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Abstract
Gender equality is one of the constitutional mandates in most of the developing countries. Though contribution of women in performing agricultural operations as well as in domestic activities is quite high and hilly areas are no exception. Many studies have pinpointed the issues relating to women, but not much attention has been paid to examine their socio-economic status and livelihood security. In view of the above, the present investigation was planned to throw reasonable light on the various pointers of socio-economic status and livelihood security of women in hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh (India) and Sri Lanka with the specific objectives viz. (i) to identify the key socio-economic pointers contributing to the status of women, (ii) to study entrepreneurial behaviour of women and their involvement in various activities/organizations for women empowerment/upliftment of the family, community and society and (iii) to examine livelihood security of women and problems faced by them in socio-economic upliftment.

The present study was restricted to tea growing locations of the selected districts. Three tea growing locations were randomly selected from each district, and one village was randomly selected from each selected location. From each sampled village, 25 households were randomly selected, thus, making a total sample size of 150 households. Primary data relating to various parameters of socio-economic status, entrepreneurship and livelihood security were gathered through specially designed schedules by survey method for an agricultural year (2006-07). The secondary information was collected from various published/unpublished sources. Tabular and regression techniques were employed to analyse the data. The study revealed that the decisions rights/power lies more with the women of Nuwara Eliya as compared to Kangra. The marital status, education and social participation were the significant pointers determining the status of women in both the study areas. Also, caste was found one of the key pointers in Kangra and type of family was observed as another parameter determining the status of women in Nuwara Eliya. Among the components of entrepreneurial behaviour, achievement motivation, management orientation and risk taking ability in order of ranking were the important pointers for the women of Kangra district. Whereas, achievement motivation, management orientation and ability to coordinate the farm activities were found to be the important components of entrepreneurial behaviour for women in Nuwara Eliya. Education, farm income, economic motivation and accessibility to market were identified as the key determinants of entrepreneurial behaviour of women in Kangra district. Whereas, age, farm income and information sources were the important determinants of entrepreneurial behaviour of women of Nuwara Eliya. It was found that the proportion contribution of women to the household income from farm activities was comparatively higher in Nuwara Eliya as compared to women of Kangra district. Based on the livelihood security index, overall, the women of Nuwara Eliya district were found better in all the indicators as compared to their counterparts of Kangra district. The problems faced by the women being a house manager were found almost similar for both the study areas. The most important problems pointed by women were lack of training programmes, followed by no loan facilities for household infrastructure. As an entrepreneur, the most important problems of women were high cost of raw materials and lack of knowledge about financial institutions, training institutions in both study areas. In view of above, it can be concluded that low literacy, sex ratio, calorie intakes is a serious concern which needs to be addressed through concerted
efforts and policy support. Further, it was suggested that launching effective public and communication systems to create awareness among the society about the equal importance of male and female child, imparting free education to them up to graduation level as in case of Sri Lanka to enhance the literacy level of females, imparting training on the said aspects and revising their training courses as per the need of the females from time to time are important policy options that have emerged from the study.

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