



Satisfaction Level of Rural Consumers with SHG Products

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ABSTRACT

Now-a-days women empowerment is a great challenge in our society. For attaining that the emergence of self-help groups in rural and urban areas are gaining momentum. They are producing a variety of food and non-food items and selling them to get their livelihood as well as satisfaction as an earning and independent member of the society. The study was conducted in Puri district. A three point scale was developed for assessing the level of satisfaction of rural consumers towards SHG products. Frequency, percentage, mean and rank order were used for analysis of data. It is revealed that 69.16% are highly satisfied with packaging of food items whereas only 5% respondents are dissatisfied with quality of the food items. Similarly level of satisfaction is non-food items in seen in case of low cost of the product which ranked first and least is observed in case of readily available non-food items.

Key words: Self help groups, Food items, Non-food items, Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

In perspective of women's empowerment, a good number of plans and programmes have been initiated since long by the planner and policy makers both at central and state government level [7]. Irrespective of various facets of women empowerment, economic empowerment is considered as an important strategic intervention which needs to be spring at the grass root level for its successful implementation and long term benefit for the women chunk of our society. According to Singh A and Singh V. [8], the emergence of self-help groups formed by the women folk found to outnumber the self help group formed by their male counterpart when assessed against the economic parameters. In state like Odisha, women self-help groups in rural areas are very much vibrant, functional and visible in their various entrepreneurial activities for augmenting the livelihood options in favour of the irrespective group members and families [4]. As reported, by Datta H. [3], the various products in the form of food and non-food items which are available in the rural/local market for the local consumers and cover a major share of the rural households in the areas are prepared by SHG. Many a times it is observed that the urban consumers too prefer such products marketed by SHG at the time of exhibition, festivals and other religious and civil functions being organized periodically in urban areas also [1]. Thus it is in this background and context a study entitled "Satisfaction Level of Rural Consumers with SHG Products" was conducted by the scholar with the following objective.

To find out the various factors responsible for giving satisfaction to the rural consumers out of self help group products in their locality.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in two blocks mainly Nimapada and Pipili under Puri district of Odisha which were selected randomly, with purposive selection of the district. Further two Gram Panchayat from each block and two villages from each Panchayat were selected by following multi-stage random sampling

technique with the sample size of 120 no. of respondents selected through disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. An interview schedule was developed for collection of data against the stated objective and further it was pre tested and revised on the basis of feedback received during the phase of pre testing. The said interview schedule was administered to the selected respondents. A three point scale was developed for assessing the level of satisfaction of rural consumers towards SHG products and both parametric and non-parametric statistics like frequency, percentage, mean and rank order were used for the analysis of collected data and correct interpretation of the same in order to draw appropriate conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For any kind of business or entrepreneurial activity, it is a well known fact that a satisfied consumer is the best advertiser of the product [2]. This principle also holds good for SHG products. In order to know the ground reality, data against stated objective was collected and presented in table no. 1.

Table-1: Level of satisfaction of SHG produced food items

Influencing Factors	Highly satisfied		Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Mean score	Rank	Gap %
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Low cost of the product	25	20.83	76	63.3	19	15.83	2.05	IV	31.66
Trust worthy	21	17.5	75	62.5	24	20.0	1.97	V	33.66
Quality of the product	39	32.5	75	62.5	6	5.0	2.27	II	24.33
Packaging of the product	83	69.16	20	16.6	17	14.16	2.55	I	15.0
Product safety	48	40.0	41	34.16	31	25.83	2.14	III	28.66
Social change/Helping under privilege	19	15.83	37	30.83	64	53.5	1.625	VI	45.83
Readily available	17	14.16	24	20.0	79	65.83	1.48	VII	50.66

It is observed from the above table that majority of respondents to the tune of 69.16% are highly satisfied with packaging of the products and this became as a motivating factor which influence them in favour of the product. As against the criteria of quality, it is observed that 62.5% are satisfied with the quality followed by 32.5% are highly satisfied and only 5% are dissatisfied against this criteria. Against the factor like product safety, the sample respondents are highly satisfied, satisfied and dissatisfied to the extent of 40%, 34.16% and 25.83% respectively. This type of findings may be attributed to the factors like the aesthetic sense on the part of the respondents where they like beautiful things hence the very packaging style of the available products are liked by maximum without ignoring the quality as well as safety aspect of the products.

Getting attached to or being motivated in favour of the SHG products does not confined only to food items produced by self help group of the study area but also covers non-food items as well when it is observed in case of rural consumers. The criteria of non-food items against which the level of satisfaction of rural consumers are assessed on three point scale presented are in the table no. 2 with the related percentage of respondents whether highly satisfied, satisfied and dissatisfied by three point scale in order to find out the relative rank of each criterion.

Table-2: Level of satisfaction of SHG produced non-food items

Statement	Highly satisfied		Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Mean score	Rank	Gap %
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Asthetic value of the product	45	37.5	30	25.0	45	37.5	2	V	33.33
Low cost of the product	42	35	63	52.5	15	12.5	2.22	I	26.0
Trust worthy	50	41.6	30	25.0	40	33.3	2.08	IV	30.66
Social change/Helping under privileged	57	47.5	23	19.16	40	33.3	2.14	III	28.66
Product safety	21	17.5	71	59.16	28	23.3	1.94	VI	35.33
Quality of the product	41	34.16	58	48.3	21	17.5	2.16	II	28.0
Readily available	40	33.3	19	15.83	61	50.83	1.82	VII	39.33

It is inferred from the above table that the cost of available non-food items produced by self-help group ranked first, as a motivating factor which is helpful in deriving satisfaction followed by product quality in second rank and third rank occupied by the criteria like helping the under privileged with mean score satisfaction of 2.22, 2.16 and 2.14 respectively. This may be attributed to the reasons such as, by nature,

consumers always try to get things at cheaper rate with full quality consciousness. It is also interesting to observe that the respondent consumers are too concerned about the underprivileged, and too have a fellow feeling about others in their neighborhood / community where the underprivileged also have some social intimacy with the privileged members [5].

CONCLUSION

Self Help Groups (SHGs) are the biggest conduits for accelerating the economic growth and development of the country like India where majority live in villages. The village economy indirectly boosts country's economy. Thus SHGs as a social structure must be sustainable in nature which is possible only when the very economic activities hovering around producing and marketing the food and non-food items as per the local needs on continuous basis without any disruption in between are possible. The satisfaction of rural consumers of SHGs produced food and non-food items is definitely an important factor having indirect bearing upon the rural economy and consequently upon the country's economy.

Therefore the present study not only explicitly touched the various factors responsible for good marketing of the SHGs products, but also confirmed some of the factors like cost and quality of the products which always motivate the potential consumers/customers of the products and consequent satisfaction derived by them which is in support of Premalata S. and Malarvizhi A. [6].

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