

Awareness knowledge programmes for empowerment of rural women of Punjab

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ABSTRACT

Rural people's sources of livelihood are diverse. Farming is the major source of income to a large majority. Livelihoods that include women's participation are substance production, commercial agriculture and home based or small scale business enterprise activities. Despite the technical as well as social development taking place in India, rural women are still facing hardships and remain at the background of modernization. Therefore, in this context, under AICRP (All India Coordinated Research Project, Directorate Research on Women in Agriculture, Bhubaneswar) – FRM component made an attempt to empower the rural women under the objective of empowerment of rural women through Resource Management Practices and drudgery reducing technologies. For this purpose, five villages were adopted in Ludhiana District namely Mansura, Mohi, Gahaur, Bhanaur and Hassanpur. The need based trainings were conducted under Awareness Knowledge Programmes to the rural women for capacity building and to generate income for enhancing the quality of life of their families. These trainings were conducted on fabric painting, candle making, jewellery making and preparation of eco - friendly cleaning agents. Trainings were also imparted to make the rural women aware regarding the use of solar energy, conservation of water and fuel at household level, consumer rights and responsibilities and also drudgery reducing technologies. It is therefore, recommended that rural women need appropriate motivation to use and adopt the knowledge and skills given to them through these training programmes for capacity building and income generation.

KEY WORDS : Awareness, Knowledge, Empowerment, Drudgery reducing.

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In ancient India, women occupy a place of prominence in the society. However, due to unfavorable beliefs, women remained deprived of education and the social freedom for a very long time. The society remained dominated by men and women did not get equal opportunities for their development and growth. In independent India, much emphasis has been laid on the upliftment of women, but lot more needs to be done to give women due place in society. While the woman in the urban sector has the opportunities for education, the same has been found wanting amid the rural women folk. The rural woman is more prone to circumstances where nature intervenes and many times distorts her livelihood landscapes. The urban educated woman is more inclined to seek salaried jobs for becoming economically independent. Both the rural and urban woman alike however require to be exposed to the opportunities and the scope for self development through entrepreneurship. In rural areas micro enterprises can play an important role in the promotion of self employment, entrepreneurship and raising the level of income and standard of living of

women. They could be helpful in providing opportunities to women for gaining direct access to income and developing competence in managing an enterprise. By promoting women's ventures and small enterprises, government and non government organizations can play a crucial role in supporting women as agents of change by encouraging the development of small and medium sized enterprises in their own areas. Therefore, in this context, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana center of All India Coordinated Research Project – Home Science, Directorate of Research on women in Agriculture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Bhubaneswar made an to empower the women through Awareness – Knowledge Programmes with the following objectives: to assess the awareness level regarding Fuel, water and energy used for home and farm, to know the awareness regarding drudgery reducing technologies for farm activities and to build the knowledge and capacity of farm women in Fuel, water and energy saving practices, entrepreneurial skills through Awareness Knowledge Programmes.