

An Assessment of Extension/Advisory Services to Reach Rural Women

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Tahseen Jafry, BSc, PhD

Glasgow Caledonian University, UK

Co-authors and partners

Dr Ann Kingiri, Head of Research, African
Center for Technology Studies, Nairobi, Kenya.



Dr Boyson Moyo, Dean, Lilongwe University of
Agriculture and Natural Resources, Bunda Campus, Malawi.



Dr Rasheed V Sulaiman, Director, Center for Research on
Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP), Hyderabad, India.



Significance of Addressing Gender

- Agriculture provides the worlds most vulnerable and marginalised communities their main source of food, livelihoods and income.
- FAO (2011) **43% of the agricultural workforce is made up of women;**
- 20% Latin America, 50% Asia and Africa possibly more.
- Women are involved in crop production, processing, livestock rearing, small scale income generating activities. The list is endless.
- If they had the same access as men to land, technology, financial services, education and markets – possible to increase agricultural production and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 100-150 million (FAO 2011).
- Women are the backbone of agriculture and the need to link extension to food security and livelihoods more pressing than ever before.

The Project – what we set out to do and answer

To provide an assessment of a range of different types of approaches that are currently being used to reach rural women.

New knowledge and understanding of what is working, what is not and what is not working as well as it might.

Reasoning and explanation of for success and failure. What makes things work and why?
Key themes, patterns, common threads, core features?

What next? Where do we go from here?

Geographical Focus

- South Asia: India, Bangladesh
- East Africa: Kenya and Malawi

Objectives and Methods

1. Comparison of existing women focussed engagement methods

Q - what comprises/are elements unique to methods being used?

Method

Systematic review of peer reviewed and gray literature.

- Focussed around specific research question/s?
- Search strategy (databases) is explicit and extensive.
- Article selection criteria (inclusion/exclusion) is given.
- Critical appraisal is based around data extraction templates.

2. Evidence of impact of scale in use and achievements of approaches.

Q- What is the evidence of scale in use/benefits to women of the methods used?

Method

Case study – explore and identify the scale in use, impacts, uptake, adoption, success, constraints of approaches currently used.

Case Studies

India

Case 1 Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) initiative of Andhra Pradesh Rural Poverty Reduction Project (APRPRP) implemented by the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) of Rural Development Department of Government of Andhra Pradesh (Social organization as the organizing principle for reaching women farmers)

Case 2 Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) initiative of Government of Himachal Pradesh (Transferring skills, technology and expertise as the organizing principle for reaching women farmers)

Case 3 Village Resource Centers and Village Knowledge Centers of MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) (Information dissemination as the organizing principle for reaching women farmers)

Case 4 Village Resource Persons (VRPs) of Jeevika project of Government of Bihar (Women paraworkers as the organizing principle for reaching women farmers)

Case 5 Women Cooperative Diary - Mulkanoor in Andhra Pradesh (Enterprise/ value chain development as the organizing principle for reaching women farmers)

Bangladesh:

Case 1 Rice Videos/ e-Krishak initiatives (Information dissemination as the organizing principle)

Kenya

- Kenya agricultural commodity Exchange (KACE) , NMK (Njaa Marufuku Kenya)

Malawi

- Dowa Women Group in Kasungu , Women Club Livestock Enterprise (Piggery Units)

Key Findings – What is the literature telling us?

- Very **limited peer reviewed literature** related to this topic. 170 closely related papers across the 4 countries.
- **Most papers argue for the need to support rural women** and why and provide recommendations on ways forward e.g. women extension workers, training, linking to markets, pluralistic approaches, access issues, working at local level, building trust, ICTs etc.
- **Very little empirical evidence** available on the **effectiveness** of the different extension approaches being used.
- **Little information** on how to engender extension approaches, how to determine who our target groups are (poverty, vulnerability) and how to ensure target groups needs are met.
- Hear much about working with farmers, small holder farmers **but little disaggregated data** (sex and socio-economic categorisation).

Extension approaches/methods to reach women

Organising principle/purpose	Approach
<i>Dissemination of information to individuals/groups/wider audience</i>	farmer-farmer, field visits, farmer visit to extension officer and vice versa (via telephone, letters, email), ICTs (traditional and new; community radio, participatory video, web-portals, tele-centers, mobiles), field days, agricultural shows/exhibitions, campaigns, mass media (radio, newspapers, T.V)
<i>Transferring skills/knowledge/expertise</i>	trainings, short courses, demonstrations, trials, group meetings, FFS, exposure visits (field trips, farm visits, excursions), whole family training, associations of women entrepreneurs.
<i>Social mobilisation</i>	SHGs, thrift and credit, commodity group, common interest group
<i>Enterprise development</i>	microfinance, institutional support , markets, private sector
<i>Build trust/ having allies/buy-in</i>	women extension officers, women field workers



What are the building blocks for success? What makes things really work?

A solid organising principle/one key approach to act as an anchor/strong root.

The most common ones found in this study:

Social mobilisation/group mobility/participatory approaches and high levels of participation – sharing resources, sense of identity, chance to contribute, needs, aspirations, voice concerns, learn from each other.

Effective transfer of knowledge, information and skills via engagement with both men and women that is designed to suit the socio-demographic profile of the user. Respecting/learning/promoting indigenous knowledge e.g. appropriate training, ICTs.

Having allies and support e.g. women mentors, reduces negative attitudes towards women farmers

Enterprise development – back-up institutional support and skills, especially for enterprise/value chain projects.

What does not work? What are the key constraints?

- **Approaches which have limited communication and dialogue** with intended recipient groups/communities on their needs, desires, wants, requirements.
- **Approaches which lack strategic focus** on how they could contribute to changing/ addressing gender inequalities and addressing/tackling social/cultural constraints.
- **Approaches which fail to recognise women as farmers** and their contribution to agriculture as a target group.
- **Approaches that are top down supply led and input driven.**
- **Approaches which lack participation** by women and men in decision making.

What can we learn from the case studies? Achievements/scale in use

Case studies confirm what was found in the literature.

Plus points	Down sides
Built on women SHGs, participation, with some elements of other support.	Women are mostly receivers of the projects/programmes
Collaboration with other stakeholders.	Constraints faced by target group not met (poverty, social, economic, cultural, technical, education).
Availability of inputs.	Women realize they are marginalized but feel powerless to change their situation.
Capacity building /training.	Trade off between what women want and their husbands/HH demands.
	Poor communication methods not taking into account illiteracy levels.
	Little opportunity for demanding other support.
	Little evidence of convergence with other stakeholders.

What is missing? What next? Dealing with the down sides.

Focus – thinking strategically and critically about our target group – their problems, constraints, dilemmas including social/cultural constraints.

Right entry point - recognise limitations. Work in partnerships with other actors. Understanding social architecture of support networks available.

Rationale/logic/sustainability - about the content, relevance and reach of programmes on offer/to be offered. Programmes that are poverty focused built around lives and livelihoods rather than agricultural production.

Inclusive Approaches - programmes are built around needs, desires, aspirations, of women in consultation/dialogue with men/HH members/others.

CHIVALA EXTENSION PLANNING AREA

Muononga Village, Dowa District



“This issue is very complex to tackle because the problem is not with us. Men are the ones who need to be approached so that they can get to appreciate the efforts and understand women from their perspective because as far as development programs are concerned, women may be given loans to start business etcetera but at the end of the day, the control to the usage of that money will still remain to the husband. And making matters worse, women are mostly afraid to stand and take charge of their finances because they are scared of losing their marriages”.

THANK-YOU FOR LISTENING
ANY QUESTIONS?