



INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES FOR EMPOWERMENT OF FARM WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant and with positive esteem to face any difficult situation that requires efficient and timely decision making ability. It involves a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources i.e., material, human, intellectual and financial resources and control over decision making in the home, community, society, nation and to gain power. Economic independence is the greatest means to empower the women at all ages. In order to highlight the economic importance of women, this study has been undertaken in two blocks of Jehanabad district of Bihar state comprising 150 numbers of practicing farm-women. The study revealed that, among various income generating activities, the extent of involvement of farm women in agro-processing was the highest than any other like vegetable cultivation, mushroom cultivation, backyard poultry rearing, dairy farming, goat farming, craft making and vermin-composting etc. Promotion of income generating activities in rural areas not only enhance the national productivity and generate employment, but also help to develop economic independence, personal and social capabilities of farm women. Therefore income generating activities as feasible in the local situations must be emphasized upon to empower farm-women in rural areas and contribute in raising the standard of living of the society.

Key words : Farm-women's empowerment, income generating activities, agro-processing.

Empowerment is a multidimensional process and refers to the expansion of freedom of choice and action in all spheres of life –social, political, cultural and economic. It implies control over resources and autonomy in decision making. At the individual level, it refers to enhancing individual capabilities and at the collective level, it stands for the ability to organize and mobilize, to take action and to solve their problems. Economic Empowerment involves the ability of women to engage in income generating activities which will give them an independent income. Economic independence requires that women be provided opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skills which leads to technical as well as social empowerment. Income generating activities are considered as those initiatives that affect the economic aspects of people's lives through the use of economic tools such as credit. Income generating activity is an important tool for empowerment of rural women. The Bihar state is an agrarian state with agriculture and animal husbandry sector contributing to around 20 per cent to the State's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) providing employment directly or indirectly to 56 per cent of the total work force. Quite a large number of rural women are actively engaged in farm sector contributing to around 36.percent of the total workforce in the state ;yet their roles and abilities are not recognised duly and needs attention for empowerment. Different agencies have

been promoting different Income generating activities for economic empowerment of farm women. The state department of agriculture and allied wings along with the Krishi Vigyan Kendras functional under the State Agricultural University are taking initiatives for economic upliftment/empowerment of the farm families. Therefore, the present study has been undertaken to study the extent of involvement of farm women through income generating activities leading to women empowerment in the society.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study has been undertaken in two blocks of Jehanabad district, Bihar and were adjacent to the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, with 75-farm women from each block thereby comprising a total of 150-farm-women for the present study. These women were actively engaged in post-farming activities like agro-processing—badi and papad making, chutney/sauce making, pickles-making, mushroom production, vermi-compost production, rice puffing, dal making etc. as their income generating activities apart from routine domestic cores. Data were collected through developed questionnaire schedule by personal interview, group discussion and observation during field visit. The data were tabulated, analysed and presented with the help of frequency and percentage and findings were interpreted using the

Table-1 : Involvement of farm women in income generating activities.

Sl.No.	Income Generating Activity	Involvement/frequency of farm-women		
		Very Much	Much	Little
1.	Agro-processing	54	48	48
2.	Mushroom cultivation	60	42	48
3.	Backyard poultry farming	36	50	64
4.	Vegetable cultivation	33	52	65
5.	Dairy farming	28	46	76
6.	Goat farming	27	45	78
7.	Craft making	25	42	83
8.	Vermi-composting	13	40	97

Table-2 : Extent of involvement in different activities.

Sl.No.	Activity	Extent of Involvement		
		Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Agro-processing	330	2.2	I
2.	Mushroom cultivation	300	2.0	II
3.	Vegetable cultivation	275	1.83	III
4.	Backyard poultry farming	260	1.73	IV
5.	Dairy farming	248	1.65	V
6.	Goat farming	244	1.62	VI
7.	Craft making	240	1.60	VII
8.	Vermi-composting	206	1.37	VIII

Likert Scale taking into consideration three points modification as per the requirement of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results have been summarised in Tables-1,2,3,4., It was noticed that the farm women were very much involved in agro-processing like *badi* and *papad* making, chutney/pickles making, backyard poultry farming and vegetable cultivation etc.. and much involved in dairy farming followed by and least interest in vermi-composting and craft making.

The extent of involvement of farm women was much in agro-processing (Rank I) because in all the blocks, the farm women were engaged in agro-processing activities. Mushroom cultivation secured Rank II because the paddy straw is plenty available in the district due to paddy cultivation as the major crop.. Likewise, vegetable cultivation followed by backyard poultry farming, dairy farming, goat rearing, craft making and vermi- composting in order of rank given in Table 2.

Extent of economic/social empowerment : The data (Table-3) revealed that after adopting the agri-enterprises the farm women got self- confidence which is highly essential for any development or

empowerment and secured rank I. Food habit secured rank II, because their attitude changed from food quantity to its quality. Decision making regarding spending of money secured rank III. Likewise, increase in family standard, decision making in financial matters, helping in family finance and saving were in order of rank (Table-3).

Extent of Social/cultural Achievement : Lot of research indicated that social and economic development must go together and should be complementary and supplementary in nature. Social participation indicated that participation of an individual in different social organization, which are prevalent in the society and do have influence on the social behaviour of the inhabitants. In this study, following social parameter achieved through income generating activities.

The table-4 revealed that the farm women were more concerned about their child education as they thought that education change the behaviour, attitude and knowledge of a child but in social participation, social identity, cosmopolitanisms and health care, the farm women don't have so much liberty and thus need to be strengthen.

Table-3 : Extent of Socio- Economic Empowerment.

Sl. No.	Socio-Economic Parameter	Extent of Empowerment		
		Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Self Confidence	305	2.03	I
2.	Food habit	298	1.98	II
3.	Decision on Expenditure	262	1.74	III
4.	Family Standard	248	1.65	IV
5.	Decision making in financial aspect	240	1.60	V
6.	Helping in family finance	218	1.45	VI
7.	Saving	207	1.38	VII

Table-4 : Extent of Socio-cultural Empowerment.

Sl. No	Socio-cultural Parameter	Extent of achievement			
		Score	Mean Score	+ / - than average	Rank
1	Education of the children	302	2.01	+	I
2	Health care	252	1.68	-	II
3	Social participation	240	1.60	-	III
4	Social identity	232	1.54	-	V
5	Cosmopolitanisms	225	1.50	-	IV

CONCLUSIONS

Income generating activities are the important tools for overall empowerment of rural farm-women. Farm women were found to be much involved in agro-processing and mushroom cultivation than vegetable cultivation, poultry farming, dairy farming, goat rearing, craft making and vermin-composting. Through economic empowerment, they have developed ability to build self-confidence, brought changes in food habits in terms of quantity to quality and enhanced decision making ability. Regarding social participation, the farm women were more concerned about their children's education, but in social participation, social identity, cosmopolitans and health care etc., they need to be strengthened and more empowered. Hence, the combined efforts the Government and private sectors need to play a very

vital role in mobilising farm-women through all these activities and in bringing out their ability to act strongly in the much needed sectors for the overall empowerment of those women.

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