



Review Paper

NGOs: A link between the Rural Women Entrepreneurs and City Dwellers

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Abstract

Organic vegetables are in full swing in the present era. It is into demand because of health conscious customers due to the higher risk in problems like obesity and diabetes. Such infected people are being recommended by the doctors to eat vegetables and fruits organically grown and produced. In the earlier days farmers had full faith in the fertilizers for agriculture. But now a day due to the changed trend and the harmful effects of the pesticides on the grains and food items people are becoming more aware and cautious. This new trend especially in the city dwellers has made them incline towards organic stuff. The farmers have also realized and are showing interest in organic farming. The rural women entrepreneurs must make a link to such customers and the organic farmers. They must get connected to NGOs in the city and move the organic products from the farmers to the customers. They will market the products and earn the profit as no middleman exists through this link. Hence, this paper deals with the development of the rural women entrepreneurs for a good cause and the city dwellers are also gaining from the other side.

Keywords: Organic farming, rural women entrepreneurs, NGOs, a link, City dwellers.

Introduction

People in the present era are conscious about their health. Due to the increased risk of obesity, diabetes, heart problems, cancer, stroke, etc people are bent towards the intake they are consuming and the daily activities they are performing. There is a rise in the infections and health problems. And the first and sometimes the only cautious statement received from the doctors is change your lifestyle and your life habits especially your eating style. In this fast growing era people are also more inclined towards fast food. They want to fill their stomach and because of the less time and quick availability of fast food that is junk food is preferable. And due to the bad effects of the junk food people are changing their eating styles. People feel that they have less time to finish their professional tasks. So they feel that they must not waste their time in food preparation as traditional food requires a lot of time to get cooked.

This paper deals with the organic farming which must be grown in the villages and the rural women entrepreneurs who must make it possible to make this produce reach the city dwellers through the NGOs. Firstly with the organic farming which means producing and growing of agricultural products by growing it naturally. They do not use any conventional methods like use of fertilizers and pesticides in order to enrich the soil or to grow the products and also to clean the weeds. They grow the vegetables and fruits in a natural way and use natural fertilizers to enrich the products. No chemicals or artificial fertilizers are used. Even to clean the harmful weeds manpower and crop rotation are used. But when a farmer uses conventional farming by using chemicals and artificial pesticides then the growth of

the vegetables is faster and in large quantity compared to the organic farming. He is paying more in organic farming rather than the conventional methods. Due to the lack of manpower he has to face another difficulty apart from the high cost of natural pesticides. The supply therefore reduces compared to the high demand of organic products. Apart from the less availability of the natural manure the farmers have to face high transportation costs for the animal manure and compost they require to be transported from distance places. The products will therefore cost more compared to the conventional products. Green or eco-friendly products are products safe enough to use as they are free from all contamination with low amount of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

Rural women entrepreneurs are growing in large numbers in the rural areas. They are dealing with the agricultural products as entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are the one who try to maximize the profits by innovation and innovation is to solve problems and get satisfaction by attacking the problems using certain skills and capabilities¹. Women entrepreneurs are the women who start a new business, take care to develop it, manage it carefully and keep it running successfully. There is an increase in the women owned business. As there is a demand for the organic products the rural women entrepreneurs must motivate the rural women to cultivate organic vegetables and fruits in their backyards or kitchen gardens. Once they start flourishing then they can use the fields owned and taken care by their husbands with the cash or commercial crops. The women can start at a very low range by producing the minimum until they get stabilized. For women to start with the initial investment is

not so costly as the output required is less and the women can use natural manure and can clean the weeds at the initial stage. There are many opportunities here for our farmers as we are not in a fashion to use lots of synthetic fertilizers compared to the developed countries. As the concept of organic farming is still new and not a developed one, there are chances for the rural women entrepreneurs to grow well and generate some income to be added to their family income which in turn would empower them. And to flourish here they must add and combine certain marketing and skills development.

It does not end once the products are grown. Only when such organic products reach the people who are in need of it then the real meaning of producing the products is completed. Then the rural women need to act as middleman and use their marketing skills. In order to do this they need to contact the NGOs in the nearby cities. These NGOs must connect the rural women entrepreneurs to the city people as they are reliable. The supply must reach the demand through the NGOs. The demand definitely overwhelms the supply.

The promotion and enhancement of agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity is only through organic agriculture. The regional conditions and locally adapted systems are mostly accepted. To fulfill any specific function within the system the agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods are used and the use of synthetic materials is avoided.

Discussion

In Wonokerto Village, as the research location, there is snake fruit (*salacca zalacca*) plant that is managed by local people from generation to generation. Arrowroot (*garut*) is also cultivated almost at each of the home yard. Both plants are cultivated naturally and categorized into organic products because those plants are organically cultivated². As discussed here it must be noted that the rural women entrepreneurs are starting with the basic vegetables like tomatoes, coriander, green vegetables, etc. They must compel the village women or housewives to grow such vegetables first and once in demand must start expanding by adding more vegetables and fruits. Such products must add something to the family income to start with though it is not a huge contribution at the beginning. The Soil Association has reviewed the published research that makes claims about the global productive capacity of organic agriculture when it was felt that whether the world will be fed by organic products³. And as per the data available it proves that there will be enough food for the whole world through organic farming. Accordingly, we have certain positive feeling that the organic farming will grow, exist and flourish. Though we have certain problems related to the cost and the availability of the natural fertilizers. Due to which our farmers are not practicing it regularly. But time will come when the demand increases and forces the farmers to grow more organic products. The demand

rises and the supply must rise and will bring down the cost of such goods.

“Guidebook on Developing Women’s Entrepreneurship in Green Cooperatives in the Asian and Pacific Region” developed by ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) describes that rural women entrepreneurs and online business in cooperatives must be promoted in order to empower the rural women. By doing so it would promote and help to diminish rural poverty and improve sustainable development. It further says that women from rural areas are adding value as a pioneer because they as the rural women entrepreneurship and e-business in the areas of green or organic cooperatives as it is a relatively undeveloped area⁴.

There are lots of opportunities as the area is not developed fully and initial exploration is required.

Women usually prefer organic products and it is said that they have a natural instinct to organic foods. They pay more attention to organic food as they are concerned about the family health, food safety and wholesome food. And the women are more troubled biologically due to the pesticides and chemicals and face fat storage problems and this gets transferred to their children through breast feeding. So it is felt that the women entrepreneurs would be the best to promote organic foods and farming.

The NGOs who need to bring the organic food to the city dwellers play an important role to develop and enhance market relations. They need to support the rural women entrepreneurs and the city dwellers too. They can have E-business or can take orders on telephone in the process of receiving orders from their clients. This term means buying and selling goods on internet. The NGOs can act as the mediators until the rural women develop themselves to have direct contact with the city customers through telephone on E- business.

Conclusion

The women deal with their traditional work like household responsibilities including child rearing and bringing up and the men are exempted from such tasks. Similarly the mechanical threshing in the agriculture work is for men only and women deal with the hand threshing. But women working outside are not exempted from the household work. They have a double burden work and need to take care of house, agriculture, livestock, handicrafts and the small business apart from all this. They cook, clean, carry food to the male members in fields, fetch water, collect fuel and fodder, take care of the children, and do some non routine works like house repairs and construction, repairing storage bins, processing and conserving foods like pickles, papads, grinding, etc, weaving and stitching clothes, looking after the sick and the old, and fulfilling other social demands like attending marriages, deaths and other ceremonies. Hence, as women show their interest towards all

the work and can manage and balance both the work and house it is guaranteed that the women can grow the organic products and the rural women entrepreneurs can transfer such products to the NGOs and make them reach the city dwellers.

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