

Poor Rural Women through Solar Drying of Organic Vegetables, Greens, Herbs and Fruits

1. Introduction

The demand for organic products in India in coming decade or more is immense. As per some estimates, less than 2% of vegetables/fruits in the country today are under organic farming. The awareness level of common public towards the need of organically grown food is rising and with it the market potential. At its root, our business combines the two ends of the entire value chain of organic farming. At the production end, we are creating the sales channels directly to home customers under our tagline “We are your Family Farmers”. In India, participation of women in the labour market is extremely low with total workforce participation rate of women being 25.5% (Census 2011) - in some parts of rural India this number can go as low as 10%. In order to uplift the livelihood of rural poor women, it is necessary to make them self-dependent and financially independent. To Increase the financial abilities of women to enable them purchase food for their families, educate their children (girl child focus), afford better health, clothing and shelter for their children and reduce poverty and attain improved standards of living.

2. Objectives

Primary objective is to establish dignified livelihood for poor rural women through solar drying of organic vegetables, greens, herbs and fruits.

Long term Objective

- Developing the rural women as entrepreneurs
- A dignified livelihood goes way beyond the immediate benefits.
- *It unleashes potential entrepreneurial energy and creates grass-root entrepreneurs
- Benefits local SHGs to develop women entrepreneurs.

3. Beneficiaries

This project aims to provide sustainable livelihood for 40 rural women in Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu. The project aims for helping these women with a monthly income of Rs. 15,000/- We are working with Kalvi Kendra who has deep experience in working with Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Pondicherry and Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu. Villupuram district

is one of the backward districts of Tamil Nadu. Villupuram district is also one among the lowest five in per capita income, literacy rate and enrolment ratio.

4. Workflow

It starts with provision of input which will be done by Gratitude Farms for all the raw materials. We intend to do the project for solar drying of Tomato, Ginger and Fruits like Banana, Pineapple, Coconut etc. All the raw input will be supplied in alternate days by Gratitude Farms, at the place where solar dryers have been installed. We propose to have the project at two sites, each with 4 x 250 kg solar dryers. That implies a total of 8 x 250 kg solar dryers with an aggregate capacity of 2000 kg per run. Each site will have 20 women (total 40 women), who will be trained on solar drying by Gratitude Farms. In summary, the sales and marketing for these products has already been planned out and we can scale up this activity in the measure of the number of solar dryers being deployed. The idea is that all products must be sold expeditiously.

Expected outcome

1. Gratitude Farms will pay @ Rs. 300 /- per kg of finished products to each woman. This translates into a monthly income of Rs. 15,000/- per month for each rural woman.
2. Scalable and Replicable Model; we aim to take this Program to 10,000 rural women in next three years.
3. Gratitude Farms' teams will work to develop grass-root leadership and entrepreneurship among rural women.
4. Environment-friendly Production: Solar Dryers (zero carbon footprint).
5. Dignified and sustainable livelihood for rural women through solar drying of organic products.
6. Zero Wastage of Organic Vegetables and Fruits: