

DEVELOPMENTAL PRIORITIES OF FARM WOMEN IN AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT - A CASE OF AN ADOPTED VILLAGE K.B.PALEM

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Agriculture is the source of livelihood for over 70 percent of the population in India. Women carry out 50-90 percent of agricultural operations in this country. Thus, the prosperity and growth of the nation depends on the status and development of women. Despite these contributions, women continue to be marginalized, undervalued and unrecognized. There is a tendency among most administrators and policy makers to see “men as farmers” and women as farmers wives” and highlight their “supportive role” than “productive role”. There is an increasing attitude of farm women towards farm business (Chakravarthy and Chakravarthi 1996) Involving farm women in mainstream of development is sound strategy and hence there is a need to focus on their priorities in for overall development. Hence the research study was conducted in village Kondabhotlapalem of Bapatla Mandal in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh with the following objectives.

1. To study the profile characteristics of farm women
2. To study the developmental priorities of farm women in ARM
3. To know the relationship between selected characteristics of farmwomen and developmental priorities
4. To suggest a strategy for effective implementation of village adoption programme in accordance with their developmental priorities.

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Methodology

An Ex-Post- facto research design was used for conducting this research since the variables chosen for the study had already occurred. The study was conducted in the purposively selected village namely Kondubhotla palem that comes under Bapatla Mandal, Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. This village was an adopted village of agricultural College, Bapatla. A total number of 120 farm women were selected randomly as respondents from Kondubhotla palem village in proportionate with family farm size. The scale developed by Sabitha Kumari (1995) with suitable modification was used for quantifying the developmental priorities. Suitable measurement techniques were determined for measuring the selected profile characteristics of farm women. The interview schedule, an instrument of data collection, consisted of set of questions, which were asked to the farm women. Answers were filled in by the investigator in a face-to-face situation with the respondents. Correlation Coefficient, multiple linear regression and frequency and percentage were used for meaningful interpretation of data.

Results and Discussion

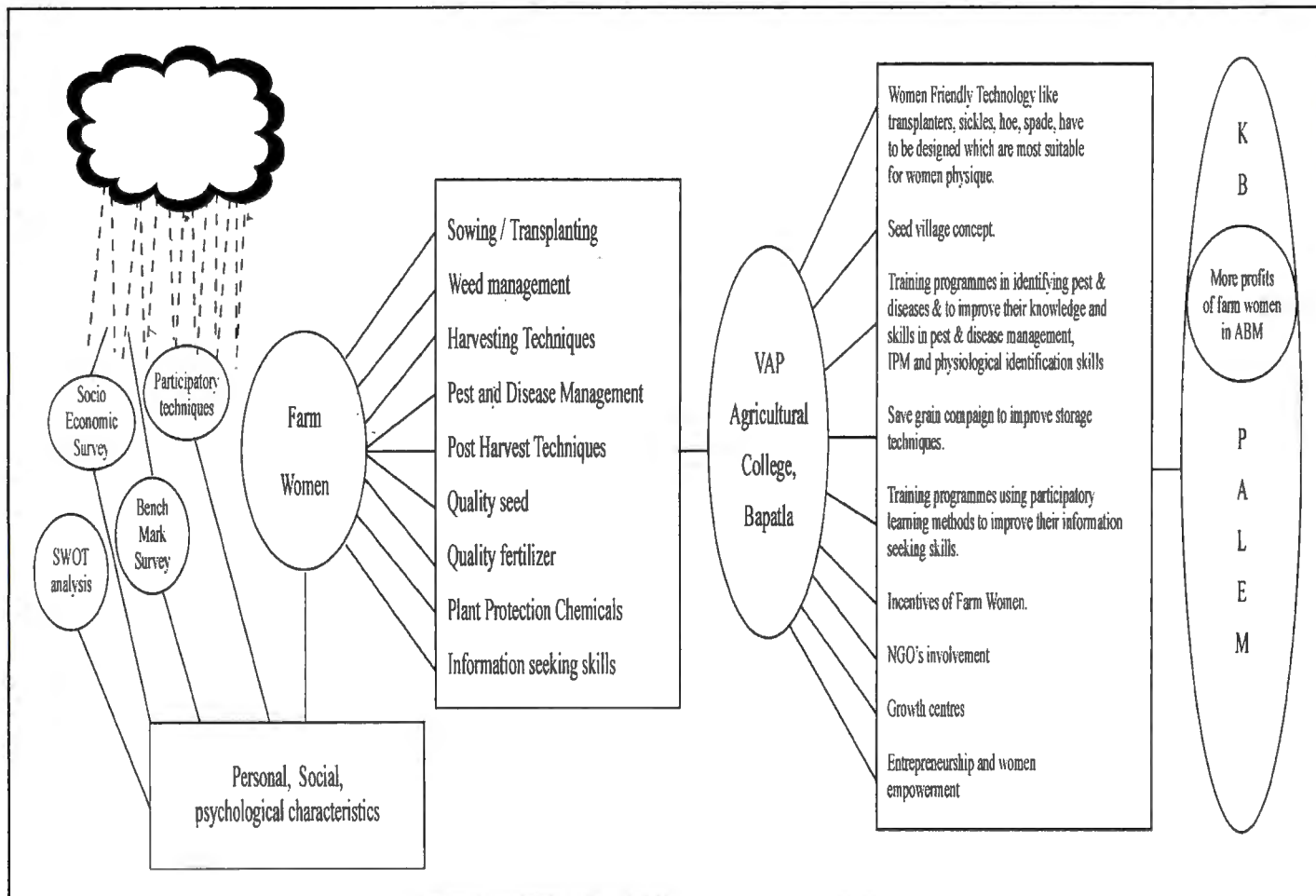
The results of the study are presented and discussed under the following

1. Personal, Socio- Psychological Characteristics of the farm women

The results presented in the table 1 indicated that majority (66.68%) of the respondents belonged to middle age followed by young age (26.7%) and old age (6.7%) group. It is indicative of the fact that most of the middle-aged women were involved in agribusiness management due to their heavier responsibilities.

While looking at their educational status, results revealed that majority (40.83%) of the respondents were illiterate followed by primary school (22.50%), functionally literate (27.50%), middle school (7.50%) and high school(1.67%). The plausible reasons might be their financial problems and non-availability of educational facilities. Another reason observed is the lack of encouragement from parents and traditional outlook towards their daughter's education. Therefore women should be encouraged to have higher education as education is the means for development.

Fig. 1 : Model of strategy for effective implementation of village adoption programme (VAP)



**Distribution of the respondents according to profile characteristics of farm women
(n120)**

S.No	Variable/Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
1.	Age:				
	a) Young age	32	26.66		
	b) Middle age	80	66.68	41.33	10.166
	c) Old age	8	6.66		
2.	Education:				
	a) Illiterate/no schooling	49	40.83		
	b) Functionally literate	27	22.50	2.25	0.97
	c) Primary school	33	27.50		
	d) Middle school	9	7.50		
	e) High school	2	1.67		
3.	Social participation:				
	a) Low social participation	32	26.67		
	b) Medium social participation	79	65.83	2.242	0.93
	c) High social participation	9	7.5		
4.	Mass media consumption:				
	a) Low mass media consumption	39	32.50		
	b) Medium Mass media consumption	60	50.00	9.558	2.2
	c) High mass media consumption	21	17.50		
5.	Extension contact:				
	a) Low extension contact	17	14.16		
	b) Medium extension contact	79	65.83	10.133	2.26
	c) High extension contact	24	20.01		
6.	Urban pull:				
	a) Low urban pull	18	15.00		
	b) Medium urban pull	92	76.67	20.108	3.5
	c) High urban pull	10	8.33		
7.	Aspiration:				
	a) Low aspiration	16	13.33		
	b) Medium aspiration	88	73.34	18.83	2.95
	c) High urban pull	16	13.33		
8.	Leadership status:				
	a) Women who were never consulted by others	30	25.00		
	b) Women who were rarely consulted by others	46	38.33		
	c) Women who were some times consulted by others	32	26.67	2.223	8.92
	d) Women who were often consulted by others	10	8.223		
	e) Women who were most often consulted by others	2	1.67		
9.	Opinion about sponsoring agency:				
	a) Unfavourable opinion	9	7.50		
	b) Neutral opinion	64	53.33	19.133	2.4
	c) Favourable opinion	47	39.17		
10.	Drudgery:				
	a) Low drudgery	6	5.00	19.525	2.78
	b) Medium drudgery	95	79.17		
	c) High drudgery	19	15.83		

Regarding social participation, half of the respondents had medium level of social participation followed by low (26.67%) and high social participation (7.5%). The probable reasons for the above trend might be lack of more number of social organizations in the village and hindrance from male members of the family for their social participation. Social participation of women could be improved through formation of more number of mahila mandals, organizations for women, women charcha mandals, local village institutions like primary cooperative societies. There was a need to break the iceberg of shyness and traditionalism among the women.

With regard to mass media consumption, half of the respondents belonged to medium mass media consumption category followed by low (32.5%) and high (17.50). Illiteracy and inaccessibility to printed literature might be the reasons for this trend.

The results on extension contact focused that majority (65.83%) of the respondents had medium extension contact followed by high (20.01%) and low (14.16%). This trend might be due to the fact that study area is an adopted village of Agricultural college Bapatla where scientists of this college make regular visits to the village for transfer of technology.

Regarding urban pull, majority of the respondents had medium (76.67%) urban pull followed by low (15%) and high (8.33%) urban pull. Busy schedule of farm and house hold activities coupled with more attachment with rural area might have made them to inhibit urban pull.

While coming to aspiration, nearly three fourth of the respondents had medium aspiration. A sense of fatalism and blocked opportunities might have conditioned the farm women to have medium and low level of aspirations.

Results on leadership status denoted that most of the farm women were rarely (38.33%) consulted by others followed by some times consulted by others (26.67%), never consulted by others (25%), often consulted by others (8.33%) while very few (of the respondents were most often (1.67%) consulted by others.

With regard to opinion about sponsoring agency that most of the respondents had neutral (53.33%) followed by favourable (39.17%) opinion about

sponsoring agency and very few number of respondents had unfavourable(7.5%) opinion about sponsoring agency.

Regarding drudgery, most of the respondents belonged to medium(79.17%) category of drudgery followed by high(15.83%) are low(5.00%) category of drudgery. The probable reasons for the above trend might be due to over work load in house and farm activities.

II. Developmental Priorities of Farm women in Agribusiness Management

A cursory glance at the table 2 reveals that most of the farm women had medium (64.17%) and high (21.66%)developmental priorities and only few of the respondents had low (14.17%) developmental priorities. Majority of the respondents were middle aged and had heavier responsibilities. To meet the same they have to earn more income. Since their major occupation is agriculture, they paid more attention in agribusiness management activities to earn more profits. Prioritization of developmental activities of the farm women is the forerunner for effective implementation of the programmed activity. Farm women with high priorities need to be equipped with understanding of the resource base through bench mark.

Table 2.Developmental priorities of farmwomen in Agribusiness Management; Distribution of respondents according to their developmental priorities

S.No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low developmental priorities	12	14.17
2.	Medium developmental priorities	77	64.17
3.	High developmental priorities	26	21.66
$\bar{X} = 96.392$		$\Sigma = 15.07$	

Response analysis of Developmental priorities

It was evident from the table 3 that farm production sector was given first rank followed by extension skill development (II rank) input sector (II rank) and out put sector (IV rank) in their developmental priorities.

It is an indication of the fact that farm women had given priority to the areas in which they were participating mostly i.e. farm production sector includes sowing/transplanting, weed management, water management, pest and disease management and harvesting techniques. It is quite natural that participating activities are prioritized more than non-participating activities. To that extent farm production sector includes only the activities which involve active participation of farmwomen (Bhagyalakshmi, 1997). This calls for a strategy to formulate women friendly technology for reducing their hardship and drudgery. In input sector, quality seed, quality fertilizer, plant protection chemicals were given first rank in their developmental priorities. In farm production sector, sowing/transplanting, weed management were given first rank in their developmental priorities. Harvesting was given second rank in their developmental priorities. In output sector, post harvest techniques were given first rank in their developmental priorities. In extension skill development, information-seeking skills were given first rank in their developmental priorities.

Table 3. Regression coefficients between the independent variables and developmental priorities of farmwomen

S.no	Variable	Regression coefficient	Standard error	t-value
1.	Age	-0.29168	0.1446	2.016
2.	Education	0.5829	2.1460	0.272
3.	Social participation	-1.7192	3.8875	0.442
4.	Mass media consumption	0.53312	3.379	1.8012
5.	Extension contact	1.9851	0.54768	3.624
6.		-0.039233	0.32172	0.122
7.	Urban pull	0.26774	0.46708	0.573
8.	Aspiration	3.3539	3.3410	1.004
9.	Leadership	0.088833	0.33807	0.263
10.	Status Opinion	-0.20461	0.4307	0.472
R ² =0.875		F=76.05* *	Intercept=64.24	

Table 4. Response wise analysis of developmental priorities of farm women in Agribusiness management.

Sl.No	Particulars	Mean score	Rank	Score for main area	Rank
1.	Input sector				
a.	Quality seed	2.7	I		
b.	Quality fertilizer	2.7	I		
c.	Credit procurement procedure	2.6	II		
d.	Plant protection chemicals	2.7	I	2.55	III
e.	Irrigation facilities	2.2	IV		
f.	Transportation facilities	2.4	III		
2.	Farm production sector				
a.	Weather forecasting	2.4	VI		
b.	Soil sampling techniques	2.4	VI		
c.	Seed treatment	2.5	V		
d.	Nursery preparation	2.6	IV		
e.	Sowing/Trans planting	2.95	I		
f.	Weed management	2.95	I		
g.	Pest and disease management techniques	2.73	III		
h.	Irrigation management	2.4	VI	2.6	I
	Fertilizer management				
j.	Operation of farm machinery	2.4	VI		
k.	Harvesting techniques	2.9	II		
l.	Financial management	2.6	IV		
m.	Energy management	2.6	IV		
3	Output sector				
a	Post harvest techniques	2.7	I		
b.	Transportation facilities	2.4	II	2.5	IV
c.	Marketing	2.4	II		
4	Extension skill development				
a.	Communication skills	2.5	III		
b.	Leadership skills	2.6	II		
c.	Organization skills	2.5	III	2.58	II
d.	Information seeking skills	2.7	I		
e.	Total quality management	2.6	II		

III. Relationship between selected personal social and psychological characteristics of farmwomen and their developmental priorities in ARM

Perusal of Table 4 reveals that variables of age and drudgery were negatively and significantly associated with developmental priorities. Education, social participation, mass media consumption, extension contact, urban pull, aspiration, leadership status, opinion about sponsoring agencies were positively and significantly associated with developmental priorities.

As age increases energy declines, and their interest in management of farm activities declines. Hence it might be the reason for negative relationship between age and developmental priorities.

As drudgery increases, due to hardship and busy schedule of farm and home activities, their attention might be decreased in management of farm activities. Hence priorities in agribusiness management decreases.

As education, mass media consumption, extension contact, leadership status, opinion increases, their interaction with others and exposure to new technology increases and their attention in management of activities in Agribusiness increases thereby developmental priorities in Agribusiness management also increases.

IV Strategy for effective Implementation of village adoption programme in accordance with their identified developmental priorities

Based on the findings of the study the following strategy is suggested.

- ☛ As majority of the farm women have given priority to farm production sector women friendly technologies like transplanners, sickles, hoe, spade etc. have to be designed which are most suitable for the physique of women.
- ☛ Training programmes should be conducted in identifying pests and diseases and to improve their knowledge and skills in pests and disease management, IPM and skills in identification of physiological disorders.
- ☛ Save grain campaign should be conducted to improve storage techniques

- ☛ Seed village Concept should properly be implemented in the village by taking group of progressive and innovative farmers covering the area of at least 50 acres and they should make the villagers self sufficient in producing quality seed for the use of farmers in the same village.
- ☛ Agricultural growth centres were required to be established in the village to provide up to date technology by identifying their priorities.
- ☛ Incentives should be given to farm women to improve their participation in social activities.

Conclusion

Farm women had medium developmental priorities and farm production sector was highly prioritized. So as to reduce drudgery and hardship women friendly technologies should be developed. Women should be educated to improved their prioritization.

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