



RESEARCH PAPER

Economic empowerment of rural women through food processing

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Abstract : Rural women can play a significant role by their effectual and competent involvement in entrepreneurial activities. They have basic indigenous knowledge, skill and potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. Income generating activities are effective instrument of social and economic development to generate employment for a number of farm women within their own social system and best tool for rural women as it adds to the family income. Women are backbone of any nation. Prosperity of the nation depends upon the prosperity of its women. Entrepreneurship is one of the ways for empowerment of women especially in rural areas and hence, promotion of women entrepreneurs is focused highly by the Government. Te food processing is one of the efforts initiated to promote value addition of fruits and vegetables especially for the unemployed, both men and women of the state. It focuses on need based short term skill training where participants learn from hands on training/ practices. The present study was undertaken to find out usefulness of fruits and vegetables preservation, milk and milk products training programme organized under rural youth training for self employment by the rural women. The study was conducted in Auraiya district of Uttar Pradesh. The sample consisted of 20 women participants each training programmes. The data was collected through personal interview technique using interview schedule. Frequency and percentage were calculated for analyzing the data. The results indicated that the fruits and vegetables preservation training perceived as good and increased their knowledge, skill and efficiency about fruits and vegetables preservation.

Key Words : Diversifications, Value addition, Economic empowerment, Income generation

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INTRODUCTION

Rural women are key agents for development. They play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face. These are further aggravated by the global food and economic crises and climate change. Empowering them is essential, not only

for the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also for overall economic productivity, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide. The rural food processing industry can play a vital role in rural poverty alleviation, empowerment of rural women and sustainable development in India. It can enhance farm incomes by offering a ready market for farm products, generate off-farm employment and reduce rural-urban migration.

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Rural-based food processing industries are mostly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and face such constraints as poor infrastructure, shortage of entrepreneurial talent and skilled manpower. limited access to appropriate technologies, volatile demand and small profit margins. The paper describes characteristics and problems of agribusiness for rural development with emphasis on small and medium food processing industry based on a farm village and provide a platform to reach the policy makers and suggest remedies to overcome them. The rural economy cannot be developed fully by improving only the productivity of agriculture, although this will go along way in improving the rural economy; however, rural industries, subsidiary activity and food processing industry in particular, are of great importance for a rapid transformation of the rural economy, in India. According to National Sample Survey (NSS) and census data, nearly 25 percent of the rural labor force is employed in Non-agricultural activity. The economic status of this population can also be improved by increasing non-farm activities, particularly rural food processing industries, Rural women continue to contribute to the extent possible in post harvest handling and processing of produce. An effective interactive coupling, linking all these organizations (private enterprise, NGO, community organization, individual farmers) and empowerment of women through suitable gender-specific technologies can contribute greatly towards the development of small and medium-scale food processing industries in rural India. The introduction of post harvest food processing and the establishment of national and international market for processed foods as the most

appropriate and economically viable intervention, in support of the economic empowerment of marginalized women. Thereby improving the rural economy of the country.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Krishi Vigyan Kendra Auraiya was organized Rural Youth Training programmes on fruit and vegetable preservation, milk and milk products, cutting and tailoring, embroidery and needle work and food processing for Rural women participants. Fruits and vegetables preservation training was selected for the present study. The total numbers of women beneficiaries of the training were 20. All the 20 beneficiaries were selected for the study. Interview technique was used for data collection. Frequency and percentages were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

Age group:

The perusal of Table 1 reveals the distribution of respondents according to age group. 80 per cent of farm women belonged to age group 20 to 30 years with followed by 60 per cent of respondents who belonged to 30 to 40 years of age group with mean age 34 years and 75 per cent of farm women belonged to age group 40 to 50 years with mean age 43 years whereas, 40 per cent

Sr. No.	Age group (years)	Frequency	Per cent
1.	20 – 30	16	80
2.	30 – 40	12	60
3.	40 – 50	15	75
4.	50 and above	08	40

Sr.No.	Education	Frequency	Per cent
1.	Illiterate	08	40
2.	Upto Primary	07	35
3.	Upto Middle	12	60
4.	High School	15	75
5.	Intermediate	18	90
6.	Graduation	05	25

of respondents belonged to 50 years and above age group with mean age 54 years.

Education :

The data revealed in Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to education. 40 per cent of farm women were found to be illiterate in the study area, followed by 35 per cent of farm women who were educated upto primary level. 60 per cent of respondents were educated upto middle level, whereas, 75 per cent of farm women were educated up to high school. 90 per cent of respondents were educated up to graduate, while only 25 per cent respondents passed intermediate.

Table 3 reveals that the women respondents had attended training due to their own interest and desire to learn new things and to gain more experiences. Utilization of leisure time, advice by the friends and neighbours to Setup to self enterprise unit and to bring improvement in their existing skills were some of the reasons reported by 75, 60 and 50 per cent respondents, respectively.

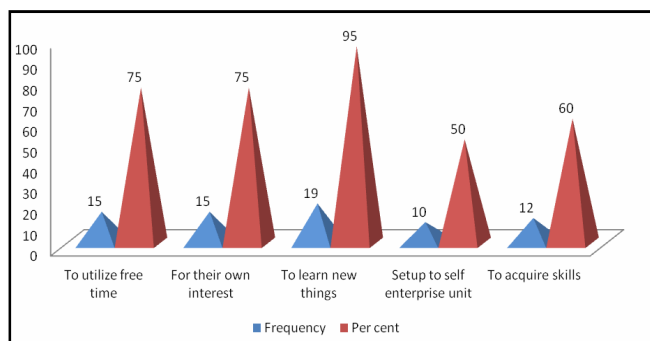


Fig. 1 : Distribution of the rural women according to reasons for attending rural youth training programme

The data revealed in Fig. 1 shows the distribution of rural women according to fruits and vegetable preservation, milk and milk products training programme. 95 per cent of rural women were benefits through Increased knowledge about the making food products in the study area, followed by 60 per cent of rural women

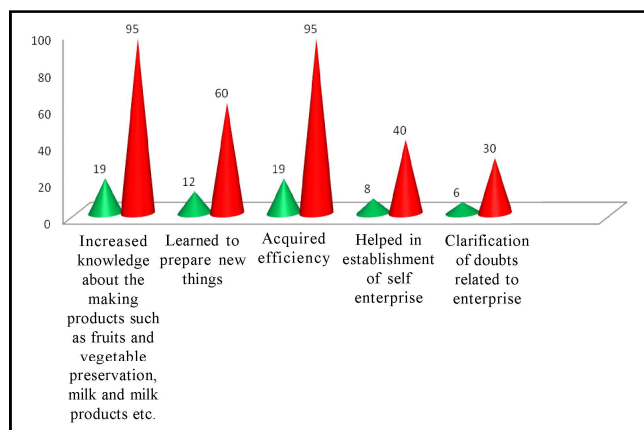


Fig. 2 : Benefits perceived by respondents through rural youth training programme (n=20*)

who were benefited through learned to prepare new things. 95 per cent of respondents were benefited through Acquired efficiency, whereas, 40 per cent of rural women were got helped in establishment of self enterprise . 30 per cent of respondents were clarification of doubts related to enterprise.

Conclusion:

The fruits and vegetables preservation training organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra Auraiya was satisfactory and helped women to increase their knowledge, acquire proficiency and establishment of an enterprise on fruits and vegetables preservation and milk and milk products. A study conducted by rural youth training programmes for unemployment rural women, also confirms the above findings. The study inferred that while emphasizing the importance of training programme reported that training in rural craft such as toys making, weaving and fruit and vegetable preservation such as Achar, jam, jelly, murbba, sauce, ketchup making is essential for women to make them self employed and for securing better economic status. The established fruits and vegetables preservation enterprise proved to be profitable venture in terms of income generation.

Sr. No.	Reason	Frequency	Per cent
1.	To utilize free time	15	75
2.	For their own interest	15	75
3.	To learn new things	19	95
4.	Setup to self enterprise unit	10	50
5.	To acquire skills	12	60

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