

**EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
THROUGH INTEGRATED COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES  
THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

**Dr M.Annam**

Assistant Professor of Commerce  
V.V.Vannaiperumal College for Women,  
Virudhunagar,  
Tamilnadu.

**Abstract**

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*This Paper focus on the role of women entrepreneurs in poverty alleviation in rural communities of Virudhunagar District, Tamil Nadu. It will specifically analyse the socio-economic characteristics of women's and assessed the contribution of Women-owned firms to poverty alleviation in my study area. Hence, in this paper, an effort is going to be taken to impart skills to rural Women and facilitate them to become entrepreneurs. Women are now adopting the careers of their own and sharing equally with men the responsibilities for the development of society in all aspects. They have been taking an increasing interest in recent years in income generating activities, self-employment, and entrepreneurship that also lead to property rights, political representation, social equality, personal right, family development, market development, community development, and at last it leads to the national development. Self-employment is an occupation in which an individual employs himself either in producing goods or providing services. Self-employment provides an opportunity to make the women economically empowered and they are in position to face any challenges in their lives. The problem is that most of the Women do not think of taking agriculture as a practice for entrepreneurship as a career option. Therefore, the rural Women need to be motivated to take agriculture as a source of earning, by giving them proper training and sustaining support systems providing all necessary assistance for their upliftment. This paperl will provide livelihood training programs to rural women and farmers in Virudhunagar district, which is our neighborhood and adopted village for our outreach program. They will be followed up, linked with financial institutions and MSME to start their ventures and the impact of such programmes will be assessed.*

## **I Introduction**

India is endowed not only with natural resources but also with ever increasing young population. This young human capital can see India a developed nation, provided the enabling atmosphere for this young population should be given to hone their skills and employed appropriately. Nearly 70 per cent of India's population is below the age of 35 years, making India the youngest nation in the world and interestingly 70 per cent of them live in rural areas. According to 2011 Census, the youth population in the country including adolescent youth is around 550 million. In 2020, the average Indian age will be only 29-year-old, whereas in China and the United States of America the average age is estimated to be 37 years (Parasuraman, 2014).

Though, the demographic dividend is in favour of us, the employability of youth and the skill they possess is questionable. The unemployment problem that persists in rural India is primarily due to the skill gap i.e., required skill and existing skill of youth population.

However, there is a large disparity between rural poverty and urban poverty across states. It is customary to argue that urban poverty is a spillover of rural poverty. The reasons behind the aspect of poverty are that areas with a large concentration of the poor are also those with low levels of income, low nutritional levels, low literacy rates, low life expectancy, and high rates of infant mortality. They also have low standards of physical and social infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and receive low levels of public expenditure.

In order to fight back poverty, the Central as well as States Governments in India has attempted a number of programs leading to income generation. Some of these programs lead to creation of common physical assets, such as rural infrastructure including roads; facility for drinking water; sewerages while others create self-employment, promote entrepreneurship and provide support for business to the rural youth.

Another serious trend is the moving of rural youth irrespective of caste, religion from Agriculture to non-agricultural ventures which resulted in abandoning of cultivable lands, decrease in production etc., Hence, the rural youth are to be retained through offering skills in improved agricultural and allied enterprises and by opening farmer production support Units.

Hence, in this proposal, an effort is going to be taken to impart skills to the rural youth to become entrepreneurs. They will be followed up, linked with financial institutions to start their ventures and the impact of such programmes will be assessed

## **II Specific Objectives**

1. To undertake entrepreneurial need analysis of rural youth in selected blocks of backward district in Virudhunagar.
2. To finalise the Agriculture based entrepreneurial ventures to be considered for skill training
3. To conduct the skill training in selected agriculture based entrepreneurial ventures to rural Youth
4. To facilitate the selected trained rural youth to prepare a project report for getting financial and other inputs
5. To link the trained rural Youth with Financial and other institutions which facilitate them to start a business
6. To prepare socio-economic impact indicators and to conduct impact evaluation of skill training

## **III Review of Status of Research and Development in the subject**

Singh *et al.*, (2011) reported to be most preferred enterprise with mean score 3.62 followed by milk collection and product shop (3.30), livestock (2.57), fish farming (2.49), bee keeping (2.22), mushroom production(2.18), agricultural product processing (2.12), vermin compost (1.82), poultry (1.17) and sheep goat rearing (0.99) under agro- based enterprises respectively.

As per the study of MIJARC, IFAD and FAO (2012) reported that more than half of the respondents that were not practicing farmers, mentioned access to land as one of the main factors that refrains them from starting a farming activity respectively 50 per cent of young farmers from developing countries stated education and training as one of the biggest challenges when they started farming, and also indicated that 25 per cent of young farmer respondents are engaged in marketing and commercialization of agricultural, fishery and/or forestry produce. They can be food buyers or food sellers and they can play a role in every link of the value-chain from production to transformation to marketing, more than 70 per cent of young farmer's respondents to the survey stated access to finance as the biggest challenge they face when they start farming.

Narendran (2000) reported that professional occupation was the first aspired occupation of the school going rural youth followed by glamour occupation, management occupation, agriculture, white-collar jobs and skilled jobs. None of the school going rural youth aspired for unskilled occupation, whereas in the case of non-school going rural youth, management occupation was the first aspired occupation followed by agriculture, glamour occupation, white-collar jobs, professional occupation, skilled jobs and unskilled jobs based on their level of aspiration.

Sangamesh (2006) observed that in the irrigated tract, majority of the respondents (69.99 per cent) had medium level of aspiration whereas 8.33 per cent and (21.66 per cent) of the respondents had low and high level of aspiration. Bhanu (2006) reported that majority of rural youth (65.00 per cent) had medium level of general aspirations. Only 19.17 per cent of the rural youth had low level general aspirations while the remaining (15.83 per cent) rural youth had high general aspirations. Radhakrishnan (2013) revealed that majority of the youth (73.33 per cent) belonged to medium level of aspiration followed by high (14.17 per cent) and low (12.50 per cent) levels of aspirations respectively. Dhakre (2014) concluded that majority of the respondents (66.80 per cent) had positive aspirations of students towards agriculture enterprise.

Hiremath (2000) in his/her study conducted in Dharwad district of Karnataka state reported that 61.67 per cent of the youth had unfavourable attitude followed by 36.67 per cent with favourable attitude and only 1.66 per cent had neutral attitude towards agriculture and there was no significant difference between the attitude scores of youth involved in farm activities and youth involved both in farm and non-farm activities.

Kavinila (2016) reported from her study that majority of the youth possess medium to high level of the risk orientation (80.80 per cent) and fifty percentage of the respondents had medium level of achievement motivation. Nearly two – third of the youth (62.5 per cent) had medium level of aspiration in agriculture and nearly three-fourth of the rural youth (74.2 per cent) had medium level to high level of attitude towards farming activities.

She concluded that development of irrigation systems / drip facilities was assigned highest score by cent percent respondents and training cum demonstrations and advisory services for need based technologies was assigned second highest score by the respondents towards intervention required by the rural youth to involve them in farming activities.

Rural youth expressed that, the less conservative and awareness about the future and possess good spirit and less fear for failure as the major strength of the youth and ranked with an RBQ value of 88.67 and 87.83 respectively.

Majority of the respondent's registered large sections of the youth population untrained and less educated and rural youth expressed the formation of youth clubs for TOT as the weakness of the youth with an RBQ value of 92.16 and 90.33 respectively.

The positive and significant relationship between the variables like farm size, occupational status with aspiration of rural youth in agriculture at five per cent level of significance. The variables are age, decision making pattern showed a negative significant with aspiration of rural youth in agriculture at five per cent level of significance. Educational status, mass media exposure, self-confidence, economic motivation, risk orientation, contact with extension agency, innovativeness, training undergone showed a positive relationship with aspiration of rural youth in agriculture at one per cent level of significance.

#### **IV Importance of the proposed project in the context of current status**

The Rural Youth forms part of important segment in society whose empowerment in turn lift the country to a different plane. In Tamil Nadu, the population of rural population is on the rise, the youth belonging to this section needs to be given with proper skill training to put them in development path. The socio, economic and political situations prevailing in the rural areas may have every chance of diverting the rural youth to involve in unlawful activities.

The entrepreneurial need assessment is an important first step to be carried out in the project which will unravel the aspirations of rural youth and associated constraints in converting their dreams into reality. The need analysis will give a fair idea about the entrepreneurial ventures that the youth want to get themselves skilled.

The entrepreneurial skill development would serve as an eye-opener for youth in the study area through which they can start a business on their own. The skill trainings will be in line with their needs with abundant business opportunities.

The rural youth will become successful entrepreneurs through which their socio-economic conditions would be enhanced drastically. This would give confidence to the other youngsters in the village

The important part of the project is not only imparting skill training but also the linking up of the youth to financial and other institutions like District Industrial Centre to start a

business on their own. Further, in this project, the selected youth are going to be given with training to prepare a project report to be submitted to financial institutions.

Hence, this project is not a usual capacity building project but it will ensure the rural youth to start a business in isolation or in group through various follow-up activities.

**V Basis for selection of location**

The project is going to cover the following districts in Western Agro climatic zones of Tamil Nadu

covering area	Villages
Villages of Virudhunagar Block	1. Alagapuri 2. Appayanaickenpatti 3. Kooraikundu 4. Meesalur 5. Pavali 6. Pudupatti 7. Rosalpatti 8. Sankaralingapuram 9. Senkottai 10. Valayapatti 11. Valliyur

The Southwestern zone is selected because of the backwardness of rural population dwelling in these places. Most of the area in the selected districts were dry in nature because of which the farmers tend to migrate. Hence, the interventions in this project are designed in such a way to arrest migration and to improve the socio-economic conditions

**VI Methodology**

The entire project is going to be carried out in four phases. They are

1. Entrepreneurial Need Assessment
2. Skill Training in the Selected entrepreneurial ventures
3. Linking with financial and other institutions
4. Impact analysis of Interventions

**VII Step by step methodology of Four phases**

**1. Entrepreneurial Need Assessment**

- of Tamil Nadu will be selected for the study

- Fifty rural youth in each of the selected district will be shortlisted using Proportionate Random sampling method (based on proportionate population in each of the districts)
- Totally 300 rural youth will be selected as respondents for this study and who will be given with selected entrepreneurial skill trainings according to their need
- The Development departments in the district and Krishi Vigyan Kendras were consulted during the selection process
- Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Research Stations which are being operated by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in the respective districts will be identified as locations for operation of the project
- In selected locations in the concerned districts, Participatory Workshops with chosen rural youth will be conducted wherein various **participatory tools will be used to identify the entrepreneurial needs of the youth.**
- **SWOC (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges)** analysis for each of the entrepreneurial options will also be explored
- In each district three of such participatory workshops will be conducted. Totally **Eighteen participatory workshops** will be conducted in selected districts.

## 2.Skill training in selected entrepreneurial ventures

Though, the entrepreneurial ventures will be identified from need analysis, the following tentative list will also be discussed in the need assessment process, as these areas were reported in majority of literature as preferred entrepreneurial ventures.

- Mushroom production
- Vermicompost production
- Millet based value added products
- Horticultural nurseries
- Seed production of high value crops
- Protected cultivation of Vegetables
- Operation of farm machineries
- Bee keeping
- Bioinoculants preparation
- Cattle/Goat rearing and Management

- Composite carp cultivation
- Organic cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants
- Organic firming
- Planning of resource persons, venue will be decided in advance. The skill training will be fully practical with judicious mix of demonstrations, lectures, field visits and learning by doing exercises
- On-going and summative evaluations will be conducted for all the skill trainings. Evaluation will also be conducted using hands on testing of the skills learnt.

### **3. Linking with financial and other institutions**

- Once the skill trainings are over, the trainees will be given training on how to convert the skills into business
- Resource persons from business schools, banks, DICs will be asked to give lectures on how to make good business plan
- The banks will be linked to the trainees and they will be facilitated to get loans for starting business
- The trainees will be facilitated to get all the other inputs other than credit from formal and informal institutions.

### **4. Impact analysis of Interventions**

- Socio-economic indicators will be identified to study the impact of Interventions on rural Youth
- The indicators will be given to experts to judge the merit and to get suggestions
- The indicators of impact will be converted into a questionnaire and it will be administered among the selected respondents
- The impact will be analysed using statistical tools
- Report preparation and submission



## CONCLUSION

The newly implemented economic policy in India has increased employment, mostly in the urban informal sector. Lack of employment creation in agriculture and rural areas causes the rural population, particularly those who come from economically and socially marginalized groups and have very low levels of education, to rely on the agricultural sector as wage labourers or in non-agricultural sectors in a similar way. This not only greatly reduces their number of days worked, but also their wage rate. However, this finding suggests that there are employment options for socially and economically disadvantaged groups in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, even in the non agriculture sector, with the former offering a very limited number of days of employment with very low wage rate. People who live in villages with a stronger focus on agriculture and those who are part of the socially and economically underprivileged sections of their villages have been identified by the study. This has made their level of poverty greater, which can be reduced by improving the condition of the agricultural sector in the rural economy. A strong agricultural sector has the potential to expand the non-agricultural sector's cascading impacts, which helps the entire rural economy grow. Moreover, improved attention can be given for extending training in skill acquisition among the socially deprived segments, apart from strengthening the agro-based industries, the co-operative movement and also the institutional credit mechanism in the rural areas, as they all play a very pivotal role in the development of the rural economy. Moreover, by increasing the number of employment days to reduce the impact on poverty, the MGNREGP and related programmes can be made more effective.

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