

Empowerment of Women in Food Sector

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ABSTRACT: Agriculture sector is the backbone of India's economy in terms of income, employment generation and ensuring food and nutritional security. The strength of Indian food industry lies in the availability of raw materials, flexibility of product mix, consumer awareness for safe and nutritious foods and well trained technical power. Efficiency is reported both in production and processing sub-sectors. If the industry has to largely benefit from the growth potential of the sector, better organization, presentation and marketing are to be given priority attention. In other words, enlightened entrepreneurship development is the key to success of food industry. Empowerment is a multi dimensional process, which would enable women or group of women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building, leading to greater participation to greater decision making power and transformative action. The present study was conducted on empowerment of women in food sector, which aims to know the food products produced by the women entrepreneurs and marketing channels adopted by them and also to assess the empowerment scale of women in food sector. (Anil Kumar 2003)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is essentially based on primary data. The study has been carried out in various parts of Bangalore, Karnataka state. Data was collected on sample survey method. Random samples were drawn based on the annual income and they were classified into small, medium and large scale entrepreneurs. There were 100 respondents selected for the study with the preset objectives and data was analyzed by suitable statistical methods.

Category	Annual Income
Small scale entrepreneurs	< 1 lakh
Medium scale entrepreneurs	1-5 lakh
Large scale entrepreneurs	Above 5 lakhs

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data projected in the Table 1 indicates the Food products produced by the women entrepreneurs. About majority of the women entrepreneurs were producing masala powders in large quantities followed by preserved foods and condiments. Ragi products, pickles, instant mixes, sweets, chocolates and herbal products were producing in limited quantities. Utilization of different types of masala powders found more in every household for daily consumption, due this reason there was increase in production of masala powders. (Bharathi *et.al.*, 1995)

Table 1
Food Products Produced by the Women Entrepreneurs

Category of enterprises	Small	Medium	Large
Masala powders	15 (22.06)	10 (33.33)	1(50.00)
Ragi products	9 (13.24)	1 (3.33)	1 (50.00)
Pickles	8 (11.76)	2 (6.67)	0 (0.00)
Preserved foods	14 (20.59)	5 (16.67)	0 (0.00)
Condiments	12 (17.65)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
Instant mixes	3 (4.41)	5 (16.67)	0 (0.00)
Bakery foods	2 (2.94)	1 (3.33)	0 (0.00)
Sweets and chocolates	3 (4.41)	3 (10.00)	0 (0.00)
Herbal products	2 (2.94)	3 (10.00)	0 (0.00)

(Values within the parenthesis indicates percentage of the respondent

Table 2 indicates the Marketing channels used by the women entrepreneurs. Majority of the small scale (44.12%) and medium scale entrepreneurs (33.33%) were doing direct selling of their products. Medium and all large scale entrepreneurs adopted contract selling for marketing of their products. In case of direct marketing entrepreneurs could meet more peoples and they could introduce their products to more number of people and they will get good publicity for their products.(Aravind and renuka 2001).

Table 2
Marketing Channels Used by the Women Entrepreneurs

Category of enterprises	Direct	Contract	Agency	Co-operatives
Small	30 (44.12)	25 (36.76)	10(14.71)	3 (4.41)
Medium	10 (33.33)	10 (33.33)	8 (26.67)	2 (6.67)
Large	0	2 (100.00)	0	0

(Values within the parenthesis indicates percentage of the respondents)

EMPOWERMENT SCALE

Majority of the women entrepreneurs were empowered to large extent in decision making, self-confidence, contribution to family and received support from the family. Decision making power of the women was operationally defined as their power to take decision/choices affecting their lives which influences their wellbeing or position in their family and society. Self-confidence was the factor which

contributed mainly for development of entrepreneurial qualities in the women. The success of an enterprise positively correlated with the time spent on it by the entrepreneurs. (Dilbaghkaur 2000)

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Major findings of the study are as follows

More number of women entrepreneurs were producing masala powders in large quantities, followed by ragi products (50%), preserved foods (20.59%) and condiments (17.65%). Some women entrepreneurs were producing instant mixes (16.67%), pickles (11.76%), sweets and chocolates (10 %), herbal products (10 %) and bakery foods (3.33%) in limited quantities.

Majority of the women entrepreneurs (86.76%) of them were doing direct selling of their products, followed by contract selling, agency selling and through co-operative selling.

Table 3
Empowerment Scale of Women Entrepreneurs

Category	Decision making			Self confidence			Contribution to family			Support from family		
	Good	Medium	Low	Good	Medium	Low	Good	Medium	Low	Good	Medium	Low
Small	24 (35.29)	40 (58.82)	4 (5.88)	51 (75.00)	14 (20.59)	3 (4.41)	61 (89.71)	5 (7.35)	2 (2.94)	51 (75.00)	14 (20.59)	3 (4.41)
Medium	25 (83.33)	5 (16.67)	0	28 (93.33)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	30 (100)	0	0	29 (96.67)	1 (3.33)	0
Large	2 (100)	0	0	2 (100)	0	0	2 (100)	0	0	2 (100)	0	0

Majority of the women entrepreneurs were empowered to a large extent in the aspects like Decision making, self confidence, contribution to family and support from the family.

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