

Perception of Trainees about Gender Sensitization in Agriculture

Rajesh Kumar ¹ and R.K. Sohane ²

ABSTRACT

A National Gender Resource Centre in Agriculture (NGRCA) was set up in the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), MoA during 10th Five Year Plan. It is a modal centre for convergence and coordination of gender-related issues at national level. In order to create adequate sensitivity among the programme implementers (at three different levels, viz. senior level, middle level and cutting edge level) and to facilitate them to perceive and implement agricultural schemes/programmes with greater gender focus. Bihar Agricultural Management and Extension Training Institute (BAMETI) has given responsibility to organize 10 training programmes for the delivery on gender sensitization modules for the cutting edge field level functionaries of agriculture and allied departments. The BAMETI has developed a pre-training questionnaire related to attitude, knowledge, behaviour and skill towards gender for analysis of perception of trainees about gender sensitization and issues in agriculture. Training programmes based on gender sensitization were found an effective tool to motivate the cutting-edge extension functionaries.

Key words : Gender, Cutting edge extension functionaries, Perception, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation

INTRODUCTION

Rural women form the most important productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations including India. Agriculture, the single largest production endeavour in India, contributing 20 per cent of GDP, is increasingly becoming a female activity. Agriculture sector employs 4/5th of all economically active women in the country. About 48 per cent of India's self-employed farmers are women. There are 75 million women engaged in dairying as against 15 million men and 20 million in animal husbandry as compared to 1.5 million men. Moreover, several farm activities traditionally carried out by men are also being undertaken by women as men are migrated to urban areas. Thus, rural India is witnessing a process, which could be described as feminization of agriculture. More than simply supplying labour, women possess detailed knowledge of agriculture and use of plant and plant products food, medicine and animal feed. Women work extensively in production of major grains and millets, in land preparation, seed selection, seedling production, sowing, applying manure, fertilizer and pesticide, weeding, transplanting, threshing, winnowing and harvesting; in livestock production, fish processing, collection of non-timber forest produce (NTFP) *etc.* In animal husbandry, women have multiple roles ranging from animal care, grazing, fodder collection and cleaning of animal sheds to processing of milk and livestock products. Rearing milch animals, small ruminants and backyard poultry is an important source of income for poor farm families and agricultural labourers.

Landless women and agricultural labourers play a pivotal role as they are involved in most of the agricultural operations. Landless women also lease in land for cultivation. While women have always played a key role in agricultural production, their importance both as workers and as managers of farms has been growing, as an increasing number of men move to non-farm jobs. Today 85 per cent of all rural female workers are in agriculture. Women constitute 40 per cent of the agricultural work force and this percentage is rising. Despite significant contribution of women in the production process, an all pervasive bias of development planners in treating them primarily as consumers of social services rather than producers, kept them away from the development programmes in agriculture and allied sectors. As men and women have different roles and needs and face gender-specific constraints, women may not automatically benefit from development activities, but may remain excluded. So, to create adequate sensitivity among the programme implementers and to facilitate them to perceive and implement agricultural schemes/programmes with greater gender focus, Government of India, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) organized several training programmes.

BAMETI, Bihar organized 10 training programmes for the delivery of Gender sensitization modules for the cutting-edge level field functionaries of agriculture and allied departments. To know the perception of trainees about attitude, knowledge, behaviour and skill related to

¹ Assistant Director (Extension Management), BAMETI, Patna, Bihar, ² Director, BAMETI, Patna, Bihar

gender sensitization and issues in agriculture, BAMETI has developed a pre-training questionnaire.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 273 trainees who participated in 10 training programmes constituted the sample size for analysis. To know the perception of trainees, the sample size was broadly divided into two major categories which are as follows:

Master trainers

The first training programme was organized for the Programme Coordinators and Subject Matter Specialists of Krishi Vigan Kendra. The Subject Matter Specialists were mainly home scientists. They were trained as resource persons for the nine trainings organized at division and district level and categorized as master trainers. The master trainers were again divided into two groups, *i.e.* male and female.

Cutting-edge extension functionaries

All the participants of agriculture and allied departments in the nine training programmes organized at division and district level were categorized as cutting edge extension functionaries. This group was also divided into middle Level (Joint Director, District Agriculture Officer, District Horticulture Officer, Deputy Director and Assistant Director etc., posted at H.Q) and lower level (Officers posted at blocks) extension functionaries

Five simple questions related to attitude, knowledge, behaviour and skill were asked from trainees to know their perception.

Attitude

Attitude frequently intervenes between the knowledge and decision functions. The questions asked were:

- i) I do not think women and men behave differently because they are biologically different.
- ii) I think all jobs can be done by women.
- iii) I feel sympathy with people who experience discrimination.
- iv) I look forward to a time when men and women would be equal.
- v) Raising gender issues does not cause conflict between men and women.

Knowledge

Knowledge is a tool created earlier to communicate the information about new ideas. The questions asked were:

- i) I understand what gender is.
- ii) I know methods of finding out what men and

women do in a day

- iii) I know three roles of women.
- iv) I believe that there is inequality among men and women in rural areas.
- v) I believe that patriarchy system is an important reason for women oppression.

Skill

Skill is an ability that has been acquired by trainings on different issues. The questions asked were:

- i) I find it easy to listen to others.
- ii) I find it easy to express my feelings to others.
- iii) I can motivate rural men to change their attitude towards women.
- iv) I know one way of collecting gender sensitive data in a village.

Behaviour

Persuasion function in the decision process is either a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the innovation, which leads to a subsequent change in overt behaviour. The questions asked were:

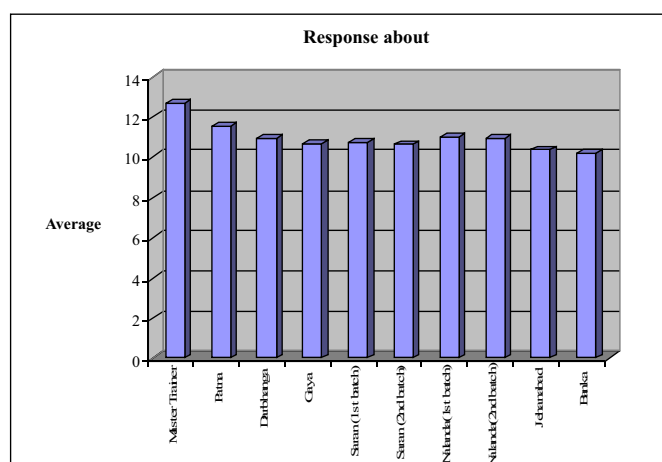
- i) I participate actively in a group.
- ii) If I hear someone making a discriminatory comment I challenge him.
- iii) I feel confident to raise gender issues with men.
- iv) I feel confident to raise gender issues with women.
- v) I will promote equal opportunity for girls/women.

The trainees were asked about their level of perception on a three point continuum & the scores assigned were 1,2 and 3 respectively. The average was worked out to find out level of perception.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was taken up with a view to find out the perception of trainees. In pursuance of the objective of the study, the data have been presented along with critical discussion, so as to draw meaningful conclusions. The presentation of results and discussion is divided into following sub-heads for the sake of ex-positional convenience.

The average of response of the trainees towards attitude was worked out and depicted in a graph given below. It was observed that average of master trainer and Patna is on higher side while district of Jehanabad and Banka on lower side.



Attitude

Extension officers should begin their activities in a particular client system i.e. involving women farmers with an innovation that possess a high degree of relative advantage, that is compatible with existing beliefs, and that has a very high likelihood of success. This will help create a general, positive set towards change and paves the way for later ideas that may be introduced. Extension workers shall put their efforts in creating a positive general attitude toward change on the part of women farmers. Individuals in such a change-oriented system are self-renewing, self actualizing, open to the new, and active in inquiring about innovations. This gives scope for the extension officers to the sequential introduction of innovations.

Knowledge

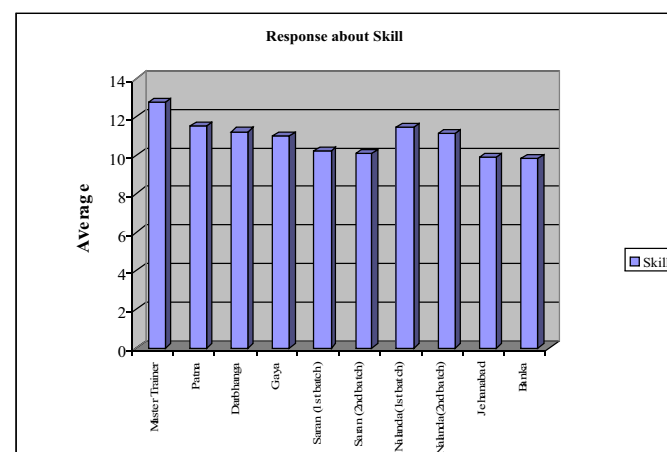
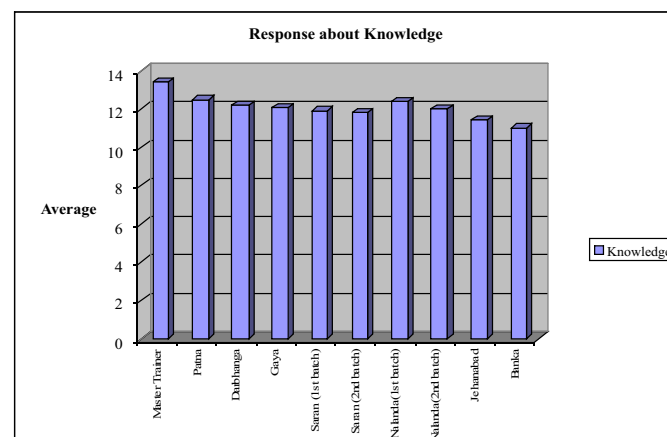
Most of the cutting edge level extension functionaries and some of the middle level extension functionaries responded “not at all” when ask what gender is. Almost all the trainees completely aware about the methods of finding out what men and women do in a day and three roles of women. Master trainers and most of the middle level extension functionaries believe that patriarchy system is an important reason for women oppression. The average of response about knowledge is given below.

Skill

Communication skills are the set of skills that enables a person to convey information so that it is received and understood. Communication skills refer to the repertoire of behaviours that serve to convey information for the individual. In Agriculture extension, skill is an art to express and capture feelings of farmers and have patience to listen to others.

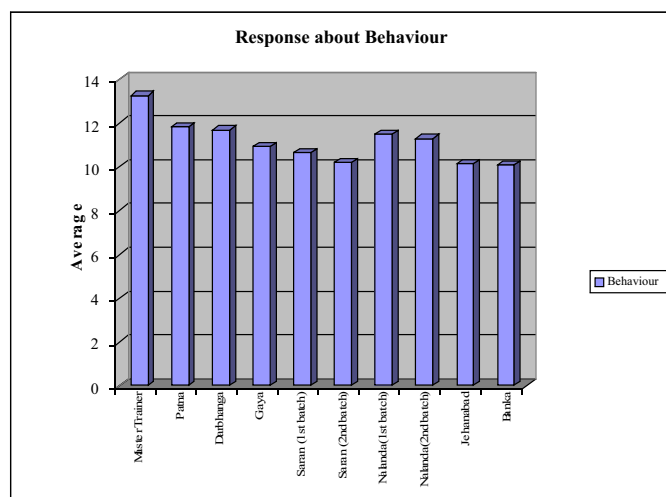
It was found during the trainings that all except the master trainers did not know one way of collecting gender sensitive data in a village, while the cutting edge functionaries express their hesitation talking to women

leaders. It was found during interaction with the trainees that master trainers have ability to motivate rural men to change their attitude towards women. While middle and lower level extension functionaries needs training covering the motivational aspects. The response about skill has been depicted in the following figure.



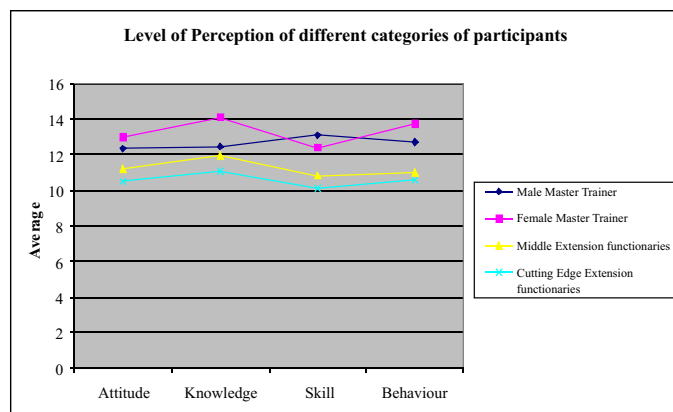
Behaviour

More effective communication occurs in homophilous condition, where they share common meanings; the communication of new ideas is likely to have greater effects in terms of knowledge gain, attitude formation, change and overt- behaviour change. Norms are the established behaviour patterns for the members of a social system. They define a range of tolerable behaviour and serve as a guide or a standard for the members' behaviour in a social system. The norms of a system tell an individual what is expected behaviour. A system's norms can be a barrier to change. The average score of response on behaviour was found highest (about 88 per cent) for the master trainer. The districts viz., Patna, Darbhanga and Nalanda ranked second, third and fourth respectively in terms of response of behaviour. The average score of response on behaviour was found lowest (67%) for the Banka district followed by Jehanabad (68%).



Level of Perception

The participants were categorized into four groups viz. male master trainers female master trainers middle level and extension functionaries lower level. Then the analysis was done to find out their level of response. It was found that in all the categories, the average scores of female master trainers was highest for attitude, knowledge and behaviour respectively but the average score in case of response to skill was found highest for male master trainers. It was found that women master trainers score low in the questions like easy to express my feelings to others and easy to listen to others. Overall, the average scores of cutting edge extension functionaries were found lowest. Only in case of response to behaviour, the average score of cutting edge extension functionaries and middle level extension functionaries was found almost equal.



CONCLUSION

Farm women are considered as an invisible work force in agriculture even though they participate in most of the agricultural operations. In the changing scenario of agricultural development, dissemination of need based and location specific technologies to farm women

assumes greater importance. For consistent growth of agricultural production, stabilization of income in agriculture, it is necessary to involve women in increased adoption of improved farm practices. This can be attained through effective training and extension programmes specially designed and based on technological felt needs of farm women through which their behaviour can be changed in a desired direction, production and productivity can be enhanced. It can be concluded that the cutting-edge extension functionaries as well as middle level extension functionaries need more motivational training, so that they will be able to communicate in better way to the farm families and also motivate the male members of farm family to change their attitude towards women.

REFERENCES

Indian Council of Agricultural Research International Conference on Appropriate Agricultural Technologies for Farm Women: Future research strategy and linkage with development systems November 30 - Dec 6, 1988, New Delhi Manila: International Rice Research Institute, 1988. 263 p. 396.51 IND

Maithili Viswanathan, 1994. Women in agriculture and rural development Jaipur: Printwell Publishing, 276 p396.

Gender Analysis in Agriculture Report of a Workshop, Jointly organized by Kerala Agricultural University, Thrissur and M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai from 6-8 November 2000 at Thrissur, Kerala

Annual Report 2004-05, Department of Women and Child Development, GOI.

NGRCA in Performance Budget Document of DAC, 2005-06.

Rashmi Singh 2007. Achievement motivation of women Entrepreneurs. Indian Journal of Extension Education Vol. 43, No. 3 & 4. 27-31.