A Research Study on Problems of Hill Farm Women in Uttarakhand

Arpita Sharma[1] and Mustfa Hussain[2]

[1]Assistant Professor, Dept. of Agricultural Communication, College of Agriculture, GBPUA&T, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, India

[2]Assistant Professor, Agribusiness Management, Integral University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

*Corresponding author: MISSING

ABSTRACT

Women of Uttarakhand are the backbone of the development of State. Despite of growth and development of entire state, women in hill areas are suffering from various types of problems. Past researches revealed that hill farm women are suffering from various problems like depleting soil, water and other natural resources, decreasing size of farm holding, input use inefficiency, costly and scarce agriculture labour, poor access to credit and investments facilities, slow diffusion of relevant technologies, competitiveness of quality and prices in export and domestic markets *etc*. Present investigation was conducted in four villages named Bhaluti, Kausani, Jeoli and Sariyatal of Nainital District in the state of Uttarakhand. Data was gathered through interview schedule, group discussion *etc*. A total number of 50 respondents were selected for the above mentioned investigation. Results revealed that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group category and from General caste. Majority of the respondents received formal education upto High school level and have nuclear family. Majority of respondents take farming related information from input dealers, key informants/elderly person,scientists of Bee Keeping Centre, progressive farmers, scientists of KVKs and Anganwadi workers. Majority of women were facing Constraints like lack of financial assistance, lack of technical know-how, lack of marketing skills, lack of entrepreneurial skills, lack of self-confidence, mobility constraints, illiteracy or low level of education.

Keywords: Hill farm women, Problems, Constraints

Present era is the period of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), privatization and globalization(Sharma*etal.,* 2018).This provides the enormous opportunities for the development of women. Various research studies have revealed that hill women are facing a plethora of problems and constraints at various stages of their growth and development.

Predominantly the economy of Uttarakhand is agrarian like our country. Uttarakhand is 29th state of country separated from Uttar Pradesh in 2000 but in this small span of time the state has achieved many milestones even in agriculture and agribusiness sectors. Total population of state is 10086292 and about 60 percent of it is engaged in various agriculture and other allied activities (Agricultural Statistics, 2016).

According to Saurabh (2015), women in hill areas are busy in various enterprises like bee keeping, dairy, farming *etc.,* and putting efforts in development of territory. Although Government has initiated various programme, policies for the development of rural people but still in hill areas most of the women are facing various problems due to lack of

knowledge, information and education on many aspects (Sharma and Singh, 2016).

Keeping all these factors in mind present research was done with the objectives[1]. To study the socio-economic characteristics of hill farmwomen[2]. To ascertain the constraints faced by hill farm women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present research was conducted on fiftyhill farm women in three villages of Bhimtalblock *viz.*, Bhaluti, Kausani and Sariyatal. The villages of hill areas are very small and have less population, thus 25 women from Bhaluti, 10 from Kausani and 15 from Sariyatal were selected through PPS sampling method. Data was collected through personal interview for fetching the information about Socio-personal profile, communication characteristics and constraints faced by hill farm women. Only those women were taken into consideration who were conducting agriculture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(A) Socio- Personal Characteristics

1. **Age:** Majority of the respondents (40 per cent) belonged to middle age group category (20-30 year) followed by young age group category (36 per cent) and old age group category (24 per cent).

2. **Caste:** Majority of respondents (56 per cent) belonged to General caste followed by Other Backward Caste (24 per cent) and Schedule caste (20 per cent).

3. **Education:** Majority of respondents (40 per cent) received formal education upto High school level followed by primary school (30 per cent) and intermediate (26 per cent)**.** Atotal 4 per cent of respondents were illiterate.

4. **Type of Family:** Majority of the respondents (64 per cent) have nuclear family followed by joint family (36 per cent).

(B) Communication Characteristics

1. **ICTs Ownership:** All the farmers owned Mobile Phone followed by Television (100 per cent). Total 18 per cent respondents read newspaper followed by possession of computer (10 per cent).

2. **Communication Behaviour regarding Agriculture:** Majority of respondents (78 per cent) take farming related information from input dealers followed by key informants/ elderly person (50 per cent). Total 42 per cent respondents were found to take information from scientists of Bee Keeping Centre. Total 20 per cent respondents take farming related information from progressive farmers and scientists of Mushroom Centre (18 per cent). Total 36 per cent respondents take the information from Scientists of KVKs and Anganwadi workers. Total 24 per cent respondents take the information from Friends and Relatives. More than half of the respondents (60 per cent) take information from Block Development Functionaries/ Pradhan.

(C) Economic Characteristics

1. **Income Generation through Micro Enterprises**: Majority of respondents (42 per cent) earn income of ₹ 20,000-₹40,000 followed by >₹20,000 (30 per cent) and ₹40,000< (28 per cent).

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of Hill women

Sl. No.	Statement	Respondents	Percentage
(A)	Socio-Personal characteristics		
1	**Age**		
(a)	Young (20-30)	18	36
(b)	Middle (30-50)	20	40
(c)	Old (Above 50)	12	24
2	**Caste**		
(a)	General	28	56
(b)	Other Backward Caste (OBC)	12	24
(c)	Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST)	10	20
3	**Education**		
(a)	Illiterate	2	4
(b)	Primary	15	30
(c)	High School	20	40
(d)	Intermediate	13	26

4.	**Type of Family**		
(a)	Joint	18	36
(b)	Nuclear	32	64
(B)	**Communication characteristics**		
1.	**ICTs Ownership**		
(a)	Television	50	100
(b)	Mobile phone	50	100
(c)	Computer	5	10
(d)	Newspaper	9	18
2.	**Communication Behaviour**		
(a)	Input Dealers	39	78
(b)	Friends and Relatives	12	24
(c)	Progressive Farmers	10	20
(d)	Key Informants/Elderly person	25	50
(e)	Scientists of KVKs	18	36
(f)	Scientists of Bee Keeping Centre	21	42
(g)	Scientists of Mushroom Centre	9	18
(h)	Anganwadi workers	13	26
(i)	Block Development Functionaries/Pradhan	30	60
(C)	**Economic Characteristics**		
1.	**Income Generation through Micro Enterprise**		
(a)	> ₹ 20,000	15	30
(b)	₹ 20,000-40,000	21	42
(c)	₹ 40,000<	14	28

Constraints faced by Hill farm women: Among all, few problems were identified as crucial from agricultural and its marketing point of view. These problems are preventing them to be more successful and creating barriers for getting more benefits.

Table 2: Constraints faced by Hill farm women

Sl. No.	Statement	Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiteracy or Low Level of Education	35	70
2	Lack of Financial Assistance	31	62
3	Lack of Technical Know-how	37	74
4	Lack of Marketing Skills	50	100
5	Lack of Entrepreneurial Skill	41	82
6	Lack of Self-Confidence	29	58
7	Mobility Constraints	25	50

Illiteracy or low level of education

Majority of the respondents (70 per cent) were facing illiteracy as the major constraint in establishing an enterprise. According to Satpal *et al.* (2008), women are lagging far behind in the field of education. Women were educated up to primary as well as intermediate level. They have less scientific knowledge about many aspects. Women entrepreneurs were facing many problems due to lack of proper education. They do not know about the developments in various aspects of technology, new methods of production, marketing, networking and other governmental support which will encourage them to rise in the field of management.

Lack of Financial Assistance

Majority of the women (62 per cent) were facing the fund related and financial problems. Women entrepreneurs suffer a lot in raising and meeting the financial needs of the business. Bankers, creditors and financial institutes do not come forward to provide financial assistance to women borrowers on the ground of their less credit worthiness. They also face financial problem due to blockage of funds in raw materials, inventory, work-in-progress, finished goods and non-receipt of payment from customers in time.

Lack of Technical knowhow

Majority of respondents (74 per cent) were facing the problems of technical knowledge as a major challenge. Management has become a specialised job which only efficient managers can perform. Women entrepreneurs sometimes are not efficient in managerial functions like planning, organising, controlling, directing, motivating, recruiting, coordinating, and leading an enterprise. Therefore, less and limited managerial ability of women has become a problem for them to run the enterprise successfully.

Lack of Marketing Skills

All the respondents were facing the marketing problems. Since most women cannot run around for marketing, distribution and money collection, they have to depend on middle men for the above activities. Middle men tend to exploit them in the appearance of helping. They work in order to add

their own profit margin which result in less sales and lesser profit for women entrepreneurs.

Lack of Entrepreneurial Skill

Total 82 per cent of respondents facing the problems of lack of entrepreneurial skills. Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude is a matter of concern for women entrepreneurs. They have limited entrepreneurial abilities. Even after attending various training programmes on entrepreneurship women entrepreneurs fail to overcome the risks and troubles that may come up in an organisational working.

Lack of Self-Confidence

Total 58 per cent respondents have lack of self confidence. Women entrepreneurs because of their inherent nature, lack self-confidence which is essentially a motivating factor in running an enterprise successfully. They have to work hard to strike a balance between managing a family and managing an enterprise. Sometimes they have to sacrifice their entrepreneurial urge in order to strike a balance between the two which results in loss of a prospective entrepreneur.

Mobility Constraints

Total 25 per cent respondents were facing the problems of mobility constraints. Women mobility in India is highly limited and has become a problem due to traditional values and limited driving skills. Moving alone and asking for a room to stay out at night for business purposes is still looked upon with suspicious eyes. Sometimes, inexperienced women feel uncomfortable in dealing with men who show extra interest in them other than work related aspects.

Suggestions

On the basis of above findings some suggestions are given as follows:

1. Information Communication Module should be prepared to give the information, education and knowledge among various aspects.

2. Local Media can also empower the hill women through giving them information on various Government policy and programmes.

3. The main problem is lack of knowledge on many aspects. Thus, Media can play an important role for the empowerment of hill women though giving them information on various aspects.

CONCLUSION

From the various research papers studied several challenges faced by hill farm women have come into focus. Women farmers playing very crucial role in up-liftment of economy of territory however they are not being considered as much important as they should be. From the present investigation, it can be concluded that state Govt and gram panchayats should take some initiatives at grass root level so that they might be benefited and appreciated for their contribution.

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