

Assessment of Training Needs of Farmwomen: A Case of Western Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

The study was conducted in selected three villages of Meerut district with an attempt to ascertain the roles, constraints experienced and training needs of farmwomen. Relevant data were collected from sixty randomly selected women involved in farming with the help of personal interview technique and focused group discussion. The study suggests suitable interventions, addressing both the practical and strategic issues for enhancing women's participation in extension programmes. Need for identifying needs of farmwomen and its replication over time is suggested for planning efficient skill up-gradation programmes for women.

Key words: Training needs, constraints, farmwomen, sex segregated roles

Introduction

Women play a significant and crucial role in agriculture and allied activities. Rural women are extensively involved in agriculture and allied activities which vary within agro-production systems^[4]. They are managers as well as labourers. Women's work is complex and important because their engagement in both farm and household activities is necessary. In developing economies, workers' combined multiple activities over different part of the year and participation in those activities is restricted by the caste and class category, education level and biasness of male about female working. Rural farm women are the backbone of agriculture. They play a significant and crucial role in agricultural production and development processes. They

Material and methods

The study was conducted in selected adopted villages of Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research at Modipuram, Meerut.

The sample comprised of 60 farm women belonging to three adopted villages of ICAR-IIFSR, Modipuram namely Andawali, Mahal and Kishoripur. These villages were selected purposively on the basis of availability of women farmers in the villages. A self-prepared interview schedule was used to elicit socio-personal information about

perform a variety of agricultural operations physically; mostly drudgery prone and manage the livestock production activities^[2]. The role of farm women in agricultural development is substantial and their involvement in transfer of technologies is becoming more and more crucial due to the changing socio-economic environment. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the technology and training needs of farm women in the transfer of farm technologies from the laboratories to the land. It is important for women to participate in training because training will help them utilize their full potential in agricultural production and increase their confidence on decisions on budgeting and healthy food management at household level.

therespondents and to investigate their trainings needs. The research instruments were administered on a small sample to check the redundancies in the questionnaire. Focused group discussions were also made with women. For assessment of needs, the weighted scores for different thrust areas were calculated. Frequencies, percentages and weighted scores were calculated for prioritizing the problems experienced by farm women in farming and allied activities and

their training needs. For training needs assessment, farmer women's responses were collected in three point continuum scale such as Very Important (VI), Important (I) and Not

Important (NI) by assigning scores 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The results were calculated as weighted score for each of the thrust area identified for the training:

$$\text{Weighted Score (WS)} = \frac{(\text{No. of VI} \times 3) + (\text{No. of I} \times 2) + (\text{No. of NI} \times 1)}{\text{Total No. of VI} + \text{I} + \text{NI}} \times 100$$

On the basis of weighted scores, ranks were assigned to the thrust areas for training.

Results and Discussion

Socio-personal profile of farm women:

The socio-personal profile of the respondents was examined and information is presented in Table 1. Among the total respondents selected, mostly (40%) were of age group 35-40 years followed by respondents (35%) of less than 35 years of age. A few respondents (25%) were of age more than 50 years. Most of the respondents (40%) were illiterate followed by twenty per cent educated upto elementary and twenty per cent respondents educated up to primary level.

A few were qualified upto high school (10%), intermediate (7%) and graduation (2%). In farming experience, majority of respondents (33%) were having experience up to ten years, followed by women having experience of twenty to thirty years. Majority (97%) belonged to male headed households while only three per cent households were female headed. These households were female headed because of the absence of any male figure in the family.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents according to personal characteristics

Categories	Number	Percent
Age		
Less than 35	21	35
35-50	24	40
More than 50	15	25
Education		
Illiterate	24	40
Primary	12	20
Elementary	13	22
High school	6	10
Intermediate	4	7
Graduates/other	1	2
Farming experience		
Nil	4	7
Upto 10 years	20	33
10 -20	13	22
20 -30	16	27
30-40	3	5
Above 40	4	7
Family Type		
Male headed	58	97
Female headed	2	3

If gender roles segregation in agriculture and allied activity is looked at, it can be inferred from Fig 2 that majority of the activities (81%) were performed by women followed by jointly performed activities (11 %). A few (8 %) activities were reported to be performed by men. In crop production, more than half (54%) of work is managed by men alone, followed by joint participation of men and women (23%) and women alone (23%) in rest of the activities^[1,3].

Livestock rearing is a women dominant activity. Majority of women (78%) were found responsible for livestock care and management in their households followed by

Constraints reported by farm women

The selected women were asked in Focussed group discussion about problems they generally experience while performing agriculture and allied activities. The women

performing jointly (18%) with men. In a few households (14%) only, men took the responsibility for livestock rearing. The possible reason for higher participation of women in animal husbandry would be that women are at home for more period of time than men and are available at home to take care of the livestock. The results are in line with study done by Mishra *et al* (2008) which stated that most activities like collection of fodder (88%), cleaning of animals and sheds (67%), feeding animals (79%), milking (46%) and traditional healthcare (67%) are performed by women in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh.

listed out the problems and percentages were calculated to know which were the most common problems faced by the farm women. Accordingly ranks were assigned to the problems on the basis of percentages drawn.

Table 2 Problems experienced by farmwomen in farming and allied activities

S.No.	Problems	Percentage	Rank
1	Lack of need based trainings	83	1
2	Drudgery in farming	75	2
3	Lack of women specific programs	73	3
4	Multiple responsibilities of women	67	4.5
5	Lack of women extension workers	67	4.5
6	Lack of access to resources	57	6
7	Lack of knowledge	43	7
8	Lack of land rights	37	8
9	Secondary status of women	28	9

Table 2 depicts the major problems faced by farm women in practicing agriculture. Eighty three percent reported lack of need based training programmes for women as the major problem they face in farming followed by experience of drudgery related problems reported by seventy five percent of farm women. Lack of women specific agricultural programmes was another major constraint ranked as fourth by the women that they face as an obstacle in farming. More than half of the women (67%) reported that they feel that their multiple responsibilities at home and family affects their performance in agriculture. About half of the women (57%) reported lack

of access to the resources as a problem in their participation in agriculture and allied activities. Lack of knowledge of agricultural practices, no knowledge of land rights and secondary status of women were also some of the reported problems.

Training needs of farm women

Farmer training is directed towards improving their job efficiency in farming. The training needs of the farm women are presented in the form of weighted scores in Table 3. Weighted Scores were ranked within each discipline and the first five rankings were identified as priority training needs of the farmers of this region.

Table 3 Weighted scores and ranks of the training needs of farm women

S.No.	Thrust area	Very important	Important	Least important	Max score	Max score obtained	Rank
1	Livestock care & management	93	7	0	3	2.83	I
2	Value addition	57	40	3	3	2.56	II
3	Scientific storage	57	30	13	3	2.53	III
4	Drudgery reduction	3	40	57	3	1.80	IV
5	Post-harvest technology	0	17	83	3	1.56	V
6	Weed management and control	87	13	0	3	1.46	VI
7	Procuring bank credit	70	30	0	3	1.30	VII
8	Marketing of goods	7	30	63	3	1.13	VIII
9	Leadership development	37	47	17	3	1.06	IX

Training on Livestock care and management was the most sought after by farm women followed by training on value addition and scientific storage techniques. It was because women in the western plain regions of Uttar Pradesh, irrespective of their caste and religion, were profoundly involved in the care and maintenance of livestock^[1]. It was suggested the proper organization of training programs in accordance with the preference by the dairy farm women. Trainings on drudgery reduction, post-harvest technology and weed management closely followed^[2]. The women complained for lack of time for attending the trainings because of reproductive and productive work. So, training on drudgery reduction was the dominant area

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for training as it would save their time and efforts for other activities. Leadership development was least favored among all the training areas. The reason may be the socio-cultural reasons which give women a secondary and subordinate status to their male counterparts. In patriarchal societies, women are considered as only helpers and the *purdah prathap* prevalent in this region was a major reason for less interest of women in leadership. Men were the major decision makers.

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