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Research Article

ANALYSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT WOMEN STAKEHOLDER SELECTION PROCEDURES TOWARDS ADOPTION IN A REMOTE DISTRICT OF INDIA

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Abstract

Realising the very need of women empowerment and development, the present study has been undertaken to explore the efficiency of different women stakeholder selection processes namely through panchayat, farm and home visit, self-help group and farmer's club with respect to adoption of innovation. The study was conducted in five villages of Coochbehar-II block of Coochbehar district in West Bengal. Purposive as well as multistage and random sampling procedure were followed in the present study. The adoption percentage was considered as the response variable and the other attributes of women stakeholders were considered as the antecedent variables for the study. The data were collected with the help of structured schedule through personal interview method. The statistical methods used for the analysis of the data were frequency, percentage, ranking and t-test. In the present study, it was found that variation in age is responsible for a significant variation among the women stakeholders selected by panchayat and farm and home visit. Likewise, the attribute education accounts for a significant difference among the women stakeholders selected by panchayat and farm and home visit, also among the women stakeholders selected through panchayat and self-help group as well as among those selected by farm and home visit and farmer's club. In case of women stakeholders' caste, the significant mean differences are observed in case of panchayat and farm and home visit selection processes, panchayat and farmer's club selection processes, farm and home visit and self-help group selection processes and farm and home visit and farmer's club selection processes. A significant mean difference is also observed, on the basis of women stakeholders' occupation, in between panchayat and farmer's club selection processes. Almost similar type of significant differences among the four different women stakeholder selection processes are evidenced in case of selected women stakeholders' family size, annual income, house type, animal size, attitude towards adoption, risk orientation, training need assessed and adoption percentage. A significant difference is also revealed in case of women stakeholders' farm size selected by self-help group and farmer's club. It is also found from the present study that women stakeholder selection process through self-help group is much more effective than other selection procedures being studied in case of adopting an innovation. In search of the training need of the women stakeholders, the most preferred areas of training by the women stakeholders were scientific orchard management, followed by floriculture, improved poultry and duckery breed rearing, cattle feed rearing, tailoring and pisciculture.

Key words: Panchayat selection; women stakeholder; self-help group selection; farmer's club selection; farm and home visit selection; effectiveness analysis; training need assessment

Introduction

Development through agricultural innovation in any sphere within the social system is not a linear phenomenon, rather it is multitudes of interactions among the innumerable elements constituting the very social system and leading to an intricate fabrication of multidimensional dynamism. In spite of economic advantage, the social and cultural considerations frequently take precedence of adopting a new agricultural practice. This socio-cultural embeddedness of economic activities is especially pronounced in traditional societies of India where activities of economic sphere are closely interlinked with those in the cultural, social and ritual spheres. Since the advent of human civilization the women plays a pivotal role in case of characterizing and giving impetus to the growth and

development of agriculture as a vocation. Women are involved in all aspects of agriculture and allied activities from land preparation to making agricultural produces. However, the nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro-production systems. The best way to make optimum use of rural women as an important human resource was to provide them opportunities for self-development through training which improved the existing knowledge, skill and enhances capabilities, improves competency to meet the challenges of the society and technology (Deo *et al.*, 2010). Many households in rural areas are headed by a single parent usually a mother because of the migration of their male members to urban areas for secondary jobs leaving them behind with the land and children leading to feminization of agriculture. In contrary,

the farm women are not much acquainted with the new agriculture technology and innovation due to their little exposure in non-formal education systems, rural institutes and extension services. Majority of farm women are illiterate, local and married in extension programmes (Deshpande *et al.*, 2011). In India, women constitute half of the nation's population that's why they are the pillars on which the family unit stands but in reality rural women present a picture of abject poverty and exploitation both inside and outside the home. Singh *et al.* (2010) identified the farmwomen were employed in the operations which were either not mechanized or least mechanized and involve a lot of drudgery. In recent times women are playing pivotal role in agriculture occupation as a manager decision maker and skilled worker (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2003). Besides various factors like lack of awareness of improved farm practices, unavailability of extension and training programme to farm women etc. which forced them to go for traditional method of cultivation resulting in less production obtained by them, the biasness of the planners and policy makers in agricultural development planning are putting the women in deprivation and consumeristic view about the women is also limiting their role in decision making process. This realisation paves the appropriate selection method of women beneficiaries besides the traditional method of selecting through the panchayat which may be through women self-help groups, women farm and home visit or farmer's club for ensuring greater participation of women stake holders leading to women empowerment and agricultural development. Also women's earnings have a positive correlation with children's health, nutritional levels and education. Therefore, the rural women need to be motivated to participate in economic activities and take up entrepreneurial activities to supplement their family income through self-development by realising their potential. This requires appropriate training need assessment for analysing training need of the rural women for securing sustainable livelihood and increased income as well as better empowerment.

In such a research climate, there is a need to explore efficiency of different women stakeholder selection procedure (panchayat, farm and home visit, farmer's club and self-help group) with respect to adoption of an innovation and also to identify the training needs of the selected women beneficiary for contributing towards the mainstreaming process.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in five villages namely Jatrapur, Jibdharer Kuthi and Kaminir Ghat in Takargach-Rajarhat Gram Panchayat and Raserkuthi, Khairatibari villages in Dhandhinguri Gram Panchayat under the block Cooch Behar-II of Cooch Behar district in West Bengal. Purposive as well as multistage and random sampling

procedures were followed for the selection of the respondents. The adoption percentage is considered as the response variable to define and characterize the concept of adoption of scientific innovation for judging the efficiency of different stakeholder selection procedures and the sixteen other variables were considered as the antecedent variables for the study. The data were collected with the help of structured schedule through personal interview method. The collected data were processed into statistical analyses like frequency, percentage, ranking and t-test. The scientific azolla cultivation was taken as the innovation in terms of which the adoption percentage and behavior was calculated for the present study.

Results and Discussion

Table-1 presents the comparison of different selection procedures in case of women stake holders with respect to different attributes through t –test. The result shows that in case of age variation there is distinct variation among the women stakeholders selected by panchayat and farm and home visit. The difference is significant at 5 % level of significance. In case of women stakeholders' education the significant difference is found among the women stakeholders selected by panchayat and farm and home visit, also among the women stakeholders selected by panchayat and self-help group as well as among the women stakeholders selected by farm and home visit and farmers' club. Considering the women stakeholders' caste, the significant mean differences are observed in case of panchayat and farm and home visit selection processes, panchayat and farmers' club selection processes, farm and home visit and self-help group selection processes and farm and home visit and farmers' club selection processes. Considering the women stakeholders' occupation, the significant mean difference is observed in case of panchayat and farmers' club selection processes. The significant differences among the different selection procedures are evinced in case of selected women stakeholder's family size. There is no evidence of significant difference among the four selection procedures in case of selected women stakeholders' educational aspiration, material possession, expenditure and knowledge about the technology. A significant difference is depicted in case of women stakeholders' farm size selected by self-help group and farmers' club. Almost similar type of significant differences are found in between four women stakeholder selection procedure with respect to the women stakeholders' annual income, house type, animal size, attitude towards adoption and adoption percentage. In case of the women stakeholders' risk orientation and assessed training needs there are significant differences among the women stakeholders selected by farm and home visit and farmers' club.

Table 1: Comparison of different selection procedure in case of women stakeholders with respect to different attributes through t –test

Variables	Panchayat and Farm and Home visit	Panchayat and SHG	Panchayat and FC	Farm and home visit and SHG	Farm and home visit and FC	SHG and FC
Age	2.07*		-1.54	-1.36	0.36	-0.94
Education	-3.32**	-2.71**	1.31	1.04	-2.12*	-1.28
Caste	-3.82**	1.23	-3.33**	4.08**	-5.57**	-1.58
Occupation	-1.38	-1.12	2.30*	0.26	1.08	1.31
Family Size	2.10*	0.11	-2.60**	-1.47	-0.72	-1.91*
Educational aspiration	0.15	0.54	-1.01	0.37	-0.79	-0.37
Farm size	0.27	1.28	0.66	1.44	1.10	2.85**
Annul Income	-1.41	-2.07*	3.41**	-1.04	2.54**	1.35
House Type	-0.41	-2.90**	1.45	-2.64**	0.98	-1.73
Material Possession	-1.19	-1.19	1.07	-0.01	-0.31	-0.30
Animal Size	0.07	2.27*	1.39	1.87*	1.24	2.98**
Expenditure	-1.06	-0.61	0.98	0.90	-0.88	-0.19
Risk Orientation	0.43	-0.69	1.36	-1.07	2.17*	0.52
Knowledge about the Technology	-1.04	-0.66	-0.75	0.38	-1.28	-1.08
Attitude towards technology adoption	0.31	-2.89**	0.26	-3.52**	0.15	-4.61**
Training need assessed	-1.31	-0.28	0.93	0.91	-2.29*	-1.20
Adoption percentage	-0.58	-3.74**	1.20	-3.08**	1.25	-3.60**

*Significant at 5% level, **Significant at 1% level

Table-2 presents effectiveness of the different women stakeholders' selection procedure with respect to the adoption of new innovation. In the present study the adoption percentage of scientific azolla cultivation is treated as a new innovation which in turn used as the supplementary cattle feed. With respect to this technology, the adoption percentage of the women stakeholders selected by self-help group in the study area is highest and the adoption percentage of the women stakeholders selected by panchayat in the study area is lowest. This can rightly be related to the findings of another study which reported that the Self-help group was an alternative approach to achieve the objectives of the rural development (Singh *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the change agents will have to guide the members of SHGs to start some profitable income generating activities and facilitate them in sustaining those activities through technological and market linkages (Sharma and Varma, 2008). This may be concluded that the effectiveness of the women stakeholders in decision making for adoption of new innovation may be increased if the selection is carried out by self-help group instead of panchayat traditionally as the self-help group helps to

empower the rural women through raising their voice, increasing the access to the resources. In this direction farmer's club can also play a pivotal role to enhance the efficacy of the women stakeholders in adoption process. So, it is discernible that the local grass root level organisations like self-help group and farmers' club are shouldering the prime responsibility of empowering the women in rural areas. Day by day the panchayat and the traditional way of contact that is farm and home visit are losing their importance in case of developing the decision making ability of the rural women.

Table 2: Effectiveness of the different women stakeholder selection procedures with respect to the adoption of new innovation

Selection procedures	Average Adoption percentage	Rank
Panchayat	57.83	IV
Farm and Home visit	62.83	III
Self-help group	80.54	I
Farmers club	70.95	II

Table-3 depicts the training need of the women stakeholders in the study area selected through four selection processes. Though there is a planners biasness in case of giving due importance to the women for outside activity like horticulture and agriculture, still the result shows that women are very much fond of outside activity like orchard management. Consequently women stakeholders need much more training on scientific orchard management. The women stakeholders are very much reluctant to fishery. They don't have much more idea about the development of fishery enterprise. As a result very little percentage of women stakeholders have their training need on pisciculture. The other salient training needs of the selected women stakeholders on the basis of priority are floriculture or scientific flower production, improved poultry and duckery breeds rearing for improving livelihood status from improved livestock rearing, cattle feed preparation to supply the low cost quality feed to the cattle for increasing milk production and tailoring which helps to contribute in the family earning through alternative livelihood option.

Table 3: Identified training need of the women stakeholders

S.N.	Identified training needs	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Cattle feed preparation	76	79.17	IV
2.	Tailoring	75	78.12	V
3.	Pisciculture	34	35.42	VI
4.	Scientific orchard management.	90	93.75	I
5.	Floriculture	84	87.50	II
6.	Improved poultry and duckery breeds rearing	82	85.41	III

Conclusion

In the changed social situation, Women are the prime mover of the household activity, livestock rearing and agriculture which in turn helps in developing the rural family economy. In the changing dynamics of the social system there is a need to consider the prerogative of women stakeholders for

decision making process in the inside and outside activity of the development process. In this direction the selection of the women stakeholder is very through panchayat, farm and home visit, self-help group and farmer's club etc. Here, in the present study, after comparing the effectiveness of four different women stakeholders selection procedures (panchayat, farm and home visit, self-help group and farmer's club), it can be concluded that self-help group is the best option. Therefore, self-help group should be given more emphasis and taken care of during any developmental activity for women empowerment. In such a situation, the farmer's club may also be utilised for selection of women stakeholders to promote adoption of innovation for their socio-economic upliftment and empowerment. The present study as being designed to assess the training needs of the respondents has identified some of the preferred areas of the training by the respondents so that the training programme could be made demand driven for the women stakeholders. One of the concerned areas of training may be the scientific orchard management as there are a number of fruit orchards in the study area and mostly these orchards are managed by the women community.

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