower themselves through group approach.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Livelihood security, Food processing, Entrepreneurship, Resources, Management

See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

GAYATRI BIRADAR

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, BIDAR
(KARNATAKA) INDIA

■ **HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER** : Biradar, Gayatri and Bhavani, K. (2015). Empowering rural women through small scale food processing unit- An approach. *Asian J. Home Sci.*, **10** (2) : 462-465.

Agro based industry is regarded as the sunrise sector of the Indian economy in view of its large potential for growth and likely socio-economic impact specifically on employment and income generation. Some estimates suggest that in developed countries, approximately 14 per cent of the total work

force is engaged in agro-processing sector directly or indirectly. However, in India, only about 3 per cent of the work force finds employment in this sector revealing its underdeveloped state and vast untapped potential for employment. There is no denying that India has to live with the problem of unemployment for many years to

come. Therefore need arises to make all over development among all sections of the society especially in rural agrobased industrial units.

Processing of food commodities is an essential step in value addition. Rural people have been using traditional methods of processing which is often time and labour intensive. It is mostly done manually resulting into very small quantity, poor quality and also involves drudgery especially of women. Besides this processed product require less space as compared to raw produce, add value to the product and improves livelihood. Increasing income are always accompanied change into food basket (Gotait and Pradhan, 2006). Thus processed products have recently become more important because of consumers' preferences.

Agriculture being an important occupation for the rural poor in Bidar district and provides employment only for two seasons. Hence, there exists problem of unemployment for the farmers especially the poor rural women. The district has potential for small scale food processing units. This would provide avenues for various livelihood options such as food processing. There is a tremendous scope for enhancing pulse processing activities. However livelihood security is the need and is very essential to prevent the farm families from migration and also being surrendered to death. In such situation ICAR is concerned about upgrading income of farm families and to sustain agricultural under this NAIP has risen as a mega project aimed to support sustainability. One of such component of NAIP was sponsored by ICAR to KVK, Bidar. The project on livelihood security through resource and entrepreneurship management in Bidar district aimed at empowering rural women by promoting small scale food processing units strengthening rural women livelihood.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The following processing machineries were introduced to establish 24 small scale food processing units in Bidar district under NAIP-3, KVK, Bidar for livelihood security of the rural poor women

Besides this, training programme on entrepreneurship development and skill upgradation for food processing and exposure visit to small scale food processing units, workshops and buyer-seller meet were conducted for better management of food processing

Sr. No.	Inputs	Groups
1.	Mini dal mill	24
2.	Vermicelli machine	24
3.	Chilli pounding machine	24
4.	Flour mill	24

unit.

A survey on small scale food processing unit was conducted by NAIP, KVK, Bidar team. The sample consisted of 240 selected beneficiaries from 24 selected villages *viz.*, Ganganbeed, Kherda, Aknapur, Ganeshpur, Sawargaon, Hokrana (Tq:Aurad), Naagur, Chandapur, Jainapur, Konngli, Jaamkhandi, Wanjarkhed, (Tq:Bhalki), Ghotala, Umaapur, Laaheshwar, Raamtirth, Chowkiwadi, Jajanmugli (Tq:Basavakalyan), Raampur, Walakhindi, Alipur, Devgiri, Polakpalli, Maddargi (Tq:Humnabad) of 4 selected clusters, NAIP-3, Bidar.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

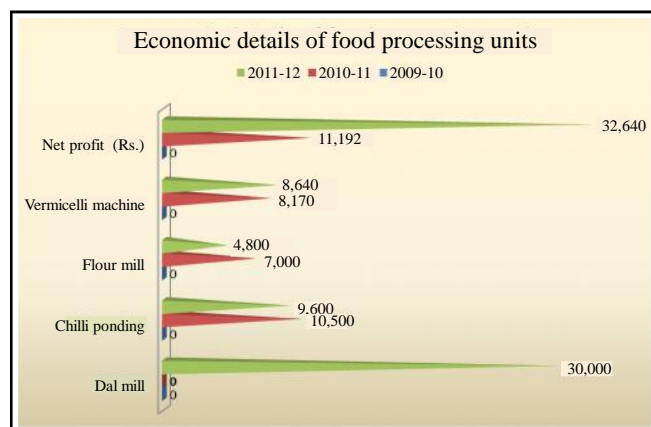
After green revolution era, India experienced growth in processing industries. As obviated risk of migration and unbalanced urban-rural parity can also be talked through food processing sector. Apart from generating employment in agriculture, this sector will directly generate employment opportunity within sector and more opportunity in service sector (Khem Chand *et al.*, 2006). Thus processing sector became very important sector for all round economic development.

In Bidar district 24 backward villages of 4 cluster *viz.*, Aurad, Basavakalyan, Bhalki and Humnabad were selected under NAIP (Component-3), entitled "Livelihood Security through Resource and Entrepreneurship Management in Bidar district". Before implementation of the project, existing condition of the village was studied by conducting PRA (participatory rural appraisal) and Baseline Survey methods. The results of survey indicated that the processing and value addition to pulses was nil. Hence 24 small scale food processing units were established in 24 villages of project area.

Results of Table 1 and Fig.1 revealed that, chilli pounding, flour mill and vermicelli preparation has generated an average monthly income of Rs.10,500, Rs.7,000, Rs.8,170, respectively during the year 2010-11 with an average total expenditure of Rs.14,478 and average net income of Rs.11,192 during season. Similarly Dal processing (Tur and Bengalgram), chilli

Table 1 : Economic details of food processing unit

Sr. No.	Particulars	Average income (Rs.)/group/month (During Season)	
		2010-2011	2011-2012
1.	Dal processing (Tur)	-	30,000
2.	Chilli ponding	10,500	9,600
3.	Flour mill	7,000	4,800
4.	Vermicelli machine	8,170	8,640
	Total income (Rs.)	25,670	53,040
	Expenditure (Rs.)	14,478	20,400
	Net profit (Rs.)	11,192	32,640

**Fig. 1 : Economic gain by small scale food processing unit**

pounding, flour mill and vermicelli preparation has generated monthly income of Rs.30,000, Rs.9,600, Rs.4,800 and Rs.8,640, respectively during the year 2011-2012 with the expenditure of Rs.20,400 and average net income of Rs.32,640. This indicates that the average monthly net income of the group has increased during the year 2011-12 compared to the year 2010-11.

During second year (2012), the average income of food processing groups increased from Rs.11,192/month/group to Rs.32,640/month/group during season. Besides this it has generated an employment opportunity of 190 man days for 240 members. Setting up of small scale food processing unit has led to easy accessibility of dal processing, chilli pounding, flour making and vermicelli preparation service at local level.

Before initiating this processing enterprise, each member of the group worked as agricultural labourer for livelihood security and to help their families' daily expenses. The earnings were not ensured as daily work was not available in slack months like summer months. These results support to the studies conducted by Kachru *et al.* (1998) and Singh *et al.* (2007).

As per processing the the raw material is concerned, presently the group is working in good condition. They are getting raw material from their local place and nearby villages. As the group consists of 10 members at present there is no labour problem. All the members are carrying out different activities smoothly by sharing activities. Now, there is more demand for processed red gram dal, khapli wheat, vermicelli and chilli powder.

Conclusion:

This study showed that promotion of small scale food processing has not only led to easy accessibility of processing at local level but also helped in improving the livelihood security of the rural poor women along with gain in income and employment generation. This group concept has made the rural women self sustainable and has helped in developing the linkage with banks for financial assistance.

Authors' affiliations:

K. BHAVANI, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, BIDAR (KARNATAKA) INDIA

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