

## A Critical Study of Women Participation in Food Processing in Relation to Their Small Scale Industry in Assam

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### Abstract

The study aimed at assessing conflict management strategies adopted by women participation in food-processing in relation to their small scale industry in Assam. The study was conducted in Barpeta district. The present investigation intends to assess career orientation among women in relation to socio-economic variables such as marital status, educational qualifications, food processing experience and age, for which alternative hypotheses were framed. The study is primarily based on the secondary data collected from the concerned small scale industry. The present study is descriptive survey method employed. The sample of the study comprised 25 women's which were selected through random cluster sampling technique. The study revealed that women participation differed significantly on the food processing of management. However, the marital status and food processing experience do not contribute much in determining the conflict management strategies adopted by women participation. In same way with many national organization carry out the activities which ensure women participation empowered such as processing and preservation of the different varieties of food products to the market, imparting training to women self-help groups, non-government organizations and other who engage themselves in the women development movement, establishment of rural agro processing centres, improving the standard of living of rural women through the multifaceted trainings, encouraging model plants to promote small scale entrepreneurs along with women self help groups carried out for the uplift of women, formed the basis for the uplift of the entire society and mankind. Finally, the paper is concluded with educational implications of the present findings.

**Keywords:** Women, Participation, Food-Processing, Small Scale, Industry, Management.

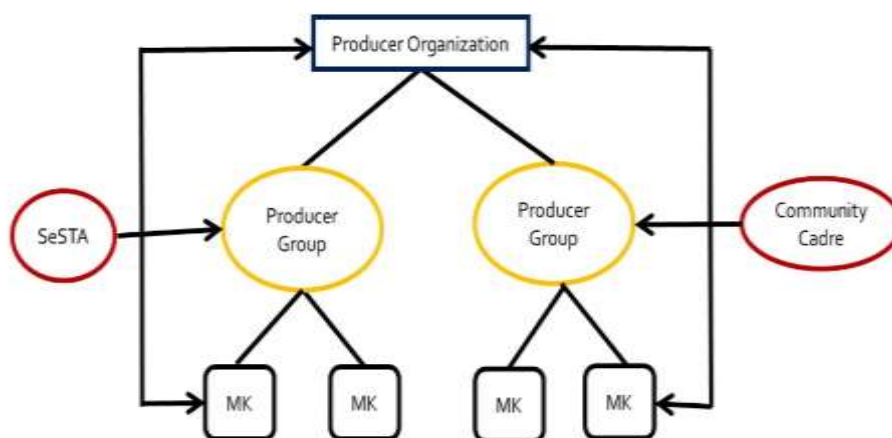
### Introduction:

The great and most important problems of life are all fundamentally insoluble. They can never be solved but only outgrown. Rural women form the most productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations including India. More than 80% of rural women are engaged in agriculture activities for their livelihoods. About 20% percent of farm livelihoods are female headed due to widowhood and desertion or male migration. Agriculture support system in India strengthens the exclusion of women from their entitlements as agriculture workers and cultivators. Most of the women-headed households are not able to access extension services, farmers support institutions and production assets like seed, water, credit, subsidy etc. As agriculture worker women are paid lower wage than men.

The Indian food processing sector is one of the country's largest industries, accounting for 32% percent of the country's overall food market. Assam has rich potential for accelerated growth in the food processing sector due to its favourable agro-climatic conditions and strong Agri-horticultural production base. The food processing sector has the potential to grow at a rapid pace with the demand for processed food increasing every day. Food processing is the set of methods and techniques used to transform raw ingredients into food or to transform food into other forms for consumption by humans or animals either in the home or by the food processing industry. Food processing typically takes clean, harvested crops or butchered animal products and uses these to produce attractive, marketable and often long shelf-life food products. Assam has many agricultural and horticultural products. Assam has a fertile soil conducive to cultivation of fruits and vegetables. So far the fruits and vegetables grown in Assam have been sent by rail or road to other parts of the country, which can be used for processing many kinds of food. Apart from rice mills, flour mills and oil mills, many small establishments of producing biscuits, lozenges, soft drinks and snacks have recently come in the town and commercial centres of the region. The food processing sector has the potential to grow in Assam with increasing demand for processed food. Opportunities exist in processing, sourcing, setting up cold chains and logistics. The Government of India has approved for setting up a Food Processing Industrial Park at Chaygaon near Guwahati in Kamrup district.

Assam has an abundance of natural resources which are yet to be engaged industriously. The agro-climatic condition of the State favour the growth of a variety of fruits and vegetables spices including orange, banana, pineapple, areca nut, coconut, guava, mango, jackfruit, citrus fruits, ginger, turmeric, chillies, potatoes, etc. Until recently, horticulture was practiced as a largely non-commercial activity. However, with better quality planting material, sufficient research support and better know-how, the state could easily be poised for a major boom in the fruit growing and food processing industry. Following are key potential industries to be developed on the core strengths of our state like Multi cropping in agriculture sector, Assam is the world's single largest tea growing region, Abundant resource of fresh water, Major varieties of the major fruits grown in Assam are Banana, orange, litchi, pineapple, papaya, Assam has abundant productive and diversified water resources to support surplus fish production to feed the growing fish eating population of the state. Livestock is an important component of mixed farming system in Assam as the meat consumption in Assam is high. The per capita availability of milk is 70gm/day in comparison to the all India figure of 246gm day. The following design of Food-Processing in operational structure and their Small Scale Industry in Assam:

#### Operational Structure of Implementation:



The North East Region is one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse regions in India. It consists of eight states i.e., Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Sikkim. The North East Region covers an area of 2.62 lakh sq. km and accounts for around 8% percent of the total area of India. The North East Region is characterized by rich bio-diversity, heavy precipitation and high seismicity. It is endowed with forest wealth and is ideally suited to produce a whole range of plantation crops, spices, fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs. The rich natural beauty, serenity and exotic flora and fauna of the area are invaluable resources for the development of the region.

#### Government Policies or Scheme:

To fulfil the need for creation of integrated and holistic infrastructure for food processing sector, Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MOFPI) had launched new Schemes in 11th Five Year Plan with strong focus on creation of modern enabling infrastructure to facilitate growth of food processing and creation of an integrated cold chain mechanism for handling perishable produce. Under the initiatives of MOFPI for strengthening infrastructure in agro and food processing sector, it had launched the Mega Food Parks Scheme, Scheme for Cold Chain, Value Addition and Preservation Infrastructure and Scheme for Modernization of Abattoirs in the 11th Five Year Plan. The Government of India has sanctioned a food processing park with a total project cost of Rs. 5.95 crores. The park is being set up near Chaygaon in the district of Kamrup (rural). The implementing agency for the food processing is Assam Small Industries Development Corporation Ltd.

#### Review of Related Literature:

Review of related literature, beside, to allow the researcher to acquaint himself with current knowledge in the field or area in which he or she is going to conduct his research, serves the following specific purposes. The review of related literature enables the researcher to define the limits of his field. Glanz (2009) found the principal food crops produced in the state are rice (paddy), maize (corn), pulses, potato, wheat, etc., Mathur (1999) makes a similar observation in the comment while the principal cash

crops are tea, jute, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton, and tobacco and although rice is the most important and staple crop of Assam. Tea is the most important cash crop in Assam. Walston (1985) are of the opinion that many of the adjectives that a women participation on small scale but not hears, become a significant part of his earliest conception of his self image. So it is also with another youngster's view of his becoming an engineer of small scale industry, another's picture of himself as a chemist-in-the-making, or a girl's dream of becoming a great access. This is the emergent aspect of personality. This is part of the work and the excitement of the inner life of the individual that often is at best only faintly glimpsed by anyone else.

### **Importance of the Study:**

In a state like Assam where majority of the farmers are small and marginal farmers and majority of them are illiterate cannot and do not have information of latest agricultural technology at their own. This is one of important causes of agricultural backwardness in Assam. The investigator has selected this topic because it has great importance as well as significance in modern times. To set up food processing industries in the states of Assam economy is fundamentally based on agriculture. Over 70% percent of the state's population relies on agriculture as farmers, as agricultural laborers, or both for their livelihood. A majority of state's population, almost 90 percent of an estimated 22.4 million in 1991, live in rural areas where the mainstay of business is production agriculture. In terms of the state domestic product (SDP), the agriculture sector contributed over 38 percent of the state income in 1990-91. Health Camps such as general medicines prescribed by the doctors will be supplied free of cost by the Board. Light refreshments will be provided to the participants and average number of women beneficiaries who can participate in health camps should be around fifty. While the Indian education system and successive government policies have made steady progress towards bridging gender and social category gaps in all levels of school education, large disparities still remain especially at the secondary level particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged groups that have been historically underrepresented in education. This paper provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical evidence on the relationship between financial development and to their small scale industry in Assam. The study was conducted in BARPETA district in Assam. This study is relatively unexplored in Assam state specially reference in BARPETA district position of rice production. Therefore, in the light of the above discussion of the importance of the study, the title of the study has been fixed as, "A Critical Study of Women Participation in Food- Processing in Relation to Their Small Scale Industry in Assam". So, explore alternative or evectional plant resources for diversification of agriculture so as to enhance production. In short, study also great significance should provide solutions which are relevant technically sound, economically viable, socio-culturally acceptable eco-friendly and systems. So, development of the economy in any farm is the outcome of human activity. This activity in men envisages three roles as an organizers, worker, farmer as well as cultivators and as a user of good produced, of these, the role of man in organizing the factors of production is very important in this present study. Hence, area and production of women participation in food processing in relation to their small scale industry in Assam also urgent need of this study. The ministry of human resource development is also negotiation with the World Bank authorised for financial assistance in implementation of the project.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Precisely stated the problem in the present study is entitled, "A Critical Study of Women Participation in Food Processing in Relation to Their Small Scale Industry in Assam". In recent years it has become increasingly evident that women are lagging behind a great deal both in availing of the benefits of development and as participations in the process of development due to several socio-economic-cultural-political impediments. This has become a cause for concern since women number several millions and constitute nearly half of our population.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The main objectives of the present investigation are as follows:

- i) To assesses the women participation of small scale industry.
- ii) To analyze about the methods of food processing plantation.
- iii) To study the economic impact such as income, expenditure, saving etc. of food processing on the women participation of BARPETA district.
- iv) To find out the social impact such as health, education, housing facilities etc.
- v). To identify the problems of social mobility in of small scale industry and suggest remedies.

**Hypotheses of the Study:**

The purpose of present study is investigating following the hypotheses are:-

- i) There is significant difference of women participation with respect to food processing.
- ii) There is significant of food processing improves the standard of living of the women with respect of small scale industry.
- iii) There is a significance difference between the working and non-working women participation with respect to food processing with regard to different areas of small scale industry.

**Limitations of the Study:**

The present study has been carried out some limitations as follows:

- i). The present study has been confined to the women participation only.
- ii). The study has been conducted in only one district namely-Barpeta district in Assam only.
- iii). The study has been delimited to variables of food processing and small scale industry only.
- iv) The study has been limited sample randomly selected, due to the limited, money, time and resources at the disposal of the investigator in the present small scale industry.

**Methodology:**

The selection of research method to be used is utmost importance in the research processes. It is necessary to adopt a systematic method and procedure. The present study was conducted through the descriptive survey method of research used. The methods of collecting primary and secondary data since primary data are to be originally collected, while in case of secondary data the nature of data collection work in merely that of completion.

**Conclusion:**

Analysis of data the investigator studying the organised material in order to discover inherent facts. The data are studied from as many angles as possible to explore the new facts. Analysis requires an alert, flexible and open-mind. On the basis of analysis, and discussion, the objectives were verified. Education must also develop a scientific attitude of mind to enable the individual to think objectively and have his conclusions based on facts and tested data. It should develop the understanding and the intellectual integrity to distinguish truth from falsehood and facts from propaganda and to reject fanaticism and prejudices. In this paper an attempt has been made to summarise the finding and also put forwarded some concrete conclusion and suggestion as follows:

Table-1: The following table depicts the state wise production of important food grains, horticulture crops, spices and plantation crops in the Assam.

State	Major crops	Plantation Crops	Fruits	Vegetables	Spices
Assam	Rice, Maize, Millet, Wheat Pulses, Coconut, Sugarcane, Jute, Cotton, Arecanut	Wheat, Rice, Coffee & Tea	Banana, Pineapple, Plum, Orange, Papaya	Sweet Potato, Cabbage, Onion, Tapioca, Tomato	Turmeric, Chilli, Ginger, Garlic

As per Table, it is evident from the table depicts the state wise production of important food grains, horticulture crops, spices and plantation crops management inventory are found to be significant. This states that women makes use of withdrawal strategy of resolving conflict more often leave or flee from their field of conflict than their women participation as professional food processing. Agriculture and its allied activities has paramount importance in the state of Assam as this sector is the major contributor to the state economy as well as providing livelihood to a significant proportion of the population of the state. About 99 per cent area of total land mass of the state is rural and almost 50 per cent of the total land area is utilized for cultivation. In same way with many national organization carry out the activities which ensure women participation empowered such as processing and preservation of the different varieties of food products to the market, imparting training to women self-help groups, non-government organizations and other who engage themselves in the women development movement, establishment of rural agro processing centers, improving the standard of living of rural women through the multifaceted trainings, encouraging model plants to promote small scale entrepreneurs along with women self help groups, since 2003 the post Harvest technology centre is offering regular training for food processing and also 2004 onwards greater attention is provided to promote thriving women entrepreneurs in producing and

processing food materials. A food processing training centre is also functioning at Coimbatore for imparting training in food processing. Thus researcher can better appreciate only through interpretation why his findings are what they are and can make others to understand the real significance of his research findings. The investigator to test the hypotheses that were formulated in this study.

An analysis of the evolutionary process reveals that the region offers scope for the cultivation of agricultural crops because of its diversities in topography, altitude and climatic condition. The total food grain production in the NER is estimated to be around 4 per cent of the all India level. Rice is the principal crop of the region followed by maize and wheat. Other crops include millet, jowar, bajra, ragi and barley. However, the North-East has a regional level deficit in food production and is dependent upon food grains from the rest of India and abroad. Horticultural crops, particularly banana, arecanut, coconut, papaya, tapioca, sweet potato, orange, mango, guava, litchi, jack fruit and a number of vegetables are grown in all the states while apple is grown in the plain and valley land of Assam for major crops none is found to be significant. Hence it is suggested that both the married and unmarried women excel almost equally on their small scale industry in Assam.

As it is evident from the above table, although there has been an increase of area under floriculture, there exists huge potential for further expansion. There is a need for additional focus on this sector through the establishment of floriculture centers, marketing access etc. The region grows more than 650 species of orchid and with its diverse climatic conditions and topography it is identified as the area with the most potential for orchid cultivation. The need of the hour is to bring awareness, popularization, conservation, propagation and commercialization of orchids so as to convert the existing national orchid wealth into rewarding resources. It is further understood that the need for guaranteeing the plantation crops are high-value crops of great economic importance and provide huge employment opportunity, especially for women throughout the year. The sub-tropical climate of North-eastern India is extremely favorable to the cultivation of many plantation crops. The three most important plantation crops of the region are tea, coffee and rubber. Assam's economy is predominantly a Tea economy. The state alone produces more than half of the all India tea production. Under this strategy, an attempt is made to deactivate the methods of food processing plantation and to study the economic impact such as income, expenditure, saving etc. of food processing on the women participation of Barpeta district and cool off the emotions and hostilities of the groups involved, by waiting for some time. Apart from this, voluntary agencies provide formal training through which women entrepreneurs acquire practical skills for managing small scale enterprises such as pickles making, toy making, fruit processing, handicrafts etc. Through the intervention of micro credit, the women entrepreneurs have benefited in many ways and shifted even their lives from rural areas into semi-urban areas. Thus women participation to development process is a major factor in determining the destiny in the women in rural area. Therefore, the sluggish growth pattern and low-yielding agriculture in the region depicts an extremely grim future if appropriate interventions are not undertaken. Hit by frequent natural disasters such as floods, high/ low rainfall, increasing food deficits, low and unstable productivity in agriculture and livestock, the region poses a serious development question to the policy makers.

Table-1: Trend of Production of Food Grains in Assam During the last 8 Years

Item	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Rice	3999	3854	3738	3880	3470	3552	2916	3319
Wheat	86	85	78	73	68	54	67	71
Pulses	62	66	60	63	61	56	59	61
Food grains	4167	4023	3894	4034	3617	3680	3060	3468
Oilseeds	155	151	144	152	142	110	129	135

Sources: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.

#### Suggestions for Further Research:

Keeping in view the above obstacles the following suggestions are forwarded to increase the extent of challenges and opportunities influenced. Following suggestion may guide in making fields more authentic. A study may be conducted on vast area sample may be large in size and other stated may be taken. Women of rural areas should be trained up in different vocational courses like handloom and textile, poultry farms, fish farming, dairy farm, food and nutrition, fashion and designing, beauty par lour etc. still 93.33% women of rural area are not getting vocational training. General awareness programmes should be taken among the women of village area to sensitizes them about the modern development of science and

technology so that they could give up superstitious believes and attitudes. In recent years, there has been new development world over and shift in agricultural cropping pattern from subsistence to commercial agriculture; our farmers are taking up more and more cash crops. The situation demands new extension approach for benefiting farming community of women participation in food-processing in relation to their small scale industry in Assam. The study was conducted in Barpeta district. Last but not the least principle is that Public Extension Service should base on the Principle of elasticity. Number of extension personnel should be increased or decreased according to the needs of rubber plantations farmers. Therefore, a further study to cover more variables should be urgently needed. The above programs, carried out for the uplift of women, formed the basis for the uplift of the entire society and mankind.

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