



Promoting Rural Women through Holistic Approach

Ratna Nashine¹, Neelam Bhardwaj² and Esakkimuthu M.^{3*}

¹Senior scientist-cum-Programme Coordinator, KVK, Dantewada, Chattisgarh-494441

²Professor and Head, ³Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension and Communication, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar-265 143 (Uttarakhand)

*Email of corresponding author: esakkimuthu418@yahoo.com

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and contributes nearly 50 percent of the total national income. Therefore, the development of the country depends on agricultural development where both men and women shoulder the responsibility of work. Agriculture in India is basically a family enterprise in which women are active participants. She is a cultivator, co-operator, labourer, and contributor to farm decision making and family income. Women are responsible for at least 50 percent of the total food production of the country. It is known from early civilization that women were the first agriculturists, while men were out for hunting and tending livestock.

Introduction

Indian economy is an agrarian economy. In India women empowerment is considered as the phenomenon of nineties and is defined as giving power to creating power within and enabling. The word empowerment means multidimensional social process that helps people to gain control over their own lives in different sphere of life. Agriculture in India is basically a family enterprise in which women are active participants. She is a cultivator, co-operator, labourer, and contributor to farm decision making and family income. Women are responsible for at least 50 percent of the total food production of the country (Kapur, 1988). The concept of tribes emerged in India with the coming up of British. The meaning of tribes, as the name implies, tribals are 'Adivasi' or original dwellers, living in the subcontinent from unrecorded time and possibly driven into forests by more aggressive settlers. 'Aryans' being the earliest one to socially subjugate them. In order to resist complete domination, tribals involved their distinct identity through endogamy, their cropping pattern, hunting and food gathering. Above all, in their intensely personal relationship with the forest around them they formed perfectly balanced rhythms which can best be described as symbiotic (Mehta, 2000). A tribe is defined as "a social group with definite area, dialects, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organisation. Though they are scattered all over the hilly and forest regions of the country, majority of them inhabitants in Central India, high concentration of tribals live in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand. To increase the food production at the rate of at least three per cent per year the efforts of government organizations alone is not sufficient. In this context, appropriate training of practicing farmers, extension personnel and the agricultural teachers and trainers is very crucial in increasing agricultural production. Since ancient times women constitute an important segment of

the society. They contributed significantly in shaping the fate of any society and performed a pivotal role in progress of any nation. Even in modern era the women constitute more than 50 per cent of the world's population, one third of the labour force and perform nearly two third of working hours (UNICEF, 1994). The socio-economic improvement of the people of hills in harmony with safe guarding of ecological balance (Yadev, 2013). Tribal women are the backbone of the tribal economy of Bastar plateau. Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is one of the grass root level agency which is engaged for upliftment of tribal women. KVK, Bastar had played significant role in improving the conditions of tribal women's of Chattisgarh. The researchers also come out with successful case studies in tribal women empowerment.

Case: 1. Raibari Bai – Progressive Farm Woman

Raibari Bai is married 43 years old Muriya tribal woman lives in a village Kondalur, Block to Kapal, District-Baster. She is illiterate and don't have any children. She had 1.5 acre of land and 0.5 acre of upland was irrigating with 'teda' (local irrigation technique). Since 1991 she was doing cultivation of crops and vegetables by applying traditional methods. She came in contact with KVK in the year 2005 and actively participated in activities of KVK. She followed the technical advice given by KVK scientists and adopted integrated farming with cultivation of vegetables round the year, rice in kharif season and maize in kharif and rabi season. By this practice her earning raised from Rs. 3000-5000 to 45000-47000 per annum. In the year 2007 under MGNREGA, one 'Dabri' was excavated in ½ acre of upland and she started integrated farming. On bund she took vegetables, planted fruits plants *viz*; papaya, banana, coconut and reared fish in the pond.. She purchased diesel pump for irrigation. She is being called for narrow casting on *Doordarshan* and All India Radio (AIR), Jagdalpur for sharing her experiences. In present, she motivates tribal women of villages to form a group which helps each member for transplanting of rice, vegetables and sowing of Maize. She was a member of Scientific Advisory Committee of Krishi Vigyan Kendra from the year 2007-2009. She is in regular contact with the KVK scientist and whatever new techniques, seeds etc. she came across from KVK she took it to the village and told to all women members of the group. She was a leading progressive farm woman and awarded 'Krishak Samruddhi Award 2009' and also felicitated by Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur, Chhattisgarh. She said that she felt empowered after coming in contact with KVK, Bastar and found change in her life. It can be said that KVK, Bastar had left significant impact on her.

Case: 2. Sukadibai Netam- Sarpanch

Mrs. Sukadibai Netam is a Muriya schedule tribe woman of 40 years. She had education upto primary level. She was elected Sarpanch of the Balfola Gram Panchayat as seat is reserved for ST woman, in 2009. She visited Panchayat frequently and does all the work related to panchayat. She leaves in extended family and has 1.75 of land on her name. She came in contact with KVK in 2005 when Drought Prone Area Project was implemented by KVK in Kondagaon block in 5 Micro villages. After this National Agriculture Innovative Project III (NAIP-III) was implemented by KVK in Balbola village which was choosen as a cluster and whole village was covered under this project for improvement of livelihood of tribals. She took round the year vegetable production in the land and earned about rupees two thousand to three thousand per season as net profit. Before coming in contact with KVK she was cultivating vegetables through

traditional way. Now she used improved varieties of seeds of vegetables, Brinjal, Pumpkin, Cole crops. She had learned many new techniques of agriculture viz. vermicomposting, Mushroom production, seed treatment, root treatment, fresh fermented cow dung etc.

She improved her communication skills and presented her views in front of the officers and outsiders. She also took actively participated in trainings of KVK, Front Line Demonstrations and Farm Advisory Services. Presently she revealed that she could earn sufficiently money which she could spend on her family members. She had motivated several villagers to adopt new agricultural practices. She was also a member of SHGs which sold vegetables and maize. She played active role at community level and also solved the disputes of the villagers. She also took major decisions of her family along with her husband. She gained social recognition, improved her economic status by adopting new agricultural practices and earned money by selling vegetables. She felt self-confident and empowered after coming in contact with KVK.

Case: 3. Pakhali- Feels Empowered due to Change in Life

Pakhali is married 36 years old Muriya tribal woman with three children. She was having two acres of farm and 1 acre of 'Badi'. She lives with her husband Ramu in a village Kondalur, Block Tokapal, District Bastar. In Kharif season she cultivated rice and maize in the fields and vegetables in 'Badi'. She came in contact with KVK in the year 2005 and regularly participated in the trainings and other activities of KVK. She improved her cultivation techniques by applying scientific methods. She became a member of SHG and cultivating the vegetables in a group. This has led to earn more income and helped them to complete the intercultural operations timely and also helped them to save the time, money and energy. Most important is that there is continuous monitoring in the field and all agricultural operations were completed timely in a group. She purchased four Buffaloes and sold the milk in nearby villages. At present she is earning Rs. 12000/- to 15000/- in one season which was earlier only Rs.3000-4000/-. She says that by participating in activities of KVK she gained knowledge, enhanced her skills and got change in her outlook towards life. Pakhali said that she is well recognized in the community, improved her skills and feels self-confident to do the work. She could express herself very well in front of the officers. She felt empowered socially, economically and technologically and felt energetic and enthusiastic towards.

Case: 4. Dayamati- Change in Outlook

Dayamati is 40 years old married woman lives in joint family with her husband Sukalu, children and in laws. She had three acres of land in which earlier she was cultivating traditional variety of rice. She came in contact with KVK in year 2006 and thereafter she learned about the crop diversification in her field. She is cultivating round the year vegetable, rice and maize in kharif season and maize in Rabi and summer season. She was the member of Scientific Advisory Committee of KVK from the year 2008 to 2010. She was awarded 'Krishak Samruddhi Award 2010' by Krishak Samrudhi Sansthan. Raipur. She had adopted improved agricultural technologies and implements. She expressed that she saves time, energy and money by using them. She revealed that she earned rupees ten to twelve thousands per season as a net profit which was earlier only rupees three thousand to four thousand per season. She said that she was invited by All India Radio, Jagdalpur, *Doordarshan*, Jagdalpur and also in the District fair, Kisan

Mela, Goshthies. Dayamati said that she felt empowered technically, socially, economically and well recognised in the society. She developed self-confident and self-esteem. She further revealed that she could take risk for the new agricultural techniques to be adopted at her farm. She motivated several other women of her village and Panchayat Singhanpur, Block Tokapal, District Bastar.

Case: 5. SHGs – Sharda Adivasi Swa-Sahayata Samuha

Sharda Adivasi Swa Sahayata Samuha (SHGs) was started in 2011 at Chappa Poddar village of Bakawand Block. It consists of ten members. The members of SHGs were trained by the KVK in nursery raising. The members learned the new techniques of nursery raising of different plants. They raised nursery for Kaju, Acassia, Mango, Custard Apple, Tamarind and Drumsticks plants. These plants they sold at Rs. 3/-each and sold to the watershed micros, farmers of the district. They raised nursery of 70, 000 to 80, 000 plants in a season. The profit earnings from selling nursery plants were distributed equally among the members. The president of the SHGs Smt. Bhunai Baghel told that there is a good cooperation among the members and they all listened to each other and respect the feelings of each member. Before formation of SHGs they were working individually or few of them were not doing any work. After joining the SHGs they earned money, learned new techniques of nursery raising, budding, grafting and gootee tying. Now they felt self reliant, confident, and free to express their views. They earned rupees One Lakh Fifty thousand as a net profit in a season and felt empowered.

Case: 6. Mushroom Production

Maa Danteshwari SHGs of Masora village, Block Kondagaon was trained in Mushroom production. Total ten women were trained in the oyster Mushroom production in the year 2006. They started growing mushroom since then. They produced oyster mushroom regularly and sold in local market (haat). They hanged 30 bags at a time and produced about 120 to 140 kgs. of mushroom per 30 bags in four pluckings. They earned Rs. 12000/- per 30 bags. After complete plucking, used mushroom bags are used to produce NADEP compost. Bags are dump in NADEP tank for composting. This compost is used in the fields by the members of the SHGs group.

Conclusion

The overall empowerment extent of rural women was observed of medium level which can be considered as good. Hence, there is a strong need of awareness with various agricultural innovations and direct motivation, so that the tribal women can get desired empowerment for their self reliance.

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