ABSTRACT

EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN BY PARTICIPATION IN AGRI-BASED ENTERPRISES

During the last decade, research, extension, policy strategy and budgetary provision have been sensitive to the expansion of agribusiness for women sector. This calls for a scientific method of investigation so as to know the extent of empowerment being created among women owing to their participation in land based agri-enterprises. Hence, the present study is a step forward in this direction to measure the empowerment of rural women and their participation in the emerging agri-enterprises. Therefore keeping in view the above considerations the present study entitled “Empowerment of rural women by participation in agri-based enterprises” was undertaken with the objectives to assess the personal profile of rural women involved in agri-based enterprises, to determine the extent of participation of rural women in different agri-based enterprises, to ascertain the extent of knowledge of women about different agri-based enterprises, to find out the training needs of rural women in different enterprises and to measure the socio-economic empowerment of sample farm women and its association with extent of knowledge and participation.

A descriptive research design was followed to conduct the present study. Sample Survey Method was used to collect the data from the respondents. Allahabad district was purposively selected for the study. Two Blocks (Jasra and Karchhana) were selected purposively for the study because more number of agri-based enterprises are existing in these blocks as compared to other blocks of Allahabad district. A list of all the women who were involved in different agri-enterprises was obtained from block offices and concerned Gram panchayats of the selected blocks of Allahabad. The names were arranged alphabetically and thereafter 200 respondents were selected randomly. An interview schedule was prepared to collect the data from the women involved in agri-enterprises by the researcher herself. The interview schedule was pre-tested on twenty women involved in agri-enterprises of the nearby area of the actual study area. On the basis of the responses of the women, the schedule was modified and finalized. The data from the sample women was collected through personal interview technique with the help of an interview schedule. The scale developed and modified by Trivedi and Pareek
(1963) was used with required modifications to measure socio-economic status of the respondents. The quantitative data obtained was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) version 20.0. The collected data was analyzed by computing the percentages, mean, weighted mean score, correlation and chi-square test.

The study informed that majority of the respondents were found in the middle age group, backward caste, poor educational background, large and joint families, earning an average income. The respondents belonged to medium socio-economic status and were participating in different agri-based enterprises (crop production, vegetable production, milk and milk products, food processing and preservation, poultry, handicrafts (basket weaving) masala making, vermi-composting). In crop production, most of the respondents were involved in storage practices, irrigation and harvesting of crops whereas in vegetable production most of the respondents were involved in harvesting and transplanting of vegetables. Majority of the respondents were involved in dahi and ghee making, storage of milk whereas in food processing, the sample women were involved in the raw material selection, processing and preservation of prepared products. The respondents were having lesser participation in poultry farming but having more participation in basket weaving activities. The level of participation in masala making and vermi-composting was average.

The respondents were having average knowledge in all the enterprises but the knowledge level was high in activities related to milk and milk products. Training needs in marketing to run the effective enterprises in crop and vegetable production, storage of milk and milk products, food processing in food preservation, health care in poultry farming, preparation of handicraft materials, marketing in masala making, preparation of vermi-compost were found. Training in rainy season, three days training duration, lecture, method demonstration, group discussion and firsthand experience by field visits were the main issues of training needs of the respondents, lectures and field visits as the methods of training and small group trainings preferred by the respondents.

A significant association between the socio-economic status and knowledge about milk processing practices was observed from the study. There is a positive
association between socio-economic status and participation of the respondents. The respondents with medium socio-economic status had more participation regarding agri-enterprises than the respondents with lower socio-economic status. The results also revealed a significant correlation between the rate of participation and knowledge of respondents in milk and milks products, poultry and vermi-composting. There is a strong and positive association between the participation, knowledge and empowerment of different activities undertook by the respondents of agri-based enterprises. The women have benefited quite well from their agri-based enterprises and got themselves highly empowered in social and economic spheres of their lives.

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