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GRT STATUS OF WOMEN IN PALM LEAF WEAVERS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN TUTICORIN DISTRICT

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Abstract:-Rural women could easily borrow from the cooperative institutions to participate in productive activities (Cited in Haile 2004). To solve the problem, women are organized themselves under cooperative institutions, which make them homogenous and for development interventions easy to operationalize. This paper attempts to analyze the responsibility and involvement of cooperatives in empowering the women. In the study, the investigator used simple random sampling technique for selecting the sample. Secondary data and information are collected from the published and unpublished sources like books, journals websites, etc. Percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation chi-square test, probability and 't' test were the statistical techniques used for carrying out the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

The findings show that there exists a significant difference between women members of Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society and Anthoniyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society after joining co-operative societies and its components. It is observed that only three members are against propagating cooperative principles as a measure to improve the condition of cooperatives. But more than 30 per cent of the total members are against procedure should be simplified. Again, more than 20 per cent of the total members are against more friendly. About 11.67 per cent of the members have no definite opinion on the issue of election and more loyal to the society. Further nearly 13.3 per cent of the total members are against liquidating or merging weak societies and 86.67 per cent of the total members are support service of experts. Since the p-value (0.000000) is less than 0.05, there is significant difference between the assessment of members for improving the performance of co-operatives and their acceptance.

Keywords: cooperative society, palm sugar, chi-square test, probability poverty alleviation, women empowerment.

INTRODUCTION :-

Most women in developing countries do not have access to education, productive resources and other services. Such discrimination hampers them not to earn incomes and not to actively participate in socioeconomic and political conditions (Kebeer 1999). The key to long term poverty alleviation in developing countries is empowerment, in the broadest sense of increasing self-reliance of the poor, especially poor women (Dawson 1998).

Rural women could easily borrow from the cooperative institutions to participate in productive activities (Cited in Haile 2004). To solve the problem, women are organized themselves under cooperative institutions, which make them homogenous and for development interventions easy to operationalize (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2002). Cooperative institutions provide nursery and tree planting services in rural Canada (Hallett 2001). Cooperatives in Western Europe initiate farmers to integrate environmental values into their production systems (Glasbergen 2000).

Cooperatives have inherent advantages in tackling the problems of poverty alleviation, food security and employment generation. It is considered to have immense potential to deliver goods and services in areas where both the public and the private sector have failed (Verma, 2004). It can generate "accelerated economic growth," when loans are easily available, properly utilized and repaid in time. A cumulative upward movement of "capital supply – increased productivity – higher real income – higher capital supply" is necessary for sustainable rural development (Chakraborti, 2004).

The observations of Chaudhuri (2001) were strongly supported by Shetty (2004) and suggested that in order to

increase the productivity of agriculture, better institutional credit delivery mechanisms were to be conceptualized, planned and executed urgently. Kanthimatinathan (2004) added to the above arguments and opined that without cheap credit it is not possible for small and marginal farmers to carry out their activities. Sivaloganathan (2004) observed that adequate credit facilities were highly essential for agricultural growth because there was a vast gap in the vital sectors of the economy.

Subrahmanyam (2005) in his study observed that the government of India examined the flow of agricultural credit and related issues in consultation with RBI, NABARD and announced the farm credit package to ensure doubling the flow of agricultural credit in the next three years. Agricultural credit and agricultural development goes by hand in hand, hence the farmer should be provided adequate and cheap credit (Dutta & Sundaram, 2005).

Calvert (1996) aptly argued that Cooperative credit is the practical alternative to usury. Vilasrao Deshmukh (2005) said that the Cooperatives in India account for more than half of industrial finance advanced to agriculture and one-fifth of private capital formation. Sharma (1970) observed that an Advisory Committee on Rural credit was constituted by the RBI to accelerate the flow of credit to the agricultural sector. This paper attempts to analyze the responsibility and involvement of cooperatives in empowering the women.

WOMEN WORKERS IN PALM PRODUCERS COOPERATIVE SOCIETY IN TUTICORIN DISTRICT

Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society established in 1957 to promote the manufacture of products out of the leaves of the palmyra tree, the co-operative today has over 250 artisans from Manapad (all women), engaged in making a wide range of eco-friendly products like hats, bags, trays, baskets and bins. From 250 women members 30 respondents were selected as sample. In Anthoniyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society, the women members are produced and sold Palm products such as Palm Jaggery, Palm Sugar, Palm Candy, Preserved Nungu, Palm Fruit Jam, Palm Chocolate varieties and non-edible products such as Palm Leaf articles, Palm Naar articles, Palm Fibre and Brush varieties, Date Palm Baskets and other Handmade palm Products and 30 women respondents were selected as sample.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1.To study the socio economic background of the members of Cooperative Society of Tuticorin District
- 2.To analyse the economic status of women members after joining co-operative societies
- 3.To identify the opinion of members for improving the performance of co-operatives.

METHODOLOGY

The present study has covered two villages from Tuticorin District viz, Manapad and Anthoniyarpuram. This study is compiled with the help of the primary data covered in only three month period (2014). Women members from Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society and Anthoniyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society in Thoothukudi District are considered for the study. The investigator covered 30 women members of the Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society and 30 women members of the Anthoniyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society.

In the study, the investigator used simple random sampling technique for selecting the sample. Secondary data and information are collected from the published and unpublished sources like books, journals websites, magazines reports, Government publications such as Economic Review, Economic Survey, NSSO estimates etc. A separate interview schedule was designed, pilot tested and used for data collection. This is purely a descriptive study. Percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation chi-square test, probability and 't' test were the statistical techniques used for carrying out the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Due to lack of money, energy and lack of time, the researcher has collected the data from 60 respondents in the study area for the purpose of analysis and discussion.

Socio-personal characteristics of respondents (n=60)

| Variable | Categories | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|------------|
| Age (in years) | Below 30 | 28.33 |
| | 30-40 | 40.00 |
| | 40-50 | 15.00 |
| | Above 50 | 16.67 |

Status Of Women In Palm Leaf Weavers Co-operative Societies In Tuticorin District

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Educational Qualification | Secondary | 20 |
| | Hr. Sec | 26 |
| | Graduate | 18 |
| | Diploma | 36 |
| Area of Residence | Urban | 39 |
| | Rural | 61 |
| Religion | Christians | 22 |
| | Hindus | 78 |
| Community | Most Backward | 16 |
| | SC/ST | 12 |
| | Backward Classes | 72 |
| Family Size | Low (Less than 3) | 23 |
| | Medium (3-5) | 45 |
| | Large (5-7) | 32 |
| Family Type | Nuclear Family | 84 |
| | Joint Family | 16 |
| Marital Status | Married | 73 |
| | Unmarried | 27 |
| Housing | Own | 15 |
| | Rent | 85 |
| Livestock | Goat | 25 |
| | Cow | 10 |
| | Cattle | 23.33 |
| | Poultry | 41.67 |
| Satisfaction of work | Very satisfied | 21.67 |
| | Satisfied | 57.67 |
| | To some extent | 12.33 |
| | Not at all | 8.33 |
| | | |

Source: Primary Data

Status Of Women In Palm Leaf Weavers Co-operative Societies In Tuticorin District

From the above table it is clear that 28.33% of the women respondents belong to up to 30 years, 55% of the respondents belong to between 30-50 years and 16.67% of the respondents are in the age group of above 50 years and the mean age group is 33.41667. Further, education results revealed that 20% of the respondents had high school education, about 26% had higher secondary level education and only about 18% had pursued degrees. Further, 36% of the respondent's educational qualification is diploma.

The table further reveals that 61% of the respondents reside at rural area. The study showed that majority of them, about 78%, was Hindus and about 22% were Christians. Generally, the study area is dominated by Hindus. Majority of the respondents belong to backward classes and their percentage is 72%. The majority of the respondents i.e., 45 percentage of families are having medium size ranging from 3-5members. Results on family type revealed that 84 percent of the respondents belonging to the nuclear family. This clearly indicates the declining of the joint family system.

From the survey the above table reveals that 73% of the respondents are married and 27% of the respondents are unmarried. From the table, it is revealed that almost all the sample women respondents are residing rental houses (15%). Livestock maintenance is an additional source of income. About 25% of the sample farmers had goat, about 41.67% of them maintained poultry and about 23.33% of them had cattle. It is clear that 79.34% of women respondents are satisfied with their work, 12.33% of respondents are not fully satisfied they need some extent in their work, and 8.33% of respondents are fully not satisfied with their work and their mean and standard deviation was 15 and 13.7598.

Changes on Socio Economic Status after Joining Co-Operative societies

| Statements | Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society | | | Anthonyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society | | | 't' value | Level of significance |
|---|---|-----|------|---|-----|------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | | |
| Access to credit sources | 30 | 4.3 | 0.7 | 30 | 3.7 | 0.7 | 1.5 | 0.0025 |
| Mobility | 30 | 0.5 | 0.05 | 30 | 0.6 | 0.05 | 3.9 | 0.0025 |
| Recognition in community | 30 | 0.4 | 0.05 | 30 | 0.6 | 0.05 | 0.6 | 0.0025 |
| Interaction with outsiders | 30 | 0.3 | 0.05 | 30 | 0.6 | 0.05 | 8.1 | 0.0025 |
| Recognition in the family | 30 | 0.3 | 0.05 | 30 | 0.6 | 0.05 | 6.6 | 0.0025 |
| Asset building | 30 | 0.1 | 0.05 | 30 | 0.6 | 0.04 | 1.7 | 0.0025 |
| Decision making related to money centered | 30 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 30 | 0.7 | 0.05 | 0.9 | 0.0025 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The above findings show that there exists a significant difference between women members of Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society and Anthonyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society after joining co-operative societies and its components. As per the table it is indicative that the mean on access to credit sources and decision making related to money centered is higher in the Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society than the Anthonyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society but on the other components the mean is higher in Anthonyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society and differ significantly.

Opinion of Members for Improving the Performance of Co-operatives (n=60)

| Statements | Opinion | | | | | |
|--|---------|-------|----------|-------|------------|-------|
| | Agree | % | Disagree | % | No opinion | % |
| Members of co-operative society should be more friendly | 22 | 36.67 | 20 | 33.33 | 18 | 30 |
| Procedure should be simplified | 27 | 45 | 21 | 35 | 12 | 20 |
| Election should be conducted regularly | 45 | 75 | 8 | 13.33 | 7 | 11.67 |
| Members should be more loyal to the society | 41 | 68.33 | 12 | 20 | 7 | 11.67 |
| The service of experts should be made available to the societies | 52 | 86.67 | 5 | 8.33 | 3 | 5 |
| Weak societies should be merged or liquidated | 49 | 81.67 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 13.33 |
| Propagate cooperative principles | 54 | 90 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data
chi-square = 76.7, degrees of freedom = 12, probability = 0.000

It is observed that only three members are against propagating cooperative principles as a measure to improve the condition of cooperatives. But more than 30 per cent of the total members are against procedure should be simplified. Again, more than 20 per cent of the total members are against more friendly. About 11.67 per cent of the members have no definite opinion on the issue of election and more loyal to the society. Further nearly 13.3 per cent of the total members are against liquidating or merging weak societies and 86.67 per cent of the total members are support service of experts. Since the p-value (0.000000) is less than 0.05, there is significant difference between the assessment of members for improving the performance of co-operatives and their acceptance.

CONCLUSION

Present study shows that there exists significant relationship between women members of Manapad Palm Leaf Weavers Cooperative Society and Anthonyarpuram Palm Jiggery Producers Cooperative Society after joining co-operative societies. Women cooperative societies are very effective in poverty alleviation and women empowerment. Member awareness is very essential. Members do not take part actively in the activities of the society due to lack of leisure time. Societies need to identify some donors and think of increasing their income so that they are financially strengthened. Service providers aiming at sustainability cannot rely on donor money and instead they have to generate their own operational income from provision of efficient services and setting the price for their services approximately. All the efforts and plans of the government in the direction of poverty alleviation and women empowerment can reach the grass root and become effective only through the cooperatives. Therefore these cooperatives have to be financially strengthened and empowered to function effectively.

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