

Research Paper

Emerging Trends and Technology for the empowerment of rural women

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India is a country of villages and about two-third of the total population lives in the rural areas. With diverse socio-cultural economic features the role of rural women in rural economy has been tremendous. They have to play both the home as well as farm affairs with multiple responsibilities. There is great need of up gradation of skills and technology to increase the productivity of the rural women in diversified fields. The application of science and technology in removing the drudgery of their workload and improving their quality of life has been emphasized by the national planners and scientist but achievements in this direction is not significant. It is high to do micro planning of poor women in village and to empower them with right kind of technical skills and technologies. Present paper focuses on some potential technical trades and technologies useful for rural women for their socio-economic transformation.

Introduction

India is a country of villages and about two-third of the total population lives in the rural areas. With diverse socio-cultural economic features the role of rural economy has been tremendous. They have to play both the home as well as farm affairs with multiple responsibilities. They are mostly in farming and village and cottage industries. Their roles as an active contributor to rural economy has been not given due recognition in real economic terms but several studies have shown that they are the backbone of rural economy. At the outset it has also been realized that most of the rural women are illiterate, unskilled and untrained. Literacy rate of women is about 40%, which indicate their poor status. There are many interrelated factors including biological, socio-cultural, psycho-social and economic which have prevented rural women to attain their due place in the society. There have been three fold interventions by the government for women development i.e. education and training, health maintenance especially reproductive health and economic independence. Some of the schemes like DWACRA; ICDS have worked in this direction with partial success. The DST (Department of Science and Technology) has also emphasized for the development of rural women through application of science and Technology) has also emphasized for the development of rural women through application of science and technology. Some of the innovative projects in the field of Vermiculture Biotechnology have given encouraging results from the development of rural women.

There is great need of skills and technologies up gradation to increase the productivity of the rural women in diversified fields. The application of science and technology in removing the drudgery of their workload and improving their quality of life has been emphasized by the national planners and scientists but achievements in this direction is not significant. It is high time to think from micro planning of poor women in a village point of view and to empower them with right kind of technical skills, technologies. The role of non-formal technical training for poor masses through present technical institutions and other agencies become important from intervention point of view (Roy, U.N, 20000).

2.0 Rural Women and Sustainable Development

Rural women have a close relation with the Nature. She is the manager of food, fodder, fuel, fiber and fertilizer,

which contribute significantly from rural economy point of view. It has established that healthy ecological system endowed with natural resources like water, forest and productive land is directly related to the healthy economic conditions of the women

(Shiva, Vandana, 1993; Agrawal, Anil, 1982). Once degradation in natural resources takes place women are the first victims of it. They need to struggle a lot collection of drinking water for household work, collection of fuel wood and fodder. Thus the role of rural women as natural resource managers has to be realized and there is a great need to involve women in the projects like Joint Forest Management, Watershed Management. The successful management and development of drinking water and sanitation programs also depend on active participation of women. Some of the important technologies related to natural resources and ecological conservation for women may be:

- o Rain water harvesting and watershed management
- o Nursery Raising
- o Horticulture and Floriculture
- o Vermiculture
- o Compost Preparation Techniques for waste recycling
- o Mushroom Cultivation
- o Bio-gas Technology
- o Smokeless Chullah

3.0 Potential Technical Trades and Technologies for Rural Women

There is a need to explore the possibilities of the trades and technologies other than traditional one, so that the economic condition of women can be improved. It is to be understood in the context of Globalization also how the products and ideas of the skilled rural women can fetch better market price. Some of the important areas with possible trades and technologies have been given below:

- (a) Agriculture and allied Activities
- Dairy and Livestock Management
 - Sericulture
 - Floriculture
 - Bee-keeping
 - Mushroom Cultivation
 - Vermiculture
 - Fruit and Vegetables Processing

<p>(b)Forestry and Forest basedNursery Raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Afforestation · Herbal Medicines · Honey Products · Herbal Shampoo and soaps making · HERBAL Cosmetics <p>(C) Electronics and Computer based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Electronic Watch Assembly · Cover of Computer,TV and other items · Assembly of transformers <p>(d)Traditional Village and Paintings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Handicrafts and Paintings · Carpet and Shawls weaving · Leather works · Ppttery and Artstic Modem Pottery · Bangles making · Agarbati making · Papad and Anchar Making · Natural Drinks Perparation · Bakery and Confectionary Items <p>(e)Low cost tiles and brick making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Low cost water storage tank construction · Low cost deain pipes construction · Low cost waste water disposal system · Compost Tanks and compost preparation Techniques · Low cost Latrins · Bio-gas plant · Smokeless Chullah · Leather works Leather Products · Pottery and Artistic Modern Pottery · Cutting and Tailoring Pottery · Rain water haevesting tanks <p>4.0 Conclusion and Future Strategies for Development of Rural Women</p> <p>There are tremendous potentials and opportunities of development of rural women in diversified fields with the help of appropriate interventions of science and technology. There is need to diversify the traditional technology with modern ideas for more producvtity benefiting the poor masses and fetching a better market price for their products. The strategies for the development of rural women lies in micro – level projects evolved with the participation of women at the grass root level. The application of high technologies like computer and internet is a dream for the rural women till the date we provide them basic livelihood support systems. After the primary level empowerment through education and technical training with financial support, we can have a long term planning for the development of rural women. There have been three fold interventions by the government for women development ie education and training, health maintenance especially reproductive health and economic independence. With appropriate intervention on these lines we can improve the status of rural women.</p> <p>References</p> <p>Agrawal Anil, 1982 State of India's Environment- First Citizen Report,1982,CSE, New Delhi</p> <p>Marcelle ,Gillian M,1993”Enterprising Women” Journal of Appropriate Technology vol 22, June,1995.</p> <p>Punia R D and U N Roy, 1999 Appropriate Technology Book published by Satya Prakashan,New Delhi.</p> <p>Roy U. N,”an Integrated Approach to Non-formal Technical Education for the Unreached Masses”. Innou,New Delhi</p>	<p>Shiva ,Vandana, 1992. Women and Ecology</p>
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