Promoting women entrepreneurship through gender analysis

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ABSTRACT

Women form a part of a human resource. Unless this section of the population is given opportunities to prove its capabilities the development would be imperfect. The present studies were conducted in Coimbatore district. The agri-based enterprises like mushroom growing, beekeeping, value-addition in jute and areca nut products and fruits and vegetable growing run by both women as well as men entrepreneurs of Coimbatore district were selected. One hundred entrepreneurs (50 male and 50 female entrepreneurs) were selected based on random sampling method.The findings of the study indicated that in all selected enterprises low percentage of the female entrepreneurs performed the roles like selecting marketing place, negotiating, fixing the price for various products, collecting money from retailers, distribution of salary for labour and expanding the enterprise by getting new dealers compared to that of male entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurs; gender analysis; male; female; enterprise

INTRODUCTION

Women form a part of a human resource. Unless this section of the population is given opportunities to prove their capabilities the development would be imperfect. They form the core of agriculture sector as agricultural laborers. 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. While women entrepreneurs have demonstrated their potential the fact remains that they are capable of contributing much more than what they already are (Kiran et al 2012). Gender divisions in agriculture are stark with all activities involving manual labour assigned to women while all operations involving machinery and drought animals are generally performed by men. Women agricultural laborers are among the poorest sections of the Indian society. Agricultural wages for women are on an average 30-50 per cent lesser than those for men. In spite of several progresses made since independence in the lives of people the gender analysis demonstrates that women in India continue to be relatively disadvantaged in matters of survival, health, nutrition, literacy, productivity and social and economic status (Thilagam 2012).

We can use this vital source of rural women and empower them through income generating activities. It is being increasingly realized that women's income in a family is very important in relation to the nutritional, economic and educational upliftment of the family. Economic independence or access to an inherited or self-generated income is considered as the major means of empowerment of women; to a great extent this is true as economic dependence is the worst form of dependence. To enable women to stand on their own legs this strategy is attempted and advocated by many governments in developing countries. Women entrepreneurs are 8 per cent of the total entrepreneurs in India (Saidapur and Saidapur 2012). In a study conducted by Vasumathi (2003) showed medium level of entrepreneurial behaviour among the majority of the rural women respondents (69.17%) followed by high

(15.83%) and low levels (15.00%). The author suggested that all agencies involved in promoting rural women enterprises and rural women farmers should give more emphasis on women education and social participation to make them more aware of day to day technological developments and the impact of adoption of those scientific practices on their enterprises and livelihood through mass awareness campaigns on a large scale which in turn makes them more knowledgeable and thereby better entrepreneurial.

Taking into account the above factors the present studies were conducted to promote women entrepreneurship through gender analysis with the objectives to study the different roles preformed by gender (both male and female) in selected agri-based enterprises, various bottlenecks faced by agri-based enterprises and formulate strategies and to encounter the same.

METHODOLOGY

The agri-based enterprises like mushroom growing, beekeeping, value-addition in jute and areca nut products and fruits and vegetable growing run by both women as well as men entrepreneurs of Coimbatore district were selected. One hundred entrepreneurs (50 male and 50 female entrepreneurs) were selected based on random sampling method.

The different roles performed by women and men entrepreneurs were identified through gender analysis exercise carried out for both male and female entrepreneurs (Table 1). Group discussions were held and well-structured interview schedule was prepared, pre-tested and utilized for this study. Data were collected and analysed with suitable statistical techniques.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Mushroom growing

The data given in Table 2 depict that under procurement only 21.66 per cent of female entrepreneurs were involved as against 83.33 per cent of males. Just 10.00 per cent females were involved in the works like construction of production unit and purchasing spawn from other sources and 20.00 per cent in purchasing raw material and spawn production by self. However their involvement in labour was 59.99 per cent as against 56.07 per cent of males. Their major work was carrying water (90.00%) and sterilizing the straw (90.00%) followed by bed preparation (80.00%), monitoring the growth (80.00%) and cleaning the mushrooms (80.00%). More males (72.50%) did marketing and financing in comparison to females (45.00%). The involvement of females was almost same wrt expanding the enterprise by getting new dealers, required hands on training on spawn production and value-added products from mushroom.

Table 1. Enterprises and male and female entrepreneurs selected

Enterprise	Respondents (entrepreneurs)	
	Male	Female
Mushroom growing	10	10
Beekeeping	10	10
Handicrafts from jute, coconut and areca nut	20	20
Fruits and vegetables	10	10
Total sample size	50	50

Beekeeping

The results given in Table 3 reveal that only 27.14 per cent females were involved in selection process as against 70.00 per cent of male entrepreneurs. They had almost nil role in painting the hives and limited wrt selection of location and species (10.00%) followed by selection of crops and providing suitable atmosphere (20.00%). Only 32.00 per cent of female entrepreneurs were in the labour work as compared to 60.67 per cent of males. No female was involved in introduction of bees into the new hives and 10.00 per cent in introduction of queen, maintaining

Table 2. Roles performed by male and female entrepreneurs in mushroom growing

Activity	Male (n= 10)		Female (n= 10)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Procurement				
Selection of suitable place for mushroom enterprise	9	90.00	4	40.00
Construction of production unit	9	90.00	1	10.00
Purchasing seed	8	80.00	3	30.00
Purchasing raw material (straw, polythene cover etc)	9	90.00	2	20.00
Spawn production by self	8	80.00	2	20.00
Purchasing spawn from other sources	7	70.00	1	10.00
Average		83.33		21.66
Labour work				
Carrying water	2	20.00	9	90.00
Collection of fuel	2	20.00	7	70.00
Steaming/boiling	5	50.00	7	70.00
Cooking of sorghum seed	5	50.00	2	20.00
Sterilizing the straw	8	80.00	9	90.00
Bed preparation	7	70.00	8	80.00
Casing	5	50.00	5	50.00
Disease management	9	90.00	2	20.00
Cleaning and repairing of machines	8	80.00	1	10.00
Monitoring the growth	2	20.00	8	80.00
Harvesting	5	50.00	5	50.00
Cleaning the mushrooms	7	70.00	8	80.00
Packaging	8	80.00	7	70.00
Average		56.07		59.99
Marketing and finance				
Assessing the marketing place	4	40.00	3	30.00
Fixing price	8	80.00	6	60.00
Collecting money from consumers	8	80.00	5	50.00
Distribution of salary	9	90.00	4	40.00
Average		72.50		45.00
Miscellaneous				
Expanding the enterprise by getting new dealers	2	20.00	3	30.00
Required hands on training on spawn production and value-added products from mushroom	8	80.00	9	90.00

Table 3. Roles performed by male and female entrepreneurs in beekeeping

Activity	Male (n= 10)		Female (n= 10)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Selection procedure				
Selection of location	9	90.00	1	10.00
Selection of crops	8	80.00	2	20.00
Selection of species	8	80.00	1	10.00
Provide suitable atmosphere	8	80.00	2	20.00
Selection of beehive box	9	90.00	3	30.00
Painting the hive	7	70.00	0	0
Providing sufficient water	0	0	10	100.00
Average		70.00		27.14
Procurement				
Purchasing hive tools	7	70.00	2	20.00
Purchasing byproduct and packaging material	5	50.00	9	90.00
Collection of bee species from forest/purchase of honeybee species	5	50.00	0	0
Average		56.67		36.67

Labour work				
Introduction of bees into the new hives	10	100.00	0	0
Introduction of queen	10	100.00	1	10.00
Maintaining the hive	9	90.00	1	10.00
Colony dividing/uniting	9	90.00	5	50.00
Calming the bees	6	60.00	3	30.00
Honey extraction	8	80.00	2	20.00
Collection of pollen	5	50.00	4	40.00
Collection of wax	2	20.00	2	20.00
Collection of royal jelly	1	10.00	1	10.00
Control swarming and other activities	1	10.00	2	20.00
Sugar feeding	7	70.00	5	50.00
Artificial queen cell rearing	6	60.00	1	10.00
Pest and disease management	6	60.00	5	50.00
Hive cleaning	6	60.00	7	70.00
Product packaging	5	50.00	9	90.00
Average		60.67		32.00
Marketing and finance				
Fixation of price for honey	7	70.00	1	10.00
Marketing the products	10	100.00	3	30.00
Distribution of salary	7	70.00	8	80.00
Average		80.00		40.00

Table 4. Roles performed by male and female entrepreneurs in handicraft enterprise

Activity	Male (n= 20)		Female (n= 20)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Procurement				
Finding source for raw material	20	100.0	2	10.0
Purchase of raw material	19	95.0	7	35.0
Stocking of raw material	18	90.0	4	20.0
Cleaning and washing of raw material	8	40.0	20	100.0
Average		81.25		41.25
Labour work				
Boiling and steaming of raw material	3	15.0	15	75.0
Drying	6	30.0	19	95.0
Insertion of raw material	19	95.0	10	50.0
Designing the product/creativeness	20	100.0	15	75.0
Preparing value-added products	20	100.0	15	75.0
Handling machinery	15	95.0	5	25.0
Packing	15	95.0	18	90.0
Required skill on preparing creative products from jute, areca nut and coconut	18	90.00	19	95.00
Required technology and machineries for rope making from coir	17	85.00	18	90.00
Average		78.33		74.44
Marketing and finance				
Selection of market place	20	100.0	5	25.0
Negotiating price	20	100.0	8	40.0
Fixing price for various products	20	100.0	2	10.0
Collecting money from retailers	20	100.0	7	35.0
Distribution of salary for labour	20	100.0	4	20.0
Average		100.0		26.0
Miscellaneous				
Expanding the enterprise by getting new dealers	20	100.0	6	30.0
Purchasing handicrafts from artisans	20	100.0	9	45.0
Required training on selection of quality raw material, machinery and marketing channels	20	100.0	20	100.0

Table 5. Roles performed by male and female entrepreneurs in fruit and vegetable production

Activity	Male (n= 10)		Female (n= 10)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Procurement				
Procuring quality raw material for preparation of value-added products	9	90.00	2	20.00
Purchasing and grading of fruits and vegetables	5	50.00	2	20.00
Average		70.00		20.00
Labour work				
Cleaning the fruits and vegetables	0	0	8	80.00
Boiling/steaming	1	10.00	10	100.00
Sterilizing	8	80.00	9	90.00
Proportion/mixing of fruits and preservatives	8	80.0	4	40.00
Operating machineries	9	90.00	2	20.0
Labeling and sealing	6	60.00	9	90.00
Recycling	7	70.00	7	70.00
Cleaning and repairing of machines	6	60.00	3	30.00
Packaging the products	4	40.00	10	100.0
Average		54.44		68.89
Marketing and finance				
Marketing (value-added products from fruits and vegetables)	2	20.00	3	30.00
Negotiating prices	10	100.00	5	50.00
Collecting money from consumers	10	100.00	6	60.00
Distribution of salary	10	100.00	5	50.00
Financial decisions	10	100.00	6	60.00
Average		84.00		50.00
Miscellaneous				
Expand the enterprise by getting new dealers	10	100.00	7	70.00
Required skill and knowledge/training on value-added products from fruits and vegetables	10	100.00	10	100.00

the hive, collection of royal jelly and artificial queen cell rearing. In case of marketing and finance also only 40.00 per cent females were involved as against 80.00 per cent of male entrepreneurs.

Handicraft enterprise

Only 41.25 per cent of the females did procurement work as compared to 81.25 per cent of males. Only 10.00 per cent of females worked for finding source for raw material. They were equally involved in the labour work (74.44 and 78.33% of females and males respectively). However in case of marketing and finance only 26.00 per cent worked against 100.00 per cent of males. Only 30.00 and 45.00 per cent women did the works like expanding the enterprise by getting new dealers and purchasing handicrafts from artisans respectively (Table 4.).

Fruit and vegetable growing

Data given in Table 5 show that in fruit and vegetable production enterprise also only 20.00 per cent of females were involved in procurement segment as against 70.00 per cent of of males. Only 20.00 per cent of females did procuring of quality raw material for preparation of value-added products and purchasing and grading of fruits and vegetables. More number of females (68.89%) did labour work as against 54.44 per cent males. In this case also only 50.00 per cent females were given the responsibility of marketing and finance as against 84.00 per cent male entrepreneurs.

Constraints faced by entrepreneurs

The constraints faced by the different entrepreneurs were identified and are enumerated in Table 6. There was not much difference among male and female entrepreneurs wrt various constraints faced by them. However in overall the constraints were enumerated by more female entrepreneurs as compared to males in all the four enterprises studied.

CONCLUSION

The overall performance of entrepreneurs was assessed and the results indicated that lesser number of female entrepreneurs performed the roles like selecting marketing place, negotiating, fixing the price

Table 6. Constraints faced by entrepreneurs in running different enterprises

Constraint	Male		Female	
	N	%	f	%
Mushroom growing (n= 20)				
Lack of knowledge on production of quality spawn	10	100.0	10	100.00
Lack of awareness on fungal attack	8	80.00	7	70.00
Lack of awareness and knowledge on marketing	5	50.00	9	90.00
Beekeeping (n= 20)				
Lack of awareness about honeybee species	6	60.00	10	100.00
Lack of knowledge on pest management	9	90.00	10	100.00
Lack of knowledge on dryness of beehives	7	70.00	7	70.00
To increase the subsidy amount	9	90.00	10	100.00
Difficult to control swarming	7	70.00	6	60.00
Lack of proper guidance and motivation from department officials	8	80.00	10	100.00
Providing knowledge/training on selection of beehive box	9	90.00	8	80.00
Fruit and vegetable growing (n= 20)				
Lack of awareness on marketing of the products	10	100.00	10	100.00
Lack of knowledge on selection of raw material required for processing	10	100.00	10	100.00
Lack of training on preservation and product packaging	8	80.00	9	90.00
Labour scarcity	4	40.00	7	70.00
Lack of brand names for the product	9	90.00	9	90.00
Low sales of products/turnover	8	80.00	9	90.00
Non-cooperation and less encouragement from family members	6	60.00	8	80.00
Lack of knowledge on latest machinery	7	70.00	8	80.00
Handicrafts from jute, coconut and areca nut (n= 40)				
Lack of knowledge on selecting of quality of raw material	20	100.00	20	100.00
Non-availability of quality raw material	20	100.00	20	100.00
Lack of knowledge on marketing	16	80.00	18	90.00
High cost of machinery	15	75.00	17	85.00

for various products, collecting money from retailers, distribution of salary to labour and expanding the enterprise by getting new dealers as compared to that of male entrepreneurs.

It is therefore necessary to provide sufficient knowledge, skill and training to female entrepreneurs on production of quality spawn in mushroom, drying of beehive, control of swarming and selection of beehive in honeybee rearing, processing and selection of quality raw material for handicraft and value-addition in case of fruit and vegetable growing enterprise. Women entrepreneurs also need to have knowledge and training on marketing, getting financial assistance from banks etc. Further the government should take necessary steps to motivate and encourage them to participate in entrepreneurial activities. The government should also address the constraints they face so that they are able to run an enterprise successfully.

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