

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and its Role in the Upliftment of the Farm Women in Indian Agriculture

Sankar Kumar Acharya¹, Riti Chatterjee²

How to cite this article:

Sankar Kumar Acharya, Riti Chatterjee. Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and its Role in the Upliftment of the Farm Women in Indian Agriculture. Indian Journal of Agriculture Business. 2019;5(2):75-78.

Author's Affiliation

¹Professor & Former Head, ²Senior Research Fellow (PhD scholar), Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Mohanpur, Nadia, West Bengal 741252, India.

Corresponding Author:

Sankar Kumar Acharya, Professor & Former Head, Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Mohanpur, Nadia, West Bengal 741252, India.

E-mail: acharya09sankar@gmail.com

Received on 17.09.2019

Accepted on 23.10.2019

Abstract

Indian agriculture started having both institutional reform and structural adjustment since 1960. In 1952 and with the inception of Community Development Programme (CDP), we introduced what we call, a comprehensive approach by grossly conglomerating the different rural institutions for a loosely defined rural development activities. The resources allotted were extremely scant and the number of functions attempted was extremely high; nevertheless community development programme, unleashed a huge pool of activities and humongous impact as well. So, global statistics indicate that women are less likely to be involved in planning, research development or application of science than men. Statistics further indicate that women are unequally represented in science and their career progression is not comparable to their male colleagues. Why is it that the numbers of women in scientific institutions remain below those of men? Where the participation and contribution of women in Indian agriculture are not only integral but also comprehensive. Farm women are participating to tune of 70-80% in all agriculture operations. Their participations are very much distinct in raising of seedlings, intercultural operation, weeding, harvesting and post harvest value addition activities. So in this changing scenario of Indian agriculture, there is a strong need for institutional innovations to foster the faster reach of innovations to the farmers and farm women as well.

Keywords: Agriculture; Farm women; Gender; Institution; Training.

Introduction:

The global as well as Indian agriculture is now facing the problem of declining growth, increasing stress, and increasing ecological entropy. These one would go more serious in the face of global warming and climate change. The unabated population growth has made land man ratio a squeezing one across the world. The overall growth in world agriculture is now set to a dismal plight, just below 0.5 percent. Gone are the days, when one can think in mundane and classical way to transform the farmer only through providing some critical inputs and exotic knowledge. Now, we have to think for a total transformation taking "Change of knowledge" as the most critical inputs. All cognitive changes

then must undergo a motivational transformation and all motivational transformation should be translated into the operational skills for being properly applied and duly appreciated. This whole lot of transformation needs the application of basic principles of social chemistry and social dynamics. Indian agriculture started having both institutional reform and structural adjustment since 1960. In 1952 and with the inception of Community Development Programme (CDP), we introduced what we call, a comprehensive approach by grossly conglomerating the different rural institutions for a loosely defined rural development activities. The resources allotted were extremely scant and the number of functions attempted was extremely high; nevertheless community development

programme, unleashed a huge pool of activities and humongous impact as well. The institutional bases of market led extension are not that strong and capable of supporting peoples' demand and services to be delivered. Agriculture is one of so many responsibilities and has failed to receive due and adequate attention. The food crises kept on surging up and the Government came to an understanding that agriculture must be the special focus area of the nation and is to keep insulated of the brunt of hunger and impoverishment. In 1960 India started Intensive Agriculture district Programme (IADP) and in 1964, we introduced intensive agriculture area programme (IAAP) through both intensification and integration of agriculture research and rural development efforts that took a new height in 1965-66 through the introduction of an ambitious programme, called HYVP. This was basically a functional symphony between physical input and human skills. The HYVP approach started paying out in the early part of seventies and triggered a quantum jump from a poultry 55 million tonnes of food production to 110 million tons of food production. This was branded as green revolution of India. The vertical growth in agriculture had been counter balanced against a skewed distribution of the benefits. So, India started welfare oriented programme, like Small and Marginal Farmer Development Programme (SMFDP). Integrated Tribal Development Programme and a series of child and women welfare programme. Some strategic programme like lab to land and operational research project kept on complementing. The first KVK in India came into being in 1974 at Pondicherry. The basic purpose was to impart need based training for capacity building of the farmers and the farmwomen around the KVK villages. This was to be done through imparting vocational training and on farm demonstration. Training is the capacity building process and demonstration is the methodology to display of the efficacy of the know-how and do-how of the critical inputs. All these were being done at a time when Training and Visit System had been in its operation. So, it had been a clandestine synergy between World Bank approach, i.e. T and V system and lab to land experiments. Right now, more than five hundred KVK in India are to create a huge network of technology dissemination and feedback mechanism. The socialization of KVK depends on the extension inputs it successfully imbibes, assimilates and internalizes in an isochronous manner. An evolving KVK system in India has curves and dents, elements and elevation, direction and dictum to make a unique institution for socialization of

agricultural technology. At the beginning it was basically banking on available technology limited demonstration and few selected farming, along and across the objectives set by the KVKs. The on farm demonstration popularly known as OFD, gradually started losing its desired applicability and expected impacts. The reasons can be catalogued into:

- (a) Technological e.g. non-availability of appropriate technology.
- (b) Technical e.g. effective extension techniques.
- (c) Tactical e.g. package approach rather than isolated technology intervention.

Rationale for Gender Equality

Global statistics indicate that women are less likely to be involved in planning, research development or application of science than men. Statistics further indicate that women are unequally represented in science and their career progression is not comparable to their male colleagues. Why is it that the numbers of women in scientific institutions remain below those of men. An understanding of the logic of exclusion/inclusion is key to understanding the dearth of women in science. Understanding the obstacles women face can assist both managers and staff to better understand how organizations perpetuate gender bias. It can also help women scientists to understand that the constraints they face are not simply individual problems but are likely related to systematic issues within the culture of scientific organizations.

Family education status and the farm women

Sarkar (1994) stated that family education status of farm women has found to be significantly associated with planning process, decision making process, perceptual process, participatory process and interactional process. And according to Ghosh (1995), family education status has been found to be positively and significantly correlated with decision making of women in farm related activities. Moktan (1997) in his study found that family education status has been found to be positively and significantly correlated with decision making of women in farm related activities.

Per capita income and its effect on the livelihood of the farm women

Poonia (1988) stated that per capita income of

women was found to be negatively and significantly related with participation and time spent in agriculture. According to Sarkar (1994) income was highly correlated with planning process and decision making of women in dairy. Patel et al. (1995) found that there was also a significant relationship between annual family income and participation of rural women in household tasks, Agricultural operation and Animal husbandry activities.

KVK and the farm women

The participation and contribution of women in Indian agriculture are not only integral but also comprehensive. Farm women are participating to tune of 70–80% in all agriculture operations. Their participations are very much distinct in raising of seedlings, intercultural operation, weeding, harvesting and post harvest value addition activities. The other side of story is that they are getting only 15–20% of the return against their 70–80% contribution to the total productions. It is reality that almost all over India; they are getting less wages than their male counterpart, the reasons behind the discrimination. Empowerment is a process where by women become able to organize themselves to increase self reliance to assert their independent right to make choice and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination (Suguna. 2002). It is the process by which individuals, organizations and communities gain control and mastery over social and economic conditions (Satapathy, 2003). In a predominantly agrarian country like ours, nearly 75 percent of economically effective women are engaged in agriculture in comparison with 63 percent of their male counterparts. Almost 50 percent of rural female workers are agricultural labourers and 37 percent are cultivators. At the same time, around 70 percent of total farm work is performed by women only. The Krishi Vigyan Kendras have got clear cut mandates for up gradation farmwomen in term of capacity building through training, demonstrated campaign and sensitization programme. While child nutrition and mother care have become the prime issues to the nation, the KVK are organizing different vocational training for the women. Some of the trainings are specially designed for the women so that they can earn and sustain their family through remunerative enterprise like vermi compost, kitchen garden, tailoring, fabric, preservation of fruits and vegetable/nursery, floriculture, pisciculture ornamental fish etc. Despite the recognized facts

and a considerable amount of development, women are still restricted in their role as farmers by unequal rights as well as access to and control over resources especially land. For example, fewer than 10 percent of women farmers own land in India, Nepal and Thailand. In Kenya, although 98 percent of women work full time in agrarian sector, only 5 percent have land ownership titles. In addition, women still carry out their work without much help from agricultural support mechanisms such as extension agencies, input suppliers as well as credit institutions. Women farmers receive less than 5 percent of extension services worldwide. In many parts of the world today, there is an increasing trend towards what has been termed as the 'Feminization of Agriculture'. Men are becoming increasingly absent from farms in rural areas. In the era of economic change, men are migrating from rural areas to towns and cities in search of paid employment. Women are therefore taking more and more responsibilities for agricultural production. Besides working for longer hours than men in the agrarian sector, women have also been largely responsible for aspects like family food security, maintaining the bio-diversity through preservation of seeds etc. Their contribution has been substantial towards improving rural economy. The women who constitute almost half of the total population are seen as strong, potential work force to be tapped in strengthening the economy. Feminization of agriculture being an important issue in this direction needs active participation of women in agriculture as worker, manager and entrepreneur. But development among the vast segment of women population have not been taken care due to male dominancy, perpetuation of socio-cultural restrictions and non-realization of women's capabilities to produce by the planners and policy makers. What we see today, women are embodiment of dependence characters and multi-purpose roles without social recognition.

Training programmes given by KVKs to farmers and farm women

KVKs generally deal with training programme related to needy areas to be served to both for men and women. The types of courses covered may be for package and practices of various field crops, vegetable crops, oil seed crops, plant protection, farm planning, care and feeding of animals, poultry keeping, irrigation and water management, marketing of agricultural product etc. To impart training efficiently, KVKs are arranged more

specialized persons. Some progressive farmers may be used as practical teachers. The help of agricultural universities, reputed NGOs, various agro-based industries and other state Govt. agencies are invited. As earlier explained KVK programmes will be problem oriented and field oriented with follow-up measures. "Learning by doing" the motto of KVK is always kept in mind while giving training. It gives direct bearing on our agricultural productivity. The training programmes further intend to cover backward areas, weaker sections and tribes, hill farmers on priority basis. Early adopters are always given priority, as they are the influential group in the rural environment. Courses in the Krishi Vigyan Kendra will be tailored to the needs of the areas served and will be for both men and women. The following types of courses might be provided, cultivation of local crops, application of package of practices; farm planning and plant protection; care and feeding of animals, poultry keeping, pisciculture, tubewell operation, irrigation and water control, nutrition, cooking and hygiene, Food processing and cooking, marketing of agricultural products, catching and marketing of fish etc.

KVK: The Vistas Ahead

- The whole episode of empirical research work generates the following recommendation for a successful functioning of KVK.
- While classifying adopted and non-adopted villages, the 'spill over' effect should be considered, i.e. the idea of isolated entity of adopted and non-adopted villages may go apparently vague.
- There should be catalogued information on education, holding size, income, motivation etc. while selecting trainees for KVK training programme.
- There should be an information inventory on adoption and rejection discontinuance and reinvention data, specially for farm women to conduct a back cross analysis or to elicit the missing links.
- Gender studies with special reference to women's unique preferences for crop variety, season, cultural need or perceived constraints on training efficacy training method, venue and time too. All these would be rendered presentable at time of delineating researchable extension agenda at KVKs.
- The modelling of technology socialization

process with gender issues and elements may go nationally important for forming a policy to support farm women for attaining sustainable development.

Conclusion

So in this changing scenario of Indian agriculture, there is a strong need for institutional innovations to foster the faster reach of innovations to the farmers and farm women as well. And woman has been as important as man. In fact, the status, employment and work performed by women in society are the indicators of a nation's overall progress. Without the participation of women in national activities, the social, economical or political progress of a country will be stagnated. Rural women can play a significant role by their effectual and competent involvement in entrepreneurial activities. So, the training programme must promote critical analysis in women and encourage them to think independently and challenge unequal gender relations and exploitation.

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