

Rural women involvement in selected entrepreneurial activities

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to find out the involvement of rural women in selected entrepreneurial activities *i.e.* shawl weaving, carpet weaving, alpana making and pine work. Personal interview method was used for data collection. Frequency and percentage were used for analysis of data. The major findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were in middle age group (31-45 years), married, educated up to High School (28.33%) and had low socio-economic status. The rural women in selected entrepreneurial activities revealed that different tasks *viz.*, marketing, fixing of price, finishing of article, design selection and making, production of articles, were performed independently by the respondents whereas procurement of raw material and machinery, arrangement of finance, acquiring of license were done with the help of family members, friends/relatives and NGOs.

INTRODUCTION

A country, which is rich in entrepreneurship, can attain economic augmentation. It is a matter of firm belief that the economic development and social progress of women is the key to emancipation of women in its real sense. Women as entrepreneurs have become an important part of national development planning and strategies. The entrepreneurship shows the path to women independence and in turn satisfies the needs and aspirations for better living standard (Sunder and Ali, 2001). In recent years, women have shown an inclination toward taking self-oriented jobs and professions with their family support, financial assistance and industrial guidance. The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs have grown over a period of time, especially in the 1990s. Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology, increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizable employment for others and setting the trend

for other women entrepreneurs in the organized sector. Rural women are having human and non-human resources to take up an enterprise need one an innovative mind and motivation and entrepreneurship is the only solution to the growing employment among rural youth. It helps to generate employment for a number of people within their own social system. This is more beneficial for women in rural areas as it enables them to add to the family income while taking care of their own home and livestock centered task. Rural women possess abundant resources to take up enterprises. She has the benefit of easy availability of arm and livestock based raw materials and other resources (Ranganatham, 2004). Hence the present study was undertaken to study the involvement of rural women in selected entrepreneurial activities.

METHODS

The study was conducted in selected Panchayat Samities namely Hawalbagh, Takula, Dhuladevi, and Bhainsiachana in Almora District of Uttarakhand state. A list of rural women

entrepreneur involved in shawl weaving, carpet weaving, alpana making and pine work were prepared separately from 13 purposively selected villages and from each list 15 rural women were randomly selected making a total sample of 60 respondents. Interview technique was used for collecting data, with the help of developed interview schedule and the questions were asked in local dialect (*Kumaoni*). Frequencies and percentage were used for analysis of data statistically.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The main findings and discussion of the research were being presented theme wise below:

Background information:

Majority of the respondents (55%) were in the age group of 31-45 years, married (83%), belonged nuclear families (76.66%), and had farming as main occupation (61.66%). More than half of the respondents (66.66%) had no organizational membership. Further majority of the respondents belonged to upper middle class (48.33%) and educated up to High School (28.33%). More than one third of the respondents (38.3%) had 5-2.5 bighas of land, residing in mixed houses (40%) and majority of the respondents (78.33%) belonged to low socio-economic status.

Rural women involvement in running of selected enterprise:

A close perusal of Table 1 reflects that more than half of the respondents (57%) performed various task related to the enterprise jointly with family members due to nature of work in which shawl and carpet weaving are labour intensive operations which require great deal of energy like, dyeing of yarns, prim winding, creel winding, spinning of woolen balls yarns, picking

of yarns, shedding of yarns, stretching of carpet, combing and finishing. Women alone cannot perform these tasks. In case of alpana and pine work the major task were rubbing of hard ply with sand paper, cutting of hard ply and varnishing, respectively. More than one third of the respondents (38.33%) worked independently without any kind of support in running the selected enterprise and only few respondents (7%) took help from the labourers.

Involvement in arrangement of finance:

Visualization from Table 2 reveals that majority of the respondents (65%) arranged the finance jointly with family members and mostly with the help of their husbands from the banks as arrangement of finance from bank involves many formalities which makes it a cumbersome process. In case of pine work and alpana making, 67 and 27 per cent of the respondents, respectively arranged the finance independently. Both these enterprises did not require large investment to run the enterprises so the respondents were able to manage the finance at their own level.

Involvement in arrangement of machinery:

Table 3 reflects that alpana and pine work did not require any machinery. In case of shawl and carpet weaving 80 and 67 per cent respondents, respectively procured the machinery jointly with the help of family members. In shawl and carpet weaving equal number of the respondents (13%) procured the machinery independently. The reason was that they were widow and had small school going children. Further, few respondents (11.66%) took the help of non government organizations and government organizations working in nearby areas of Almora city.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by their involvement in running of the enterprise (n=60)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	Labourers	NGO/GOs
1.	Shawl weaving	3(20)	9(60)	3(20)	0
2.	Carpet weaving	3(20)	12(80)	1(6.66)	0
3.	Alpana making	8(53.3)	7(46.66)	0	0
4.	Pine work	9(60)	6(40)	0	0
	Total	23(38.33)	34(56.66)	4(6.66)	0

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by their involvement in the arrangement of finance (n=60)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	Friends and relatives	NGO/GOs
1.	Shawl weaving	3(20)	12(80)	0	0
2.	Carpet weaving	2(13.33)	13(86.66)	0	0
3.	Alpana making	4(26.66)	11(73.33)	0	0
4.	Pine work	10(66.66)	3(20)	1(6.66)	1(6.66)
	Total	19(31.66)	39(65)	1(1.66)	1(1.66)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	Friends and relatives	NGO/GOs
1.	Shawl weaving	2((13.33)	12(80)	0	4(26.66)
2.	Carpet weaving	2(13.33)	10(66.66)	0	3(20)
3.	Alpana making	0	0	0	0
4.	Pine work	0	0	0	0
	Total	4(6.66)	19(31.66)	0	7(11.66)

Involvement in procurement of raw material:

Data in Table 4 show that majority of women (86.66%) in shawl weaving and in carpet weaving (73.33%) purchased the raw material jointly with family members. In case of alpana making 46.66 per cent of the respondents purchased the raw material jointly with family members. Probe into the matter revealed that mostly the raw material was purchased from outside the city and state so this was performed by male members of the family as they had greater mobility and better knowledge of outside market. In case of pine work, majority of the respondents (80%) purchased the raw material independently and rest of the women (20%) purchased with family members. More than half of the respondents (53.33%) in case of alpana making purchased the raw material independently.

Involvement in design making process:

Table 5 reflects that majority of the respondents (68.33%) made design individually. For shawl and carpet the designs were made first on graph paper according to the weave with consideration of weft and warp directions. Some times the coloured yarns were infused above the base of the weave for creating of motif/ patterns. Further table shows that in case of

shawl making mostly plain, Kullu design and border designs were being created by the respondents. In carpet making, respondents mostly used floral, animal and traditional designs. In alpana and pine work, respondents made traditional and geometrical design by braiding technique, respectively.

Involvement in production of articles:

Table 6 reveals that equal numbers of the respondents (80%) in alpana and pine work produced the articles independently as these were not labour intensive operations which require great deal of energy and patience. In case of shawl and carpet weaving Table 6 further shows that 33.33 and 27 per cent, respectively produced the articles independently. The reason was that family members were not efficient and capable to perform the task whereas in case of shawl and carpet weaving 67 and 53.33 per cent of the respondents, respectively produced the articles with family members as the process was tiresome and cumbersome while 20 per cent of the respondents in carpet weaving took help from labourers.

Involvement in finishing:

Finishing is the last and most important stage and it is directly proportional to the cost of the article. Well finished

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	Friends and relatives	NGO/GOs
1.	Shawl weaving	1(6.66)	13(86.66)	0	1(6.66)
2.	Carpet weaving	3(20)	11(73.33)	0	1(6.66)
3.	Alpana making	8(53.33)	7(46.66)	0	0
4.	Pine work	12(80)	3(20)	0	0
	Total	24(40)	34(56.66)	0	2(3.33)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	NGO/GOs	Labourers
1.	Shawl weaving	9 (86.66)	6(40)	0	0
2.	Carpet weaving	7 (66.66)	5 (33.33)	0	3 (20)
3.	Alpana making	12 (80)	3 (20)	0	0
4.	Pine work	13 (86.66)	2 (13.33)	0	0
	Total	41 (68.33)	16 (26.66)	0	3 (5)

Table 6: Distribution of the respondents by their involvement in production of articles (n=60)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	NGO/ GOs	Labourers
1.	Shawl weaving	5(33.33)	10(66.66)	0	0
2.	Carpet weaving	4(26.66)	8(53.33)	0	3(20)
3.	Alpana making	12(80)	3(20)	0	0
4.	Pine work	12(80)	3(20)	0	0
	Total	33(55)	24(40)	0	3(5)

article automatically generates better prices. Some time due to improper finish the entrepreneurs are compelled to sell their article at lower price than the estimated cost.

Table 7 indicates that majority of the respondents (65%) finished their goods independently as the task requires patience and women were expert to do the task. In shawl and carpet weaving, 40 and 47 per cent of the respondents, respectively finished the article jointly with family members. In shawl weaving finishing mean cutting and removal of extra and unwanted fibres, threads and finishing of salvages. In case of carpet weaving, finishing compromised brushing, combing over the carpet, stretching of carpet and removal of the dirt, loose yarns and finishing of the edges. Labourers were also required by 20 per cent in carpet weaving. Finishing of alpana and pine work involved removal of unwanted colour patches, spots, well finished border and cutting of small protruded pine leaves above the surface, respectively. Finishing of alpana and pine articles were done jointly with family members by 13 and 20 per cent, respectively.

Involvement in fixing of price:

Rural women entrepreneurs fixed the price of the produced articles according to cost of raw material, time devoted and

labour involved in it. Table 8 indicates that more than half of the respondents (53.33%) fixed the price independently where as 38.33 per cent of the respondents fixed the prices in consultation with family members and mostly their husband were involved in it. The respondents further revealed that fixing of price was a mind boggling and mathematical process. Rural women did not have much numerical skills and proficiency. Few respondents (8.83%) reported that NGO/GOs were involved in fixing of prices.

Involvement in marketing of the produced items

Data in the Table 9 show respondent's involvement in marketing of produce items in which 48.33 per cent of the respondents carried the articles to the market with the help of family members. Probe in the matter revealed that marketing required great potential which was not possible alone. It was quite astounding that 35 per cent of rural women were doing marketing individually. This may be due to the reason that they had full- fledged knowledge about marketing. They had liaison with the different distributors who sold their products. Rest of the respondents (35%) were doing marketing with the help of NGOs. These organizations had acted as a road way for the rural women to reach the market and these respondents

Table 7: Distribution of the respondents by their involvement in finishing of articles (n=60)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	NGO/GOs	Labourers
1.	Shawl weaving	9(60)	6(40)	0	0
2.	Carpet weaving	5(33.33)	7(46.66)	0	3(20)
3.	Alpana making	13(86.66)	2(13.33)	0	0
4.	Pine weaving	12(80)	3(20)	0	0
	Total	39(65)	18(30)	0	3(5)

Table 8: Distribution of the respondents by their involvement in fixing of price (n=60)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)		
		Independently	Jointly with family member	NGO/ GOs
1.	Shawl weaving	10(66.66)	4(26.66)	1(6.66)
2.	Carpet weaving	4(26.66)	11(73.33)	0
3.	Alpana making	9(60)	4(26.66)	2(13.33)
4.	Pine weaving	9(60)	4(26.66)	2(13.33)
	Total (f %)	32(53.33)	23(38.33)	5(8.33)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)		
		Independently	Jointly with family member	NGO/ GOs
1.	Shawl weaving	4(26.66)	7(46.66)	4(26.66)
2.	Carpet weaving	3(20)	12(80)	5(33.33)
3.	Alpana making	5(33.33)	7(46.66)	4(26.66)
4.	Pine work	9(60)	3(20)	8(53.33)
	Total	21(35)	29(48.33)	21(35)

Sr. No.	Activities	Categories f (%)			
		Independently	Jointly with family member	NGO/ GOs	Did not have
1.	Shawl weaving	3(20)	2(13.33)	1(6.66)	9(60)
2.	Carpet weaving	4(26.66)	6(40)	0	5(60)
3.	Alpana making	0	6(40)	0	9(60)
4.	Pine weaving	1(6.66)	3(20)	1(6.66)	10(66.66)
	Total	8(13.33)	17(28.33)	2(3.33)	33(55)

had been linked by non government organizations.

The findings of the study were in consonance with Sharma (2007) who reported that husbands (36.1%), followed by government organizations (31.1%) had acted as a road way for the women to reach the market. They had helped the women during starting phases. It was quite encouraging to note that 22.7 per cent of the women had themselves searched the market for their product. Nearly fifteen per cent of the women had been linked by neighbours and non-government organizations.

Involvement in acquiring of licenses:

Data from Table 9 reveal that more than half of the respondents (55%) had no statutory license. The reason as reported by the respondents was that they did not know how to acquire it and its utility, whereas 28.33 per cent of the respondents acquired the statutory license with the support of family members mostly through the male members. The reason was that acquiring license was a difficult task, it required lot of paper work and 13.33 per cent of the respondents acquired the license independently from District Industrial Centre, Almorah.

Conclusion:

On the basis of present findings, it can be concluded that rural women performed the task like marketing, fixing of price, finishing, design making, production of articles independently and in some tasks the family members were involved *viz.*, in procurement of raw material and machinery, arrangement of finance, acquiring of license and to some extent the friends, relatives and NGOs were involved. Rural women can do wonders by their effectual and competent involvement in

entrepreneurial activities. The rural women are having basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. Now, what is the need is knowledge regarding accessibility to loans, various funding agencies procedure regarding certification, awareness on government welfare programmes, motivation, technical skill and support from family, government and other organizations. Women entrepreneur networks are major sources of knowledge about women's entrepreneurship and they are increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for its development and promotion. This network helps to give lectures, printed material imparting first hand technical knowledge in production, processing, procurement, management and marketing among the other women. This will motivate other rural women to engage in micro entrepreneurship with the right assistance and they can strengthen their capacities besides adding to the family income and national productivity.

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