

Attitude of NRLM beneficiaries towards livelihood Diversification in Baghelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Livelihood diversification is one of the dynamic solutions that are now occurring in rural regions and acting as a catalyst for economic growth and development. To cope with changing situation, mitigate losses from farming activities, economic and environmental risk, rural households are adopting various on-farm and off-farm strategies as drought-tolerant crops and mixed farming, vegetable and fruit production, animal husbandry, eggs and poultry, trade, formally employee, mining, manufacturing, utilities, construction, transport, commerce, carpentry, petty trade etc. The present study was carried out in Rewa and Shahdol district in Baghelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh during the year of 2022-23 with the 221 respondents which were personally interviewed by using interview schedule, to analyze the attitude of NRLM beneficiaries towards livelihood diversification. The results of the study revealed that 50.22 percent respondent had medium level of attitude towards livelihood diversification.

Key words: Attitude, Livelihood diversification, Beneficiaries, NRLM

1. INTRODUCTION

Livelihoods are the means people used to support themselves, to survive and to prosper. Agriculture-based livelihood is affected by several nature-induced risk and hazards such as floods, droughts, riverbank erosions, and embankment damages. The purpose of diversification is maintaining a various sources of earning throughout the year and make necessary adjustments based on changing circumstances to optimize the profits [8]. The trend in agriculture is moving from subsistence to sustainable farming, which give more emphasizes on diversifying sources of income [1]. More than half of the people 55 percent living in rural areas and still depend on agriculture for their primary source of income, but this is not a profitable way to continue since they are stuck in a system of low returns, rainfed conditions, prone to risk, lack of other profitable alternatives, inability to escape the impoverishing agrarian arrangement [4].

National Rural Livelihoods mission (NRLM) is one such government initiative to uplift the rural women by making them self-reliant and helps them in earning their livelihoods [3,15]. Vocational training mainly concerns itself with creating awareness regarding new technologies for improving rural people's livelihood security, conducting trainings for women to make them self-dependent in the farming community; and developing interest among the rural youth in agriculture [14]. In Van Dhan Vikas Kendra's (VDVK's) programme, tribals are trained and given working capital to do primary processing and value-added processing of minor forest products such as bamboo candles, hill brooms, and other items such as turmeric and cashew. As a result, these Kendra's will serve as a significant milestone in the tribals' economic development [16]. Rural youth have significant

contributions to the local and national economy by being participated in Income generating activities (IGA's) such as vegetable production, nursery establishment, crop production, mushroom cultivation, bee keeping, livestock, goatry and poultry rising, cottage industry and small business etc. Unfortunately, the rural youth community is almost unknown to modern agricultural technology and has been left out from the main stream of economic development [9,10,11]. The level of adoption of technology determines the level of productivity [6]. Goswami et. al. 2021 [3] revealed that attitude towards development program ($r=0.47$) shows moderately positive correlation with psychological empowerment of women beneficiaries of NRLM. Payasi et al. 2023 [7] revealed that majority of the tribal farmers 60.00 percent had favourable attitude towards forest-based livelihood practices.

Attitude is defined as the degree of positive or negative effect associated with some psychological object and is a very important component of behaviour as it plays significant role in forming the overt and covert behaviour of a tribal farmer [12]. The farmers' mentality affects how they diversify their sources of income. Attitude is nothing but the way of thinking or feeling about diversification [2]. It is found in the fact that some characteristic feeling or emotion is experienced as we expect accordingly some definite action. It is also influenced by so many factors like social factors, family, prejudices, personal experience, media exposure, educational and religious institutions and physical factors. The family is the most powerful source for the formation of attitudes [13]. The parents, elder brother or sister provide information about various things. Attitudes developed by an individual, whether positive or negative are the result of family influence, are very powerful and difficult to change. In this backdrop, the present study is carried out with the specific objectives to know the 'Attitude of NRLM beneficiaries towards livelihood diversification'.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Baghelkhand Region of Madhya Pradesh's comprised of seven districts. Out of which Rewa and Shahdol districts were hosted for the study based on highest number of beneficiaries registered under NRLM. These two selected districts served as a representation of attitude level of beneficiaries towards livelihood diversification and also their extent of livelihood diversification in Baghelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. Based on the highest number of beneficiaries, two blocks- Sirmour and Kulchuriyan from the Rewa and Jaisinghnagar and Burhar from the Shahdol district—were chosen. Thus, four blocks were chosen from the two districts. From each block, four villages were selected randomly. Thus, 16 villages in all were selected. Using proportional random selection, which takes into account 3% of the total village's beneficiaries, a list of respondents was compiled from a subset of selected villages with the assistance of NRLM bureaucrats. Thus, the sample size for the study comprised of 221 NRLM beneficiaries. For the present study, primary and secondary data were also employed. Specifically, the attitudes of beneficiaries towards livelihood diversification were examined by using Reddy *et. al.* (2020) scale [13]. Respondents' attitudes toward livelihood diversification are categorized into three groups depending on the overall score they received as less favorable, favorable and more favorable. This classification is based on the theoretical range of scores.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Attitude towards livelihood diversification

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their attitude towards livelihood diversification

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Less Favorable	47	21.27
Favorable	111	50.22
More Favorable	63	28.51
Total	221	100.00

Table 1 clearly explored that out of total 221 respondents, 50.22 per cent respondents belong to favorable attitude towards livelihood diversification, followed by more favorable 28.51 percent and less favorable 21.27 percent. Thus, most of respondents have favourable attitude towards livelihood diversification. The rationale for the outcome is that respondents are aware towards importance of various sources of income and their benefit which mitigates the risk of agriculture failure which helps them to sustain and raise their level of living. The above results are in line with the findings of (Mittra *et. al.* 2021) [5].

Table: 2: Distribution of beneficiaries based on their mean score towards livelihood diversification

S.No.	Statements	Mean	Rank
1.	Livelihood diversification is a boon to farmer.	3.06	VI
2.	Livelihood diversification serves as insurance to farmer during crisis.	3.94	I
3.	Livelihood diversifications do not arrest the migration of farmers to towns and cities.	3.14	III
4.	Livelihood diversification leads to efficient utilization of resources.	3.04	VII
5.	Livelihood diversification is a strategy for risk mitigation.	3.10	IV
6.	Livelihood diversification ensures livelihood insecurity.	2.49	XV
7.	Livelihood diversification does not ensure economic efficiency and sustainable livelihood.	2.81	X
8.	Successive progress in one enterprise and wealth lead to livelihood diversification.	3.10	V
9.	Benefits of government scheme direct the people towards livelihood diversification.	3.36	II
10.	Competitive spirit among the people promotes livelihood diversification.	2.61	XIII
11.	Scarcity of farm labor results in diversification to non-farm activities.	2.70	XII
12.	Livelihood diversification provides no scope for acquiring new knowledge and skills.	2.81	XI
13.	Livelihood diversification increases the social status in the community.	2.90	VIII
14.	It gives me happy when others respect me for adopting livelihood diversification.	2.60	XIV
15.	Social capital enables households to diversify in main sources of	2.83	IX

The data presented in Table 2 explored that, respondents had more favorable attitude with the statement "Livelihood diversification serves as an insurance to farmer during crisis" have rank first with 3.94 mean score, followed by Benefits of government scheme direct the people towards livelihood diversification got second ranked with 3.36 mean score, Livelihood diversifications do not arrest the migration of the farmers to towns have third ranked with 3.14 mean score, Livelihood diversification is a strategy for risk mitigation have fourth rank with 3.10 mean score, Successive progress in one enterprise and wealth lead to livelihood diversification have fifth rank with 3.10 mean score, Livelihood diversification is a boon to farmer have sixth rank with 3.06 mean score, Livelihood diversification leads to efficient utilization of resources have seventh rank with 3.04 mean score, Livelihood diversification increases the social status in the community have eighth rank with mean score 2.90, Social capital enables households to diversify in main sources of livelihood including farm and nonfarm activities have ninth rank with 2.83 mean score, Livelihood diversification does not ensure economic efficiency and sustainable livelihood have tenth rank with 2.81 mean score, Livelihood diversification provides no scope for acquiring new knowledge and skills have eleventh rank with 2.81 mean score, Scarcity of farm labor results in diversification to non-farm activities have twelfth rank with 2.70 mean score, Competitive spirit among the people promotes livelihood diversification have thirteen rank with 2.61 mean score, It gives me happy when others respect me for adopting livelihood diversification have fourteen rank with 2.60 mean score, and last fifteen rank statement was Livelihood diversification ensures livelihood insecurity with their least mean value 2.49., the findings is supported by (Reddy *et. al.* 2020) [13].

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study explore that that majority of respondents as 50.22 percent had the favourable attitude towards livelihood diversification. It may be concluded that, respondent's attitude on diversifying their sources of income for their livelihood, through the technical, socio-economic and political upgradation of NRLM recipients is positive, this positive attitude might be leveraged for the diversification necessary for sustained growth. The public extension system, social and mutual learning, the institutionalized process of empowerment, and sustainable, equitable and participatory extension and development may all be effectively supported by the NRLM that positively affect the attitude and promote livelihood diversification. The most important thing in the stakeholders is a good and favourable attitude, self-confidence and ability for self-determination, in addition to efficient collaboration and coordination amongst them.

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