

Research Note

Perceived Measures for Empowering Lodha Women in Odisha

M. Bhol¹, M. Mishra², R.K. Raj³ and J.R. Mishra^{4*}

ABSTRACT

Lodha women have higher contribution for the maintenance of their family. Lodha Micro Project functioning in Suliapada and Moroda blocks in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha has implemented various activities like farm production, income generation, infrastructure development, education, health and sanitation etc. for all round development of the Lodha community. The study to seek the suggestion of women regarding enhanced empowerment showed that participatory decision making and involvement in developing infrastructures benefitting majority, community approach, programming for all families, skill training, proper utilization of resources, liasoning for credit facilities, prioritization of income generating activities and beneficiary selection with common agreement were the important suggestions of the Lodha women for income generation leading to empowerment.

Keywords: Empowerment, Income generation, Lodha micro project, Suggestions

INTRODUCTION

The Lodha women are presumed hard workers and they shoulder the major responsibilities for the maintenance of family. They are also more engaged in farm activities than their male counterparts. The Government has implemented Lodha Micro Project to change the illegal activities like theft, burglary, robbery etc. of the Lodha tribe and to bring them into the mainstream by engaging in agriculture (Panda and Guha, 2013). Therefore, the Government has facilitated them farm land, fire proof house, animals, goats and poultry birds, supply of inputs, farm implements etc. to improve their economic life. The project also organized 31 Self Help Groups in the project area in a cluster of 12 villages where income generating activities like small business, sabai rope making, poultry, goat and bee-keeping etc. were undertaken with the financial assistance from the project. Besides, fruit and forest tree plantations, silk worm rearing

is also taken up involving Lodha women. Though the project has given sufficient thoughts for the upliftment of Lodha women, their economic life has not significantly improved. Several constraints are also observed in effective implementation of the programmes (Kantidas, 2012). An institutional convergence is also required for development of women (Singh *et al.*, 2014). A study was therefore, designed to invite suggestions of the Lodha women for their upliftment through Lodha Micro Project.

METHODOLOGY

Lodha micro project is functioning in a cluster of 12 villages i.e., 4 in Suliapada and 8 in Moroda blocks in Mayurbhanj district in Odisha involving 976 households. A sample of 66 Lodha women from Suliapada block and 144 from Moroda block covering around 20.0 per cent of the adopted families were randomly selected as the respondents to invite suggestions for effective

¹Senior Scientist and Head, KVK Sundargarh-II, Odisha

²Former Reader, Home Science, R.D. Women's College, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

³Former Professor, Department of Extension Education, College of Agriculture, OUAT, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

⁴Principal Scientist, Agriculture Extension, ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi

*Corresponding author email id: jyotiranjannishra@yahoo.co.in

Table 1: Suggestions of Lodha women

S.No.	Suggestion	Mean Score		Pooled mean score (n = 210)	Rank
		Suliapada block (n=66)	Morada block (n=144)		
I	Community organisation				
1.	Organising women properly	2.27	2.44	2.41	V
2.	Involving women in problem diagnosis	2.64	2.64	2.64	II
3.	Participatory decision making	2.58	2.71	2.67	I
4.	Assigning duties and responsibility	1.95	2.04	2.01	VI
5.	Community approach	2.52	2.55	2.54	III
6.	Beneficiary selection with common agreement	2.53	2.48	2.50	IV
7.	Conflict resolution	1.62	2.07	1.93	VII
II	Infrastructure support				
1.	Prioritization of the infrastructure	2.11	2.32	2.27	V
2.	Benefits for the majority	2.61	2.67	2.65	I
3.	Involving people in establishing infrastructure	2.53	2.60	2.58	II
4.	Skill competency in use of infrastructure	2.45	2.39	2.41	III
5.	Provision for repair and maintenance	2.18	2.22	2.21	VI
6.	Developing leaders for optimum use of the infrastructure	2.42	2.39	2.40	IV
III	Vocational activities				
1.	Prioritization of income generating activities	2.52	2.47	2.49	II
2.	Programming for all families	2.44	2.53	2.50	I
3.	Priority for resource poor	2.20	2.40	2.38	III
4.	Adequate programme for women	2.59	2.28	2.38	III
5.	Feasible vocations to different groups	2.08	2.02	2.04	V
6.	Immediate action on field problems	2.03	2.27	2.19	IV
IV	Technical support				
1.	Skill training for competency	2.55	2.51	2.52	I
2.	Exposure visit for experience	2.27	2.48	2.41	II
3.	Thorough understanding on vocation	2.23	2.31	2.28	III
4.	Competency in use of inputs and materials	2.24	2.28	2.27	IV
5.	Ensuring timely availability of quality inputs	2.14	2.28	2.24	V
6.	Linking women with source of information	1.98	1.92	1.94	VI
V	Credit and finance				
1.	Financial support for the activities	2.32	2.47	2.42	I
2.	Liasoning for credit facility	2.36	2.43	2.41	II
3.	Arranging subsidy facilities	2.12	2.26	2.22	III
4.	Fixing instalments as per capability	1.83	2.13	2.04	VI
5.	Flexibility in repayment	1.92	2.16	2.08	V
6.	Insurance coverage	2.18	2.23	2.21	IV

(Maximum Obtainable Score – 3)

implementation of the project. The data was collected personally with a semi-structured pre-tested schedule. Information collected on a scale of most essential, essential and not essential were analysed with score value of 3, 2 and 1 respectively to reveal the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Lodha community should be organized properly for the active participation for successful implementation of the programmes. As observed from Table 1, involving women in problem diagnosis, participatory decision making, community approach, beneficiary selection with common agreement and organizing women properly were the major suggestions in community organization. Lodha community is usually resource poor and the micro project has developed various infrastructures which are not being used adequately. The important suggestions towards infrastructure support stated by the respondents were developing infrastructures benefitting majority, involving people while developing infrastructures and developing leaders to coordinate for optimum use. Lodha micro project has undertaken various income generating activities as livelihood support. Such vocational activities should be feasible for its sustainability. The important suggestions of the respondents were programming for all families, prioritization of income generating activities taking into account of resource availability and market demand, priority for resource poor and women. Since Lodha women are involved more in farm activities, technical competency are more essential in comparison to male members. The data reveals that skill training, exposure visit, thorough understanding on vocation including marketing as well as competency in use of inputs and materials were the major suggestions of the respondents for smooth management of vocational activities for more income.

The socio-cultural and economic constraints compels towards use of their traditional practice. They essentially need credit support to purchase inputs and material for the management of vocational activities (Dhanasree *et al.*, 2014). Major suggestions on credit and finance were adequate financial support, liasoning for credit facilities

and arranging subsidy facility by linking the activities of the developmental programmes of related departments. Unless these activities are extended, the Lodha women may discontinue the activities and switch over to their traditional activities.

CONCLUSION

Both the Central and State Government have laid emphasis for the upliftment of Lodha tribe as they are marginalized and backward. The Lodha women needs more support as they had more responsibilities for the maintenance of their family. Participatory decision making and involvement in developing infrastructures benefitting majority, community approach, programming for all families, skill training for competency in managing the vocational activities, proper utilization of resources, liasoning for credit facilities, prioritization of income generating activities and beneficiary selection with common agreement were the important suggestions of Lodha women which should be taken into consideration while formulating programmes for the empowerment of Lodha women.

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