

Constraints of women in carrying out entrepreneurial activities

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Abstract: The present study was conducted in purposively selected district of U.P. State, Ambedkar Nagar in order to know the effect of entrepreneurial activities promoted by Government. Result revealed that majority of the respondents belonged to lower middle age group, married, belonged to SC/ST caste, were self employed, nuclear family, farming was family occupation, were members of Self Help Group, living in mixed houses and belonged to low socio-economic status. SHGs & self employment programmes are playing key role across the rural economy, the activities promoted through self employment programmes were dairy, goat rearing, poultry, tailoring and beauty parlor, bee-keeping, floriculture, readymade garments shops, pottery, bamboo handicrafts, furniture making and vegetable cultivation etc. Among these promoted activities few were discontinued due to lack of technical guidance. In this investigation, an effort was made to identify problems and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in running their enterprises, so that a clear picture of the major impediments in smooth functioning of the enterprise could emerge and strategies to overcome these problems could be framed. Production and marketing related problems, technical problems, personal and family problems were found major hurdles faced by women entrepreneurs. Majority of the respondents had faced fatigue & debility (75.0%), heavy workload (65.0%) and lack of cooperation from family (45.0%) as personal and family constraints. More than half of the respondents (57.0%) faced lack of technical guidance. Lack of transport facilities and high fluctuation in demand of the products (82.0% and 79.0% respectively) were marketing related problems.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs, problems, self help group.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Women must be directed to solve their own problems in their own way; Our Indian women are as capable of doing as any in the world”

Swami Vivekanand

A woman is the nucleus of the family, particularly, in rural India. She not only collects water, fuel wood, fodder and food but also plays a significant role in preserving the culture, grooming the children and shaping their destiny. Unfortunately, in spite of their laudable and vulnerable roles, which cannot be substituted by machine or men, women have been neglected since generations. She manages all the household matters, looks after the family assets & livestock, handles the purchases and finance, works for almost 14-16 hours and is the last to sleep at night. Still, when you ask her children what their mother does? Most of them instantly reply nothing. There is no recognition for their hard work, just because her work is not evaluated in terms of money. She often falls sick, but does not complain and this goes unnoticed by others in the family as they continue to work as usual for the sake of the family. She manages the family very efficiently with meager means, but is still treated as illiterate. Women are ignored in matters, which are of concern to them as well. As a result, today women are the worst sufferers in the society due to drudgery, ill health, illiteracy, deprivation and humiliation. No wonder India hosts over one third of the poor in the world, as lack of empowerment of women is a significant cause of poverty. In rural areas development of women is still a challenging task and calls for attention and priority treatment; by promoting self-employment for their economic independence which leads to awareness and capacity building, education, better health, housing sanitation options, self motivation and encouragement from family and society. In the past various employments oriented developmental programmes were experimented and some of these are still

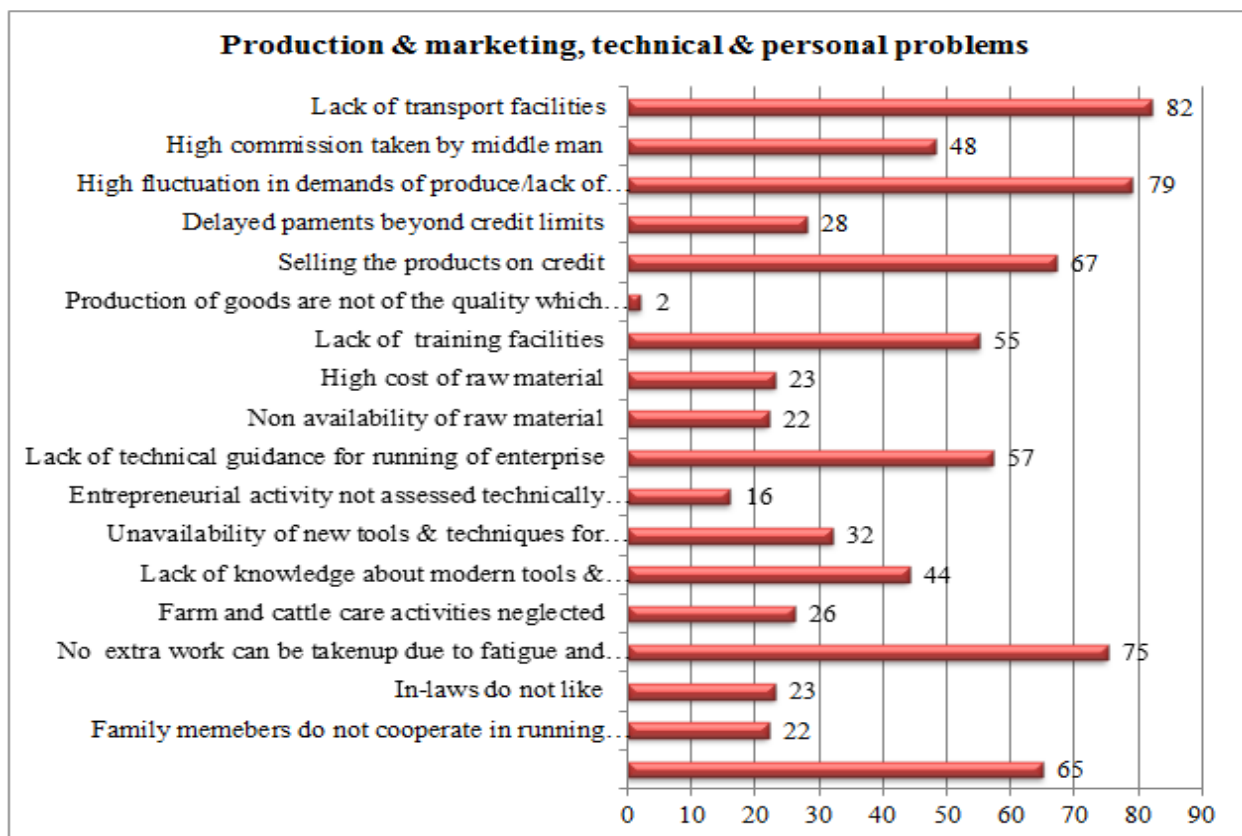
continuing in a modified and synthesized form. These programmes have definitely relieved the pressure to some extent but their overall impact seems to be very little when compared to the magnitude of the employment situations in rural areas. It was felt that women should be motivated to come together and engaged in economically viable activities. Therefore present study endeavors to explore the entrepreneurial activities promoted through developmental programme, by the promotion of self help group formation and micro credit and subsidy mechanism. It also helped in knowing the basket of income generating activities promoted, adopted, discontinued and problems faced by women in running up of the enterprises. Objective: To study the problems faced by women beneficiaries in running up the enterprises.

2. MATERIAL & METHODS

This study was carried out in Ambedkar Nagar district of U.P. state purposively selected for the study as the researcher was well versed with different organizations working in the area. Out of nine blocks in Ambedkar Nagar district, two blocks namely Baskhari and Tanda were selected. For the selection of villages and required sample, preliminary discussion was done with the block officials and a list of women beneficiaries of developmental programme along with entrepreneurial activities performed by them was prepared. As per the information obtained, four villages from each block viz. Basahiya, Pipari Visunpur, Ramdeeh Saray, Haraya Dadawa from Baskhari block and Alampur, Amiya Bawanpur, Achalupur & Raddanpur from Tanda block were purposively selected as there were higher concentration of self help group and self employment programme beneficiaries. For the selection of sample, from the prepared list of women beneficiaries, a random sample of 100 rural women beneficiaries was selected. The data were collected by means of personal interview by the help of well structured interview schedule.

3. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Any entrepreneurial activity cannot be free from the problem. In the present investigation, an effort was made to identify problems faced by women entrepreneurs in running their enterprises, so that a clear picture of the major impediments in smooth functioning of the enterprise could emerge and strategies to overcome these problems could be framed. It is evident from the Figure 1 that majority of the respondents (82.0%) faced lack of transport facilities followed by high fluctuation in demand of produce (79.0%) respectively.



Multiple responses

Figure 1: Problems of entrepreneurs

Further it is evident from the Figure 1 that three fourth of the respondents (75.0%) reported that they cannot take extra work due to fatigue and debility, more than half of the respondents (65.0%) opined that family workload is too much to cope up with enterprise. One fourth of the respondents (26.0%) reported that their farm and cattle care activities were neglected due to their engagement in enterprise, while 23.0 per cent expressed the problem that their in-laws do not like. Family members do not cooperate in running the enterprise was the problem faced by 22.0 per cent respondents. Perusal of Figure 1 clearly indicates that more than half of respondents (57.0%) had the problem of lack of technical guidance, while 44.0 per cent had the problem of lack of knowledge about modern tools and techniques. Unavailability of new tools and techniques for production of goods was reported by 32.0 per cent respondents; only 16.0 per cent respondents reported the problem that entrepreneurial activity was not assessed technically for viability and success. Regarding problems pertaining to production and marketing Figure 1 revealed that selling of the products on credit was the constraint for more than half of the respondents (67.0%), lack of training facilities (55.0%) respectively. Further it could be inferred from Figure 1 that 48.0 per cent respondent reported high commission taken by middleman, followed by high cost of raw material, and non availability of raw material (23.0% and 22.0%) respectively, only 2.0 per cent respondents accepted that production of goods were not of good quality to compete in open market. Findings of the study in line with those of Rani and Manimakalai (2003), Ramchandran and Selvarani (2005), Kumar and Gill (2006), Randhawa and Kaur (2006), Sharma and Varma (2008) who concluded that women entrepreneurs faced financial problems, shortage of raw material, tough competition, social barriers, family conflict, problems by middleman, inadequate profit, lack of technical guidance, lack of training and transport facilities.

4. CONCLUSIONS

A women is the nucleus of the family, particularly, in rural India. But, unfortunately their role is neither quantified nor correctly recognized and they are unaware about their role and strength. Knowing that major employment of women in agriculture sector, the concern is to engage women in gainful employment and to inculcate confidence among them through self help group (SHGs) and community organization. From the study it was found that majority of the women entrepreneurs were facing constraints related to production and marketing followed by personal and family and technical and technology related respectively. Although the self employment programmes had addressed the unemployment problems in rural areas, some of the above mentioned constraints if addressed it could be better option for improvement of the condition of women and their empowerment.

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