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Rural Marketing Strategies Adopted By Rural Women – An Analysis

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Abstract

Marketing is the process used to determine what products or services may be of the interest to customers, and the strategy to use in sales, communications and business development. This moves them to the rural areas to create satisfaction and uplift their standard of living. Rural areas of the country or countryside are areas that are not urbanized, though when large areas are described country towns and smaller cities are included. The purpose of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of rural marketing done by women in Virudhunagar district, Tamilnadu. The study investigates further to determine, whether women micro entrepreneurs adopt economic marketing or the non-economic marketing efforts. And will also help the government marketing societies to improve the status of women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar district. It also helps to suggest the better way of marketing of products and to raise their economic position. The finding of this research will guide to promote the rural women and to guide with better marketing techniques to sell their products. In order to collect and gather primary data, structured questionnaire survey methods are used. In addition, information was also collected through discussions and interviews with self-owned business women's, local NGOs and government's grass roots level workers etc.

Keywords: *Rural Marketing, Marketing strategy, selling, women entrepreneurs.*

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INTRODUCTION

The study on the Effectiveness of rural marketing done by rural women is to bring together an extensive amount of information on various entrepreneurship and women's development in marketing programmes introduced in India. The study looks at the socio-cultural, educational and legal barriers to women's entrepreneurship in India. It also includes profiles of the key agencies involved in promoting women's entrepreneurship and enhancing the economic empowerment of women throughout the country.

Women owned businesses are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries. The hidden entrepreneurial potentials of women have gradually been changing with the growing sensitivity to the role and economic status in the society. Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge into business ventures. 'Rural women' is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent.

A strong desire to do something positive is an inbuilt quality of marketing, which is capable of contributing values in both family and social life. It has always been understood that, the rural women are grossly home-makers and are not a part of the active financial and working life of the rural India, in spite of the proven fact that, they are hard-working, farsighted and logical individuals. This study conducted in rural areas of Virudhunagar region, Tamilnadu

Two major fields where remarkable change and growth has been seen: firstly, rural women earning out of their kitchen garden and secondly, the growth in the preserved food compliments like papad, fisheries & agricultural products food. In the recent industrial policy, the government has given tremendous importance for the agro-based products and allied products. Only 5% to 8% of the total production of fruit and vegetables are processed every year in India. This reveals a huge scope for the food, fruit and vegetable processing industry. Women have a natural flair and instinct for food preparation and processing. Anew market is developed for the processed food products. Thus there are plenty of opportunities available for rural women. The present study is an effort in this direction. An attempt has been made to document available information regarding the status of rural women against the

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backdrop of the socioeconomic context and the attendant challenges they face.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been carried out with the following objectives in

1. To understand how do these women operate and market their products.

2. To know how do they grow their customer base and sustain the existing customers in a price sensitive market.

3. To study the socio-economic background of the rural women

4. To analyze the major strength and weakness of rural women s and the environmental opportunities and threats which promote the entrepreneurship.

5. To offer suggestions to improve the satisfaction of women and the framework for the promotion of their business in Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aruna Shree P Rao (1981): made a study on the level of organizational involvement of women in development projects. The study recommends that project personnel should train participants in the skills necessary for planning and implementing project activities and Project should concentrate on activities designed to raise the income of the participants.

Study results Buttner (1997): on U.S. 29 female entrepreneurs, shows that 34% of them have difficulty in attracting investment and financial management. Carter and Kolvereid (1997): found for example that women had greater limitations in accessing personal savings, given more punctuated and interrupted work histories and lower patterns of remuneration. Glass and Petrin (1998): found family support was an important variable involved in entrepreneurial career choices of women entrepreneurs in Slovenia. In Study of Sandor (1999): the most important barriers to women entrepreneurship have been included fear of failure, lack of courage, lack of Support, moral support and lack of suitable model. The penetration of the schemes and its use seems to lack the quality to change the situation. Lee-Gosselin as cited in Maysami (1999): found that in general, the most common start-up problems seem to be lack of capital. Also important was lack of confidence in female business owner's abilities on the part of banks, suppliers, and clients alike, as well as family issues.

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Additional problems, such as marketing and labour difficulties and disagreement with associates may arise after the start-up phase. N. Pujar (2000): has analyzed the contribution and participation of women entrepreneurs by taking statistics of women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra. He pointed out that women entrepreneur have contributed much only to household industries namely food and textile industries.

Kirsi (2005) Thus instead of being a facilitating factor family responsibilities in these countries have become an obstruction in the growth of entrepreneurship. High levels of child care provisions often accompany high levels of women's employment but low levels of women's entrepreneurship so it's mandatory for researchers in India to take up intra cultural variation as a major variable in studying the cultural influence on women entrepreneurial intent. In other words, for many female entrepreneurs, the choice of self-employment may reflect the restricted structure of opportunities in the labour market, labour market discrimination or glass ceiling career problems, with self-employment often perceived as a survival strategy, or as a means of providing flexibility in work scheduling and reconciling multiple roles Baughn et al.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Rural Women who are the main source of primary data are collected from the women vendors through a well structured questionnaire. As the area of study is limited to Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu and as the total women population is numerable, the researcher has proposed the sampling techniques for the selection of respondents. To identify the right respondents which are also very essential for the collection of primary data the following process has been adopted scientifically. Finally 90 respondents were selected and included the study from various rural places near Virudhunagar who have engaged to start a small business through their own resource.

An extensive literature review of secondary data sources was undertaken as relevant to the stated objectives of the study. In order to fill in secondary data gaps, data from Rural Development Board have been referred. This study has been conducted within a short time frame. The research data collection procedure followed was simple. The methodology used for primary data collection was convenient sampling and all the targets

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were interviewed personally through a structured open-end questionnaire. FGD's (focus group discussion) of customers/consumers were also organized to get the feedback on the attitude and behaviour of these women agri-vendors and so on the. The focus areas for research works has been Virudhunagar, Mallanginar, Erichanatham, Amathur, Vallikulam, Palavanatham and also the outskirts of Virudhunagar District.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Marketing done by rural women vendors have demonstrated their potential, In order to harness their potential and for their continued growth and development, it is necessary to formulate appropriate strategies for stimulating, supporting and sustaining their efforts in this direction. Such a strategy needs to be in congruence with field realities, and should especially take cognizance of the problems of rural women marketers.

The total rural women entrepreneurs in India contribute to be about 6%. It is also clear that this percentage is growing every year. Further in the studied market the local unorganized women vendors are 37% of the total vendors.

In the rural areas in and around the middle size towns, due to financial constraints and various other reasons the women of the families have taken an initiative and have entrepreneur in to petty businesses. Some operate from their houses and a big lot moves in the market. It has been a major growth phenomenon where the rural women move to the markets or nearby towns or urban habitat and sell out their produce which is either agri- produce or handmade food compliments and so on. It is seen that these women sell packets of, papad and masalas etc in the local urban markets and also move in the residential localities. This marketing Strategy is seen to be growing slowly but steadily. It has been seen that, in and around the marked local vegetable markets in the places of Sivakasi, Arupukottai, Sattur, there is a big lot of women vegetable vendors who are although not big in terms of volume and value but still have a very consistent market. There are a lot of women mobile vegetable vendors who keep moving within the residential colonies of the city where they have a very consistent and regular set of customer base. These are by and large the women vendors hailing from the nearby rural agriculture areas of Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Satur, Arupukottai, Thirumangalam, etc.

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TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

This study was conducted among 90 respondents of the rural women vendors. Personal interview is the major tool of data collection. Interview technique is to be made at women entrepreneurs. The secondary data are also proposed to collect from various departments. All these data are to be arranged in various form of tables and proposed to critically analyse with the help of a number of statistical tools. Percentage Analysis and Chi-Square Test are the statistical tools applied.

Socio Economic Background

The personnel characteristics of the selected respondents like age, educational status, marital status, family income, business type, size of the business, financial sources and spend expenses are discussed in this section

Table 1 -Socio Economic Background of the Respondents

Factors	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age Factor	**Below 30**	**20**	**22.22 %**
	30-40	**32**	**35.56 %**
	40-50	**26**	**28.89 %**
	50 & above	**12**	**13.33%**
Marital Status	**Unmarried**	**31**	**31%**
	Married	**59**	**59%**
Educational Qualification	**Illiterate**	**5**	**5.56**
	Primary	**9**	**10**
	Secondary	**16**	**17.78**
	Higher secondary	**42**	**46.67**
	Graduate level	**18**	**20**
Annual Income	**Below 10,000**	**15**	**16.67**
	10,000- 20,000	**32**	**35.56**
	20,000-30,000	**21**	**23.33**
	30,000-40,000	**14**	**15.56**
	40,000 & ABOVE	**8**	**8.89**

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Chi-Square Analysis: The opinion of the respondents and socio-economic characters relationship is applied for chi square test. The selected variables only to apply in this model. Table 1.3 reveals that the summary of the respondents. The chi-square analysis reveals that the factors are Age and Education are significant at 1% level. Marital status, business type and sources of finance are significant at 5% level of significance. The remaining factors are not significant at 5% level. Open training.

Table: - 2

Factors	**Chi Square value**	**Degrees of freedom**	**Table value**	**Result**
Age Factor	17.26	6	16.81	Significant**
Educational Qualification	14.97	4	13.28	Significant**
Marital Status	12.56	2	5.99	Significant*
Family Income	3.65	6	12.59	Not Significant
Business type	11.54	4	9.49	Significant*
Size of the rural business	7.23	4	9.49	Not Significant
Source for the business	13.68	6	12.59	Significant*
Amount spend	7.26	4	13.28	Not Significant

* - Significant at 5% Level, **- Significant at 1% Level

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DISCUSSIONS

Most of the women entrepreneurs have opined that due to lack of training, they are not able to survive in the market. Hence, the government should conduct frequent training programmes with regard to new production techniques, sales techniques, etc, This training should be made compulsory for women vendors. Finance is the first major problem for rural women. Hence, the government can provide interest free loans to encourage women entrepreneurs. Rural Women vendors should be encouraged to start their entrepreneurship

Parents of unmarried potential women entrepreneurs should be encouraged in spending money on setting up business rather than giving preference to their marriage. Marketing product is one of the main problems for women here, women co-operative societies can be started to procure the products from women sellers. They will help them in selling their products at a reasonable price. Improper location and inadequate infrastructure facilities are the hurdles in the way of development of women in rural business. Hence, separate industrial estates may be set up exclusively for women entrepreneurs to reduce the initial investment and to create a special environment.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the study that women are ready to face the challenges associated with setting up of a rural business. Society is very much receptive to the concept of women vendors, so is the family. Rural marketing strategy is not only into business for survival but to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities. Rural Women development is contributing to a great extent to the social transformation. The future will see more women venturing. The socio background including factors, type and mode of business, training programmes are the important problems of women entrepreneurs in Virudhunagar District.

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