



Perceived Impact of Cassava Women Growers on Cassava Value Addition Techniques in Salem District of Tamilnadu

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Salem district acts as hub for cassava cultivation since, it accounts for 60.00 per cent of starch production in India and attracts several projects related to cassava. The analysis of perceived impact in the present study focuses on visualizing the effect of value addition interventions among the women growers using simple scoring method. The outcome states that self confidence ranked first followed by knowledge and skill enhancement about value addition and group co-operation. Set fall is observed in awareness about value addition and new development schemes and market linkage with local institutions. Overall, this study helps in understanding the feminine perception and helps in gender mainstreaming in cassava value addition and products production.

Key words: Gender, Perception, Cassava, Value Addition, Impact.

Cassava is one of the leading staple food crops, which is consumed as food and used in industries as feed to animal. Cassava has the potential to increase farm income, reduce rural and urban poverty and also helps to close the food gap (Nweke, 2001). It is used in many sectors namely, food processing, textile industries, and glucose production units. Salem stands as the first district in area and has about 650 sago and starch industries acting as the prime reason in this region for the intensive area under the cassava cultivation and about sixty per cent of the starch produced in India comes from Salem district of Tamil Nadu alone (Janakirani, 2012). Nearly, 200 products can be made from cassava, which has lead to implementation of several interventions in the district, which helped in imparting knowledge on cassava value addition techniques for adoption. The present study was undertaken to analyse the perceived impact by focusing on the effect of intervention among the women growers in enhancing group approaches and empowerment through entrepreneurship activities.

Materials and Methods

The study was undertaken in Attur taluk of Salem district, Tamil Nadu in the villages namely, Pedanaikenpalayam, Umayalpuram, and Ramanaikenpalayam. The selection of the study area was based on the population of socially backward cassava women growers, area under cassava cultivation and also considering cassava project functioning in the district. A sample size of 60 respondents was fixed and randomly grouped; one group in each village was formed for analysis. The measurement of the impact was made through the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) technique using simple scoring method adopted by Andrew *et al.*,

(2010), in which visual aids (photos) were arranged and the respondents were asked to place the stones or twigs on it. Each stone was given a score of five per cent by which maximum of 20 stones can be used for the highest preference (100.00 %). The range of the score will be 1 to 20. Later the stones or twigs in each item were counted and ranked according to the highest score and analyzed. The results obtained through this procedure are detailed below.

Results and Discussion

The perceived impact in this study refers to the self-perceived changes among the respondents on the value addition techniques. The results of the study are presented in Table 1. Under this simple scoring method, the women growers kept the stones based on their importance. Table 1 shows that self confidence (18 score) was given the first preference. To start a venture on value addition as a first step, the members should gain confidence and maintain positive attitude to attain success. This might be the reason for the highest perceived impact on self confidence.

The data predicts that knowledge and skill enhancement about value addition ranked the second and this might be due to the fact that knowledge and specific skill should be enriched for better and sustainable outcome of any activity. Knowledge on value addition could be imparted through trainings and demonstrations which may lead to enhancement of skill. Further, free distribution of chipping machineries added to the perceived impact. Group co-operation ranked third in position with 16 scores, since it is essential to make a venture to grow or fall. In order to achieve good outcome, co-operation among the members is indispensable.

Deciding value addition of products, financial position and infrastructure facilities to start up the

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venture also plays a crucial part; this makes the decision making power score 15 and ranked fourth position. The income level ranked fifth with 14 scores; this is the result of the factors like supply of free chipping machines, availability of raw materials from their own fields for producing value added products, knowledge on marketing network, training

and demonstration on preparation of value added products leading to gain additional income. This was followed by family maintenance with 13 scores, which shows that by increasing the income level, the basic and the other essential facilities can be addressed leading to improvement in the level of family maintenance.

Table 1. PRA- simple scoring method to assess perceived impact (n=60)*

S.No.	Content	No. of stones	Scores	Percentage	Rank
I	Self confidence	***** *****	18	90	1
II	Decision making power	***** *****	15	75	4
III	Knowledge and skill enhancement about value addition	***** *****	17	85	2
IV	Self employment and Income generating activity	***** **	12	60	7
V	Family maintenance	***** ***	13	65	6
VI	Gained respect from family and society	*****	9	45	10
VII	Improvement in social participation and networking	*****	8	40	11
VIII	Awareness about value addition and new development schemes	*****	5	25	14
IX	Income level	***** ****	14	70	5
X	Saving habit	***** *	11	55	8
XI	Group co-operation	***** *****	16	80	3
XII	Information sharing	*****	6	30	13
XIII	Market linkage with local institution	****	4	20	15
XIV	Debt clearance	*****	10	50	9
XV	Nutritional status	*****	7	35	12

*- multiple responses

The entrepreneurship skills and regular income had created a significant impact on women growers. The women SHGs were formed based on the best performance during the training period. In the initial stage, the SHG leaders were given special training to enhance the entrepreneurship skills, which helped in self employment and income generating activities. Hence, growers ranked this component as the seventh important impact.

The savings habit (score-11) and debt clearance (score-10) were ranked the 8th and 9th in the perceived impact study. Due to the income generation and savings, debt clearance would be possible to some extent by the women growers. They have gained respect from the family and society (score-9) due to the interventions and entrepreneurship skill development. Further, they could involve more in social activities (score-8) and development programmes organised by the Department of Agriculture, University and other institutions to overcome a few constraints laid on them mainly, dependent nature, social norms and taboos. Hence, they ranked it as the 10th and 11th perceived effect.

Due to the frequent intake of cassava value added products, the women felt that the nutritional status especially the carbohydrate level would be increased little bit and this might be the possible reason for the 12th position related to perceived effect.

Transfer of technology is seen to be high among SHG compared to individuals. This shows that SHG members shared the information and experience gained through various trainings and demonstrations. So the score of 6 and 13th rank was given to this perceived impact.

The women got awareness about the value added products and new development programmes through (Table 1) interventions; this might be the reason given for the 14th rank. The value added products like wafers, vadagam prepared by the socially backward women growers were linked with the WAFER association present in Namagiripettai for marketing. This was at the initiation stage. Hence, the women growers ranked it as the last perceived impact.

According to Aniedu *et al.* (2012), extension program planning by considering the preference of the

women cassava growers resulted in increasing the adoption level of cassava value addition techniques by 41.00 per cent. Further, 22.00 per cent increase in income level was observed, which highlights the importance of the perceived impact studies. The present study can be utilized to understand the grass root level needs and preferences of the women cassava growers. Also, it will be helpful in increasing the adoption level of the cassava value addition techniques as highlighted in Aniedu *et al.* (2012) findings. Further, it will be helpful in improving the socio-economic status of the women growers and enhancing their development in the community.

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