

Empowerment of Farm Women through Agripreneurship

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial activities provide a wider scope for women empowerment in the rural areas. This paper deals with specific objectives viz., identification of needs of farm women, to bring improvement in through trainings and assessment of their income through various income generating activities. To strengthen the rural women of district Morena, various training programs had been organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena. Majority of farm women (72%) were interested in mushroom production training because mushroom farming enterprise does not require much land and therefore, landless farm women were found to be interested to adopt this enterprise to supplement their family income. The farm women had participated in training programs and association meetings held in their village by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). They were now aware of the opportunities and market demand due to the trainings. This helped them to acquire skills, self-confidence to

earn income to their family through various entrepreneurship activities. They got an opportunity to mingle and work with other people. Most of the women expressed that they were happy with their earnings. Through marketing of value added products, they received the net income of Rs 23050 per year. The scenario in villages changed now due to employment and empowerment of farm women.

Keywords Agripreneurship, Women, Empowerment, Knowledge, Income.

INTRODUCTION

In any country, economic growth has achieved by social expansion and uplifting women and it completely lead to social development. In our nation women have equal portion with men. Therefore, women development cannot be ignoring just like that whereas diversifying different policies for rural and socio-economic changes (Bharathy and Selvakumar 2014). Micro financing or group lending has seen as an instrument could eradicate poverty vis-à-vis rural development (Selvakumar and Yoganandan 2019). Rural women play a vital role in farm activities and household management. Entrepreneurial activities provide a wider scope for women empowerment in the rural areas. Empowering them is a key not only to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to overall economic productivity (Duflo 2012). In India as 70% women are farmers, so it's the best measure to empower them on their stay, which can be possible through

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entrepreneurship in agriculture sector which in short called as agripreneurship.

Agripreneurship is defined as generally sustainable, community oriented, directly marketed agriculture. Sustainable agriculture denotes a holistic, system-oriented approach to farming that focuses on the interrelations of the social, economic and environmental process (Rama and Rao 2016). Simply stated, agripreneurship means entrepreneurship in the broad field of agriculture. Women farmers needed to be aware, motivated and trained about the diverse agripreneurial opportunities and skilled to manage those, from the bottom level by organizations like Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) on agripreneurship development which will not only solve the purpose of women empowerment in terms economic and socio-cultural aspect but also will make agriculture more attractive and lucrative.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Morena works mainly in the direction dealing with upliftment of the farming community. Its main objective is to strengthen the farm women by bringing improvement in the economic conditions through capacity building and technology transfer by conducting training programmers for practicing farm women, rural youths, and extension functionaries, KVK also conduct on-farm testing trials and front line demonstrations at farm women's field so that farm women may get acquainted with the technologies. This paper deals with specific objectives viz., identification of needs of farm women, to bring improvement in through trainings and assessment of their income through various income generating activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The promotion and diversification of agriculture and agri-based enterprises for enhancement of livelihood for the rural farm women has been a top priority. Krishi Vigyan Kendra Morena works in the direction to organize people, strengthen them in agriculture and allied fields. Recognizing the specific needs and problems of women, special interventions are needed for the women of the Morena district to bring women into the mainstream. To strengthen the rural women of district Morena, various training programs had

been organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena. Training is the process of improving the knowledge and skills, changing the attitude of an individual for doing a specific job. Along with the changing situation, the people also need to acquire new knowledge, skills and attitude to keep up with the changing environment. Rural women spend much of their time in unpaid activities like working in the family, farm and other domestic work (Sharma *et al.* 2013). Therefore training has continued to be considered as the most important device for developing an individual and improving his/her work efficiency. The term training refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The farm women differed in age, education, occupation and landholding. The age of participants was between 24 to 55 years. More than half of trainees were in age group of 26-40 whereas 36.4% were above 40 years of age. Participants selected for the present study were mainly from two categories, 68% farm women belong to general and backward caste while rest 32% were from schedule caste. Assessment of the trainees with respect to education indicated that 44% studied up to primary level followed by middle level (32%) and rest of them were illiterate. More than half of trainees belonged to farming background community followed by 19% belonged to housewife.

A number of activities were taken by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena for women empowerment. The center has always been in the forefront of creating self-employment opportunities in the area. Further, the KVK Morena have educated and trained rural women in the following fields-

Value addition of locally available fruits and vegetables.

Mushroom cultivation.

Nutrition gardening.

Tailoring program.

Rural craft from waste material.

Table 1 depicts preferences of trainings need of

Table 1. Preferences of trainings.

Sl.No.	Trainings	Percent
1	Value addition	67
2	Kitchen gardening	54
3	Stitching	46
4	Rural craft	21
5	Mushroom production	72

farm women. Hence, the trainings were designed taking note of the preferences of the targeted group. Majority of farm women (72%) were interested in mushroom production training because mushroom farming enterprise does not require much land and therefore, landless farm women were found to be interested to adopt this enterprise to supplement their family income.

From the year, 2017-18 to 2019-20, 42 trainings (on campus and off campus) were imparted to the practicing farm women on various aspects of income generation like value- addition, post- harvest management, mushroom production. In 42 training, a total of 963 beneficiaries including farm women and farmers were actively participated (Table 2). For skill development in agripreneurship, eight vocational training programs of 5-7 days were also organized during last three years in which 222 farm women were involved (Table 3). Entrepreneurial skills and knowledge among women can only be developed through training and education (Hindustan Times 2017).

The farm women had participated in training programs and association meetings held in their village by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). They were now aware of the opportunities and market demand due to the trainings. This helped them to acquire skills, self-confidence to earn income to their family through various entrepreneurship activities. They got an opportunity to mingle and work with other people. Most of the women expressed that they were happy

Table 2. Off campus and on campus trainings organized for farm women.

Year	No. of trainings	Total
2017-18	11	276
2018-19	15	299
2019-20	16	388
Total	42	963

Table 3. Vocational trainings organized for farm women.

Year	No. of trainings	Total
2017-18	2	41
2018-19	3	97
2019-20	3	84
Total	8	222

with their earnings.

Impact of KVK, Morena activities for women empowerment

Empowering women particularly rural women is a challenge. Regular training programs were being organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena to improve skill and to generate self-employment among women. The major objectives of trainings for rural women were to equip them with better skills and enhance their knowledge so as to prepare them to face new challenges due to technological developments.

Intervention and regular vocational training at center of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena caused an increase in generation of job opportunity in mushroom production, preservation of seasonal fruits and vegetables, stitching of masks and, rural craft (Table 4) and thereby, improving the economic status of rural women in the adopted villages. The trained farm women were surprised with the success of mushroom cultivation. They could not just believe such a good amount of net profit of 29000 rupees per year after selling their product at the rate of Rs 100 per kg and Rs 400 per kg (dried form). Now trained women farmer of Morena district are interested to take up mushroom cultivation as a major income generating activity throughout the year due to its heavy and regular demand.

Table 4. Income generation of farm women through various activities.

Sl.No.	Title of training	Income generation (Rs/ year)
1	Value addition of agriculture produce	23050
2	Selling of kitchen garden produce	3700
3	Stitching	16000
4	Rural craft	2025
5	Mushroom production	29000

The farm women were trained in processing and value addition of locally available fruits and vegetables. Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena provided the necessary technical and certification support as well as the market linkages. Through marketing of value added products, they received the net income of Rs 23050 per year. The result of this study clearly indicates that the good conduct of vocational / off campus/on campus training programs can provide needed information and guidance.

From these data, it is evident that as a result of the interventions, the skills, self confidence and leadership enhanced. The training courses played an important role in boosting the income generating activities among farm women of Morena district.

Following are some of the personal and social capabilities which were developed as a result of taking up enterprise among rural women:

Improvement in awareness level.
Sense of achievement.
Improvement in decision making status.
Economic empowerment.
Self confidence.
Improvement in leadership quality.
Improved standard of living.

Thus Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena has introduced and disseminated latest technology in Morena district for rural women for generating agri-based self-employment.

CONCLUSION

Rural women perform variety of operations in farm

and home system. Income generating activities are the important tool for empowerment of rural women. Awareness, motivation, technical skill and support from family, government and other organization are their needs. RVSKVV-Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Morena is a platform where farm women are educated, motivated, trained and upgrade their skills on latest technology of agriculture. The center is playing an important role in providing latest knowledge and skill in agriculture related income generating activities like value addition of seasonal fruits and vegetables, mushroom cultivation for self employment. As a source of extra income. The scenario in villages changed now due to employment and empowerment of farm women.

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