Women Entrepreneurship in Agro-Based Industries of Rural Kerala

Ms. Asha Neendur  
Assistant Professor, P.G.Department of Economics  
MES Ponnani College, Kerala  
ashapraji@gmail.com

Abstract

Women empowerment can be better achieved through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is an adventure to do something new or a strong desire to pursue an independent occupation. It may be an inner urge to make use of skills and talents in a positive and profitable way. The futuristic outlook and planning are the two vital attributes of an entrepreneur. Women have these two qualities by birth. Concerted effort must be put in to raise the level of women entrepreneurship in SSI. Social activists, NGOs, Government agencies and corporate sector should play an active role in the transformation of women and in driving the women to explore entrepreneurial opportunities in small scale industries.

Full paper

The position of women and their status in any society is an index of its civilization. Jawaharlal Nehru once said,"you can tell the condition of a country by looking to the status of its women".

Indian women have not been actively involved in the main stream of development even though they represent equal proportion of the population and labour force. No country can achieve its potential without adequately investing in and developing the capabilities of women. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period of time, especially in the 1990s.
Women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology, increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizable employment for others and setting the trend for other women entrepreneurs in the organized sector. While women entrepreneurs have demonstrated their potential, the fact remains that they are capable of contributing much more than what they already are. Women’s entrepreneurship needs to be studied separately for two main reasons. The first reason is that women’s entrepreneurship has been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. Women entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others and also by being different. They also provide the society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems as well as to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. The second reason is that the topic of women in entrepreneurship has been largely neglected both in society in general and in the social sciences. Not only have women lower participation rates in entrepreneurship than men but they also generally choose to start and manage firms in different industries than men tend to do.

A success story of women entrepreneur in Kerala

Agriculture continues to be the dominant source of livelihood in Kerala. The state is the largest producer of coconut, rubber, coir and pepper. It is also the leading producer of a variety of spices, cashew, coffee and tea. With an investment of US $769.6 million, the state has the third highest number of small-scale industries in India, employing over a million people. A majority of the state’s small-scale industries are agro-based and are engaged in rubber, food, coir and cashew processing. There is a high scope for women entrepreneurship in agro-based industries
Women empowerment can be better achieved through entrepreneurship. A women entrepreneur can contribute to national income, employment and also can participate in social transformation. Entrepreneurship is an adventure to do something new or a strong desire to pursue an independent occupation. It may be an inner urge to make use of skills and talents in a positive and profitable way. Agro-based industries are comparatively easy to establish and provide income in the rural areas with less investment by effective and efficient utilization of local agricultural raw materials. It also highlights the fact that mechanization in agro-based industries never creates unemployment and labour displacement. The spurt of different activities in this sector has resulted in the creation of both forward and backward linkages which led to the creation of economies of scale. Here, the policy implications are fairly significant. Generation of output, income and employment were found to be positive in agro-based industries.

An entrepreneur must be result oriented and therefore he plans systematically to capture future. The futuristic outlook and planning are the two vital attributes of an entrepreneur. Women have these two qualities by birth. These are natural qualities of women. So we can see wonders when women prove their qualities as an entrepreneur. But they were not coming forward with men. Here is such a story of a housewife who is doing miracles with her entrepreneurship.

SHERIN ASHREF –A JOURNEY OF SUCCESS

If women get interested in agro-based industries, they can bring spectacular change in Kerala’s economy. Here is a successful story of a women entrepreneur who had changed her life her own hard work and enthusiasm.
Hafi Biotech is a unique Agro-biotech company, established in 1994, with a technology focus. The company deals in products like tissue culture bananas of 15 different varieties, orchids in a variable range, major cut flower varieties of anthodium’s gerberas, roses, and medicinal plants. The company imports include all cultivated varieties of bananas, tissue culture, medicinal plants, dedicated to the agro-biotechnology industry, the enterprise strive to understand the needs of clients and continuously improving the efficiency. They specialize in developing plant tissue cultures that meet the highest international standards of excellence.

They produce and supply medicinal herbal plants. And also produce confidential medicinal plant species on contract propagation for various companies around the globe. They deliver cost effective plant productions with the new advanced techniques, specialist knowledge and an uncompromising attitude towards quality and service have positioned Hafi in being a partner of choice of leading growers and discerning farmers across India.

They produce and supply medicinal herbal plants. And also produce confidential medicinal plant species on contract propagation for various companies around the globe. They deliver cost effective plant productions with the new advanced techniques, specialist knowledge and an uncompromising attitude towards quality and service have positioned Hafi in being a partner of choice of leading growers and discerning farmers across India.

Haroon Tissue culture labs a division of hafi biotech situated in Kalamassery is based exclusively on domestic market. The company employs a team of 200 employees and in addition of this more than 300 families are indirectly benefited by Hafi Biotech. Hafi is one of the biggest in south India, dealing with 5 million plants per year. Future plans on the anvil focus on 80%
export of products globally. A house wife proved to be a successful entrepreneur in the case of Sherin. She canalized her qualities to entrepreneurship and thus towards empowerment.

Conclusion

Women entry in to business is a recent phenomenon. It is traced out as an extension of their kitchen activities. With growing awareness and spread of education over the years, women have started engrossing to modern activities like engineering; electronics and energy. Women are no longer confined to within four walls of house. They are participating and performing well in all spheres of activities such as academic, politics, administration, space and industry. Efforts are on at the government and voluntary agencies levels to tap the hitherto unrecognized and unaccounted for strength of women to integrate them in the process of industrial development, more especially small-scale industry development in the country. A multi pronged approach is to be adopted to motivate the women to pursue entrepreneurial activities.

Commitment and wholehearted support are crucial for any initiative intended to emancipate Indian women. Concerted effort must be put in to raise the level of women entrepreneurship. Government agencies and corporate sector should play an active role in the transformation of women and in driving the women to explore entrepreneurial opportunities in small scale industries. A multi pronged approach is to be adopted to motivate the women to pursue in SSI. Social activists, NGOs, entrepreneurial activities Commitment and wholehearted support are crucial for any initiative intended to emancipate Indian women. Concerted effort must be put in to raise the level of women entrepreneurship in SSI. Social activists, NGOs, Government agencies and corporate sector should play an active role in the transformation of women and in driving the women to explore entrepreneurial opportunities in small scale industries.
Bibliography

- Ram Naresh Thakur (2009).”Rural women empowerment in India” Kanishka publishers,New Delhi.
- Lipi ( 2009)”Women Empowermwt ;Globalisation and opportunities” in empowerment of rural women” Kanishka publishers, New Delhi.
- www.smallindustryindia.com
- www.karshakasree.in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enterprise</th>
<th>Hafi Biotech and Research centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Pookkattupadi , Eranakulam ditrict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of enterprise</td>
<td>Production of tissue culture plants, marketing, import of Orchids and trading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early capital</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual turnover</td>
<td>2 crore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working experience</td>
<td>17 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers :</td>
<td>200 employees, 300 families are indirectly depending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets:</td>
<td>Two tissue culture labs, 5acres of land, of 7200 square feet building,10000 square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
feet green house.

- There are enough customers in Kerala and neighboring states to purchase about one lakh plant per month produced at the Hafi laboratories. Plants are provided through Krishi Bhavan for customers in Kerala. A part from display of plants developed through tissue culture in a natural environment, the centre also gives information on growing them at home. Sherin utilized her interest, hobby, and her knowledge in her venture. She is proved to be a successful entrepreneur; her yearly turnover is more than 2 crores.