

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL RELATED TO PRODUCT AND GROUP MANAGEMENT OF A WOMEN GROUP IN KAZU VILLAGE, WAING MAW TOWNSHIP, KACHIN STATE, MYANMAR

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ABSTRACT

The women group from Kazu village has been struggling for an economic activity to generate stable income through banana chip production. At present, the activity is almost failing because the raw material prices are soaring gradually. On the other hand, the group cannot add some prices on their product. There is a need to change a new production that raw materials are effortless to access in local area rather than banana chip production. This cross-sectional study is focusing on comparing and learning present the women group's banana chip production and assessing livestock product of knowledge and skills using indigenous knowledge women group in Kazu village. The women group will have an opportunity to learn how to improve their skill in generating to get consecutive income through learning new product that is practical, simple, demand-driven commercial activity. The study implies and assesses that supporting the women group for empowering their ability, to improve their economic and social status such as income generating, to investing in their children's education improving women's health care.

Keywords: The Women Group, Indigenous Knowledge, Knowledge and Skills, Food Processing, Kazu Village

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INTRODUCTION

Myanmar is one of the Southeast Asian countries, located on the Indochinese peninsula. The country population is 55,447,319 according to World meter elaboration of the latest United Nation data. The country area is about 261,228 sq. mi (676,578 sq. km), north to south is approximately 1,275 miles and from east to west is roughly 580 miles boarding with India, China, Laos, Thailand and Bangladesh. There are mainly consisted of eight major ethnic groups such as Kachin, Kaya, Karen, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine, and Shan. Myanmar major economic activity is agriculture because most of the land are fertile land and it is said that there is the biggest agricultural mainland among ASEAN countries.

Moreover, Myanmar is packed with priceless natural resources such as marine resources, natural gas, oil, colorful priceless gem stones, gold, silver, jade, a wide range of minerals including rare earth. Nearly half of the country area is covered with forest in which there are a variety of hardwood such as rosewood, lumber, padauk, acacia, ironwood and michelia champaca, including world-famous Burmese teak and well-known barks, honey and bees wax, bushmeat and bat guano. Speaking of topography, Myanmar is made up with great for rivers which are Ayeyarwady, Salween, Chindwin, Sittaung, which are great water resources. Having said that, the country poverty population is 68, 20% and living in below the national poverty is over 40%. At present, nearly two million people out of in the country needs urgent humanitarian aids because of the civil war. Ironically, Myanmar has one of the abundant natural resources' countries in the world, but most of the citizen living in the under-poverty line day-to-day life. Myanmar is a country which is the longest-running armed conflict in the world which has been over 70 years and has still continued, in one form or another which is the military coup again on 1st February 2021. Now it has been over 70 years. As a consequence, being inflation, commodity, and volatile items prices are dramatically soaring, the withdrawal of international investor, a lot of corruption in the government institutions.

And also, Kazu village, my research area, is not an exceptional one. The Kazu village was founded since 1815 by Kazu Duwa @ Lahtaw Duwa. Kachin ethnic group are main population, other minor ethnic people are small amount of population live in the Kazu village. Kazu Village is only thirty miles away from Myitkyina Township which is the capital city of Kachin State. The mainland Kazu village measures over 5000 miles. The main road which connects two big city Myitkyina and Liza cross through Kazu Village. There are two main water resources from two big stream which surround the village. Thus, the agricultural land of the village has well irrigation facility. Moreover, soil health and soil quality are in good condition with suitable climatic condition.

In 2017, the ten women formed such as a self-help group to income generation. And the KBC (Kachin Baptist Convention) help to improve the livelihood of the villages which belong to KBC by addressing knowledge and skill vocational trainings to the villagers. The ten women self-help group perceived banana chip production training for two weeks. After having the training, the Kazu women self-help group set up their business for three years altogether. The group shared their profit every fortnight. At the beginning of the business, it seems to go well concerning the reasonably good price, the service, and the quality of the merchandise.

After three years of the banana chip business, the women group had been experiencing with some hardship of their business. There are two main reasons why the self-help women group had to cease their banana chip production for their income generation. One reason is that the raw materials and ingredients prices are soaring gradually. So that regular customers cannot effort to consume in local area which is one of the poor villages in Kachin State. Another reason is misunderstanding of group management and lack of effective leadership skill within the women group.

My research aims to assess knowledge and skills for processing food products from livestock (traditional bacon) among women using indigenous knowledge in Kazu village, so that they

may be able to get some commercial activities to increase income generation, invest to their children education and improve women health care and build women empowerment.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Processing Food

Dayton and Henderson (1987) report the global market of processed foods that accounted \$160.8 billion worldwide total of import and export from Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand respectively. The authors present the prime importer was the United States and accounted \$23.3 billion, followed by West Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, at \$18.1, \$17.3, \$13.4, \$13.2, and \$12.8 billion sequentially. The authors present that preserved food is a value-added merchandise, tradesmen add profit to raw agricultural products through food production, packaging, distribution, retailing, and service functions.

Speaking of food preservation, it aims to prevent the undesirable changes in stored foods and extends the self-life, on the other words combatting the food spoilage from its original condition. In ancient times, the process of food preservation had been done through the methods of drying in the sunshine, heating it over fire places or boiling water with the natural food additives with various kinds of roots and vegetables more palatable and to extent self-life. The food processing styles have been changing steadily time to time from the era of agricultural community, farmers had to save a substantial amount of meat, poultry, fish from their farms through preservation with all these benefits, people could be able to save their consumption in terms of food security.

In the modern era, food technologies may have evolved singly in many places with original variations due to differences in climate, crops, or food preferences. It is said that primary of food processing in China was to aid military rations such as tofu (soybean curd), roasted dried millet, and dried beef. AD 700, the earliest registration of the process food law, which initiates regulations for the production of dairy products and preservation of foods, using encoded in China. Various countries have different food processing technique not only using natural basic materials but also a chemical synthesis. At the global preserved food market, generally, vegetables fruits, herbs, pulse, meat and poultry, dairy, and seafood preserved foods are popular. Among them, livestock are notable achievement compared with overall food production because in urban areas, the number of the protein intake of population are gradually increasing mainly in the production of poultry and pigs than other small and large ruminants such as sheep, cattle. Meat is a powerhouse of protein, minerals such as iron, zinc, and a variety of vitamins, especially B vitamins. Meat plays key figures of human diet in different cultures lately, and the consumption of meat is gradually rocketing at the food market across the world.

Traditional Food Making Through Indigenous Knowledge

In poor nations, development agencies have been trying to help out people who living in under poverty line with fantastic projects. Having said that, most project targets outcomes have often failed. At present, most agencies have come to know that the demand-driven programs or tailor-made projects are more suitable for the rural area using indigenous knowledge. It will make geo social conditions and furthermore it will become stability of their livelihood taking for a granted. So, the feature of the IK is understandable to users, practical, originated within communities, based on local needs, specific to culture and context, being poverty alleviation, providing nucleus apprehension with flexibility for local adaptation for implementation, using local knowledge and proficiency, and materials based on local ecology. Into the development process, coordinating with IK is important to be a process of exchange of information and wisdom sharing.

Indigenous knowledge itself opposite meaning is the international knowledge system that is created by academic institute. Originally, it comes from a long journey through generations in

a given rural areas. The main works of indigenous knowledge provide knowledge related with a given local people due to facilitates communication and decision making about in agriculture activities, hunting, fishing, gathering health protection, psycho-social care, saving and lending, food preparation, education, natural resource management and a host of other social and religious activities in a specific rural society. Furthermore, IK is highly likely to increase production and growth of economic activities without any spoilage the environment and hugely potential for innovation and economically aspect of indigenous knowledge. On this case, a practical concept is defined as indigenous knowledge through oral traditions and storytelling to understand the community-based knowledge systems. Thus, in order to develop social and economic aspects, IK systems are able to contribute and strengthen the local communities than other knowledge systems.

Knowledge and Skills

National research council (2012) present “deeper learning” as personal learning through from original to apply it to brand new circumstances. From deeper learning, often interact within a community, is personal development to practice of the knowledge. It is transitional knowledge that can be applied to solve problems. The council report the mixture of both knowledge and skills as called “21st century competencies.” This deeper learning let the personal to transfer what was learned to deal with new challenge. The council report the waving of knowledge and skills shape the individual and community or organization structure.

Kimberly and Bentley (1999) report that knowledge has become the principal assets of the upcoming business and as a consequence, a new feature can be used the way in which ‘the engine of growth will be the process through which an economy creates, applies and extracts value from knowledge’. The article also revealed weightless which stands and diversify a wide range of skills and knowledge that means skills is not only for the labor’s requirement, but to develop their own lives productively. Moreover, through knowledge creatively is prime for business and social value and also individual well-being. The authors also present that in many areas, a knowledge-based economy breeds the creativity in the most effective ways.

RESEACH METHODOLOGY

In this study, assessing knowledge and skills related to bacon product of the women self-help group in Kazu Village, Waing Maw Township, Kachin State, Myanmar and qualitative research approach was used to conduct this study. Therefore, there are four different sets of interview guideline for banana chips production women group, potential customers, potential women group members, and a chairman from Kazu Village. The total population in this study consisted of 10 respondents. Concern with the research questions to the key informant persons, they are divided into two parts, the first part is the basic questionnaire about the respondent background facts and the second part is open-ended questions that consisted of twenty-seven questions.

In order to collect data, I cannot make it by myself for some reasons and I hired a researcher to conduct my data questions. She conducted data mainly through telecommunication, and in person interview, she used paper, note book, pen, pencil, mobile phone to record the voice of the respondents. For first part of the questionnaire include the demography such as age, marital status, the highest level of education, household size, monthly income, knowledge about digital marketing. For open-ended questions, twenty-seven questions include mainly three parts such as knowledge and skills about bacon making and curing, group management and women’s opinion about the impacts of processing of products from livestock on women’s household income.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The selected respondents are five individuals from the banana chip production which is self-help women group in Kazu Village, Waing Maw Township, Kachin State. And another two potential group members are from the same village who have the knowledge of how to raise local Kachin pigs and make and cure the traditional bacon. Considering the respondents' age, the result indicated that the majority of the group members and the potential members aged 41-50, followed by the ages between 51-60 years of age and 61 and above. Findings of educational level, two are secondary, two are primary, and another two individuals are elementary followed by illiteracy person. This research shows that most of the respondents received 110,000-500,000/-MMK (1,100-5000 baht) per month. All of the respondents are Kachin ethnic group. In research findings, all the respondents have the knowledge that the local Kachin pigs raising in Kazu village is one of their skill to consume for domestic. The research shows that there are two main methods to raise pig farming that free range raising and building pigpen raising. The last raising method, the local people cope with and adapt to native people when they start dwelling in mainland in Kachin State. Concerned with free-range pig farming, pigs have tone muscles, avoid depositing excess body fat and gain nutrients naturally such as grass fiber support to strengthen the animal's health and become more resistant to diseases it means that produce high-quality meat. Speaking of pigpen raising method, pigs grows fast and protect from bad weather, assure feeding regularly. Last and certainly not least, most pigs farming are in rural area where people grow and cultivate a wide of range of crops and vegetable around the local area. The free-range pigs just destroy any cultivation fields around the areas. Nowadays, most of the pig farmers would practice to build pigpen raising method in rural areas. Interestingly enough, this research also found that women possess knowledge and skill of processing pork, and turn it into a product to be sold in the market. The knowledge and skill can be considered as indigenous one because women have been practicing it when they prepare food for their family. According to the respondents, there are three difference recipes. The first recipe is the pork is marinated with herbs and spice and store in the ground hole and then take out every week until it become a perfect bacon condition. The second recipe is that the pork is marinated with traditional rice wine, herbs and spices and then pack with banana leaves under sunlight until it become bacon. The last recipe is that the pork is marinated with rice wine, herbs and spices and then keep in sunlight. Every two day, it needs to be infused in wine again until it become bacon.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Having assessed with the study objective aimed at conducting knowledge and skill related to bacon product, all respondents from the women group know well the knowledge of how to raise pigs in two methods. Furthermore, the result came out with three different ways to make and cure traditional bacon using indigenous knowledge. It can be discussed how to make and cure bacon in traditional way and the study shows the respondents from the women group have enough knowledge and skills how to make and cure traditional bacon. But the research findings show that it can be observed limited knowledge about marketing such as digital marketing and marketing skills for their business growth more than ever before. The respondents need to know the commercial package unit. And the study shows that the women group also requires of the knowledge of FDA (Food and Drugs Administration) approved for their next level of future economic activity.

The commercial product using traditional knowledge study was done by Chettri and Sharma (2009), who reported that the ethnic women in Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh from Northeast India have created protein rich soybeans into flavored fermented food with easy digestibility and bio-nutrients. The fermented soybean called Kinema in India means a sticky fermented soybean food, and this product has been

hugely appreciated and accepted in the community. Moreover, there were also comparable result study that conducted by Ogaba (2002), who revealed that Uganda women from the rural society have to add to the labor force for the man's economic activities mainly in agriculture. The author identifies one of the Uganda government department called NAADS (National Agricultural Advisory Services (extension) has been planned to help the women beekeepers to produce honey product from beekeeping. The article reported that Uganda is packed with a wide range of bees e.g. *Apis mellifera scutellata*, *A. mellifera adansonii*, and *A. mellifera monticola* and several species of stingless bees that can be harvested by rural women for the reduction of destitution. Yearly, the honey production is about 8000-9000 tones. It is suggested that bee keeping workplace is suitable for women with low-technology, equipment such as a straining cloth and bucket. In addition, the author presents that there is a variety of indigenous knowledge concern with harvesting premium quality honey and beeswax from local hives. When the premium quality honey and beeswax are harvested, the products can be exported to other countries.

Homestays tourism product in rural Nepal conducted by Prasad and Halpenny (2013), who present that attract to tourists who want to learn the indigenous communities with Nepali lifestyle, tradition and culture. In this economic activity, homestay businesses promote rural Nepalese women's avenues for income-earning using indigenous home management. It is also said that the notion of sustainable development by indigenous ethnic women of Barpak in Nepal. In many successful community-based tourism businesses of Nepal, and other countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and India preserve as a low-impact to environment, but it is effective to reduce poverty and promote social equality.

According to the modernization theory base on the concept of the process of social evolution and development of societies. In terms of the uprising of a given societies, there should be stability of economic well-being, social well-being and being safety environment. In Myanmar, 70% of the population are dwelling in rural area and almost half of the population of Myanmar are under poverty line. Although Myanmar is packed with natural resources, the country is one of the poorest countries in the world. It is highly likely to be behind the modern world because of the policy of the military junta generation by generation since 1960.

So, among the three spectrums of the prime practical things in development is economic stability for improving the quality of life. And then, the local people will manage to move next step for improving livelihood in rural area. However, modernization theory manages to balance almost every area or discipline which is behind the modern world. Nowadays, we live in a time in history where there are more resources and opportune than ever before. The self-help group women should learn from their past experience and upgrade their knowledge and skill of the new product, and by receiving the training about the management and leadership skill, so that they will able to set up their new potential business overwhelming market across the country.

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