

Extension Education for Women in Agriculture

Need and Strategies

R. Saravanan*

Indian rural women have been always an important partner in agricultural production system. Yet the fact that, most of the farmers in India are women.¹ Estimates indicated that, nearly 78 percent of rural women (34.55% women cultivators and 43.46% agricultural labourers) actively involved in agriculture as compared to 68 per cent of men. Women play important role in intellectual decision making, supervision and active participation in almost all agricultural activities and allied fields such as horticulture, dairy, poultry farming, sericulture and forestry. According to recent reports 50-60 percent of agricultural activities are performed by women and women produce 44 percent of world food today.²

For example, in the Himalayas, a research study found, women work for 3,488 hours in a year as compared to men work 1,064 hours. In the tribal economy of Orissa women spend 105.4 days per year on shifting cultivation, where as men spend only 50.11 days in same activity. Women in the three rice growing states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal make crucial contribution to the entire process of cultivation.²

It is imperative that, women participate significantly in agriculture and allied activities. But this fact is not reflected in the agricultural educational activities, women cultivators and labourers are not given importance in the transfer of technology (TOT) and agricultural training programmes. In recent past, women in agriculture, experiencing the inadequate access to the modern agricultural technologies and they are handicapped with knowledge and skill. Research conducted by Umarani and Thangamani (1999) concluded that, farm women have lack of knowledge and skills for about 60-70 per cent of the technologies of crop

production, grain storage, and cattle management relating to the operations in which they were participating. This existing situation demands appropriate extension educational measures for improve the knowledge and skill of farm women.

Extension Education for Women

Need assessment and gender analysis: Assessment of women needs is the first and foremost step in planning and developing extension educational programmes for women in agriculture.

Gender analysis in agriculture will provide the women contribution in various activities and their constraints in effective participation. Need assessment and gender analysis will facilitate to formulate the effective research design and evolving appropriate technologies to suit the needs of farm women.

Strengthening extension system linkage: Employing large number of female extension agents and making male extension agents work with existing or newly formed women groups. This will help the farm women to access the modern agricultural technologies.

Women contact farmer approach: Women cultivators selected as contact farmers, it will enhance the contact of farm women with agricultural research and extension system.

Exclusive training programmes: Training programmes in agriculture and allied activities designed based on the need and interest of the farm women. Modern agricultural knowledge and skill imparted through KVKs and FTCs.

Introduction of correspondence courses: Agricultural education will be provided to farm women through correspondence courses. Interested farm women are identified and courses are designed

* Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

and delivered through respective state agricultural universities (SAUs).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: Successful women in agriculture are to be identified and their experiences will be shared through mass media such as TV, Radio and Newspapers. Incentives and awards should be provided for the outstanding farm women in region wise.

Designing and delivering effective TOT system: Effective, efficient agriculture transfer of technology (TOT) programme designed and delivered through government agency and NGOs exclusively targeting farm women.

Conclusion

Providing appropriate extension education for farm women will ensure the socio-economic transformation in rural area, in turn, it facilities overall growth and prosperity of our nation.

References

1. Shiva, V. Most farmers in India are women. FAO Publications, New Delhi, 1991.
2. Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995. Country Report. Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of HRD, GOI, New Delhi, 1995.
3. Anonymous. Agricultural extension for women farmers: Wildeline, population and human resource development. World Bank, 1992.
4. Jiggins, J; R. K. Samanta and J.E.Olawoye. Improving women farmers access to extension services. in Swanson, B.E; R.P. Bentz and A.J. Sofranko (eds.). Improving Agricultural Extension - A Reference Manual. FAO, Rome. 1997.
5. Saravanan, R. Problems of farm women and their empowerment. Third Concept, Vol. 15 (180), 2002, pp. 41-43.
6. Saravanan, R. and C. Resmy. Strategies for empowering women cultivators. Agricultural Extension Review, Vol. 13 (1), 2001, pp. 3-7.
7. Umarani, K. and K. Thangamani. Participation of women in agriculture and allied activities. Journal of Extension Education, Vol. 10 (3), 1999.

□

Welfare of the Children

B. Ramachandran*

“**T**he beauty of the modern generation is the way parents obey children”.—Harish Trivedi, Professor, Writer.

Children are our most precious national asset. It is quite hard to believe that children, the most numerous group of our population, run the risk of being neglected in a country where Gurudev Tagore has spoken of them thus: “Children are an evidence of the fact that God has not yet despaired of men”.

* Offg. Chief Manager (Retd.), Central Bank of India, Madurai (Tamil Nadu); Freelance Writer.

Our people love children, but often enough this love is displayed in heaping the child with sweets and toys, and he seldom gets the understanding and training so necessary to enable him to grow into a mature adult. The affluent nations provide many more facilities and have fewer economic problems. Yet, that children we find there have their own problems, in many ways more complex than ours.

The attitude of mind is almost more important than anything else. The child no less than the adult must grow up with the feeling that no one can