

Extent of Utilization of Benefits and Incentives by the Homestead Vegetable Growers

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Abstract: *In traditional structure of the society women were suffering from different social restrictions. In order to tackle it various schemes and policies are drafted and implemented. The study assessed the extent of utilization of benefits and incentives available by the homestead vegetable growers. Random sampling technique was used in the selection of 120 respondents for the study. Validated and structured interview schedule was used to collect data from the selected vegetable growers. The result shows that some facilities were utilized more by women while some by men and there were no facilities in which benefits were utilized by women or men alone. Out of the selected facilities, there was no inequality noticed in the availability of basic facilities.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Women are the central figure in the family influencing and serving the social, economic, and cultural standards of the family. In traditional structure of the society women were suffering from different socio cultural restrictions (Breen and Cooke, 2005). With a clear focus on women's empowerment and financial independence, central and state government implemented many women benefit programmes all over the country. To understand the extent of utilization of benefits and incentives of these programmes by the women is important for measuring the success of these programmes and for formulating new plans and policies. The present investigation was therefore, carried out with an objective, to analyse the utilization of benefits and incentives among the homestead vegetable growers. This will help the policy makers to facilitate the process of redistributing and coordinating all the women's welfare and socio-economic development programs such a way that ensuring maximum utilization by the women farmers. This is the best option for the total empowerment of rural women for improving the participation of women in various activities.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Kollam District of Kerala. Two Agro Ecological Units, AEU 9(South Central Laterites) and AEU 12(Southern and Central Foot Hills) were purposively selected for the study from the 5 AEU's based on the maximum vegetable production. Three panchayats with maximum vegetable cultivation were selected from each AEU's for the present investigation. The panchayats were namely: Nedumpana, Veliyam and Ummannoor panchayath from AEU 9(South Central Laterites) and Kadakkal, Chithara and Piravanthur panchayat from AEU 12(Southern and Central Foot Hills). A comprehensive list of homestead vegetable growers having an area of 0.1-0.5 ha in each selected panchayats was prepared separately. On the basis of the lists, 20 homesteads were selected randomly from each identified panchayats. Thus a total sample size of 120 homesteads.

A suitable structured schedule was developed for collecting data. The response of the respondents was recorded on a three point continuum viz, women, men, and both for identifying the extent of utilization of various benefits and incentives. Data collected was analyzed with aid of frequency counts, percentages.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To get an overall view of the respondents regarding utilization of benefits and incentives Data collected was analyzed with aid of frequency counts, percentages.

(A) Benefits and incentive analysis

Benefits and incentive analysis was conducted to identify who among the two genders is more capable of utilizing the benefits of basic facilities they receive in their day to day life. The basic facilities that were selected for conducting the study are shown in the table 1. Percentage analysis was carried out to derive the final results.

Table No.1: Distribution of respondents based on benefits and incentive analysis (N=120)

SI no.	Benefits	Women		Men		Joint benefits	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Income	0	0	0	0	120	100
2	Education	0	0	0	0	120	100
3	Training and skill development	32	26	38	32	50	42
4	Extension agency contact	40	33	53	44	27	23
5	Medical facilities	0	0	0	0	120	100
6	Technological development	37	31	57	48	26	21
7	Govt polices and incentives	57	48	43	36	20	16
8	Political interventions	8	7	94	78	18	15
9	Employment opportunity	50	42	31	25	39	33
10	Transportation facilities	0	0	0	0	120	100
11	Farmer groups	52	43	48	40	20	17

Table 1 revealed that there were no facilities in which benefits were utilized by women or men alone. Both the gender jointly enjoyed the benefits of basic facilities like income, education, medical facilities, and transportation.

But benefits in case of political interventions (78%), technological development (48%), extension agency contact (44%) were utilized more by men than women. The benefits of Govt policies and incentives (48%), farmer groups (43%), and employment opportunities (42%) were utilized more by women in comparison to men. It does not mean that men cannot utilize the benefits of Govt polices and incentives and employment opportunities but the percentage is slightly less than that of women.

This may be the result of the women oriented plans and policies by the government and financial institutions to empower women in agriculture and allied sectors by enhancing their potential and their continued growth and development through SHGs, Kudumbasree, Ayalkuttam etc. It was observed that there is no gender difference in case of utilizing the basic facilities like education, medical facilities, transportation facilities and utilization of income. This may be the result of the availability of facilities for primary health care, their accessibility, high degree of awareness and acceptability among the people regarding the importance of education and availability of transportation facilities in the state. The State could attain significant achievements in the critical sectors of health and education and improvement in basic infrastructures. The results are in line with that of Danusha (2017)

From the data it can be concluded that there were no facilities in which benefits were utilized by women or men alone. Out of the selected facilities, there was no inequality noticed in the availability of basic facilities. Some facilities were utilized more by women while some by men. During the analysis, facilities like extension agency contact, political interventions and technological development were found to be benefited by men than women. The results are in conformity with the findings of Bharathi (2005). So, the policy makers, extension workers, voluntary organization and other agencies should give more attention towards rural women for their better social participation and extension agency contact which will enhance their development. Recruiting female extension workers can increase women participation in extension activities which improves the adoption of new technologies.

IV. CONCLUSION

It was found that there was no inequality noticed in the availability of basic facilities. Some facilities were utilized more by women while some by men. So, the policy makers, extension workers and other agencies should give more attention towards rural women for their better social participation and extension contact which will enhance their development.

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