

Economic and Technological Constraints facing Farm Women

Nivedita Tiwari, Research Scholar
College of Home Science (Extension & Communication Management)
C.S.A. University of Agriculture & Technology, Kanpur, U.P.
E-mail: nivedita.tewari@gmail.com

This study examines the economic and technological constraints facing farm women in four villages viz Jorium, Saroorpur, Sidhauna and Tendha of Milkpur block, Faizabad district, Uttar Pradesh. The sample size taken is of 100 farm women drawn by proportionate random sampling. 'Constraints' here refers to economical and technological problems that limit the growth and development of farm women. Few studies have been done on such problems. This study further examines the remedial measures suggested by them to overcome these constraints. The constraints were ranked after calculating the average score while remedial measures were expressed in percentages.

The primary objective is to attract attention to the constraints faced by this group of women so that steps are taken by government, non-government and local agencies or people to overcome these constraints.

It is unfortunate that because of centuries of inertia, ignorance and conservatism, the actual and potential role of women in society has been ignored, preventing them from making their rightful contribution to social progress. Even in the context of the "Green Revolution" which is considered a successful breakthrough in the "food sufficiency" campaign of India, there is no recognition or specific mention of women's participation. The lack of education, burden of family work and poor economic status were some of the serious problems women faced while lack of information, lack of technical knowledge, lack of training and lack of time were other problems. (Kulkarni, 1983)

In Uttar Pradesh, more than half of the farmers are women but their participation in departmental training and extension programmes is very limited. Only a few women have been recognized as progressive farmers. The knowledge and skill of women needs to be incorporated into the development of modern farm technologies by scientists. The blending of farm women's indigenous wisdom with modern technologies is also important. Women farmers lack knowledge and skills of

the latest technologies of farm-related operations. Agricultural practices, non-availability of technology and inputs are the major constraints faced by farm women. (Chandelet *et al.*, 2008). The flow of scientific and technical information regarding farm-related activities has to be examined and expanded to enable them to make significant productive contributions. Training programmes in the farm technologies which farm women lack, need to be conducted specially for them. A prerequisite is first to ascertain their level of knowledge and skill regarding various agricultural technologies and allied activities.

One study was found that in rural areas the women belonging to higher caste families are socio-economically better and possess some landed properties. Due to their higher social status, they do not like to engage themselves in difficult field work or in the fields of lower caste people. (Sadangi *et al.*, 1996).

The main economic constraints were scattered holdings, limited resources of purchase inputs, unavailability of labour to carry out work, small size of holding, insufficient irrigation, non-availability of loans at the proper time and costly inputs. The social problems which the farm women faced in the adoption of agricultural technology were caste, customs, tradition and religious beliefs in the case of poultry. Other problems were non-availability of technical knowledge, lack of skill in technical knowledge and non-availability of information on various topics resulting in a negative attitude (Sharma, 1992). The main constraints in taking decisions about rice production technology were a lack of technical know how (100%); lack of education in women (92%), men thinking that they know better (72%), the dominance of men in agriculture (69.%) and opportunities not provided by men (59%). (Vaish, 1999). Keeping these factors in mind the present study was examined the technical and economic constraints faced by farm women and remedial measures suggested by them to overcome these constraints.

2. Material and Methods:

The study area was selected as the researcher was familiar with it and knew its area, people, officials, non-officials and local dialect; it was also easily accessible. Four villages, namely Jorium, Saroorpur, Sidhauna and Tendha out of 113 villages of Milkipur Block of Faizabad district (U.P.) were selected. The sample size comprised 100 farm women drawn by proportionate random sampling from four selected villages. A pre-tested interview schedule was developed for collection of data. Constraints were ranked after calculating average score while remedial measures suggested by farm women were expressed in percentages.

3. Results and Discussion:

Table 1 reveals that agricultural inputs available in the market are very costly, while the supply of electricity is irregular and

expensive and consequently the income suffers and no subsidy on inputs is available to farmers. The price of products in the market has a very detrimental effect on agricultural activities. Respondents ranked these economic constraints I (2.98), II (2.90), III (2.84), and IV (2.82) respectively on the basis of their average scores.

The discouraging agricultural price policy of the government also makes growers nervous while discrimination in remuneration/wages for women working in the field and their poor purchasing power does not allow them to get the necessary inputs. The migration of agricultural labourers from rural to urban places has made labour scarce. These constraints were ranked as V (2.81), VI (2.65), VII (2.31) and VIII (1.93) respectively on the basis of their average scores.

Table 1: Economic constraints

S. No.	Statements	Degree of seriousness of constraints				
		Most	More	Much	Ave. score	Rank order
1	Poor purchasing power of women farmers	52	27	21	2.31	VII
2	Discrimination in remuneration/wage for women working in the field	74	17	09	2.65	VI
3	High price of products in the market	84	14	02	2.82	IV
4	Discouraging agricultural price policy of the Govt.	84	13	03	2.81	V
5	Subsidy on inputs not available to the farmers	84	16	00	2.84	III
6	Agricultural inputs are very costly in the market	98	02	00	2.98	I
7	Irregular and costly supply of electricity	90	10	00	2.90	II
8	Migration of agricultural labourers from rural to urban places causing a labour scarcity in villages	41	11	48	1.93	VIII

Table 2 shows that government seed/fertilizer stores do not make the necessary inputs available to women farmers or at the right time, or in the quantity needed (ranked I - 2.91). Diesel generally disappears from the market at irrigation and threshing times when it is needed most. There are no special training programmes to develop women's agricultural practices and technological skills (ranked II -

2.89). Viable and compatible technology is not available to the farm women (Ranked III - 2.84). The qualitative degradation of inputs like seed, fertilizer and IPM adversely affects the yield and adulteration of inputs decreases production (both ranked IV - 2.78). Eco-friendly technology is rarely available (ranked V - 2.60). These findings are all based on their average scores.

Table 2: Technological constraints

S.No.	Statements	Degree of seriousness of constraints				
		Most	More	Much	Ave. score	Rank order
1	Qualitative degradation of inputs like seed, fertilizer, IPM has adversely affected yield	82	14	04	2.78	IV
2	Adulteration of inputs has decreased the production	81	16	03	2.78	IV
3	Technological skills are not developed through special training programmes	90	09	01	2.89	II
4	Eco-friendly technology is rarely available	72	16	12	2.60	V
5	Viable and compatible technology is not available to farm women	88	08	04	2.84	III
6	Govt. seed/fertilizer stores do not make the necessary inputs available at the right time or in the right quantities.	91	09	00	2.91	I
7	Diesel generally disappears from the market when most needed (for irrigation/ threshing and other agricultural practices)	91	07	02	2.89	II

Table 3 shows that sufficient loans should be made conveniently available to rural women and at cheaper interest rates for agriculture and enterprise. These are the remedial measures suggested by 42% respondents. 38% also suggested that employment opportunities for rural women should be generated at their doors. Local products should be checked for exporting out of the local area and for controlling the price of

agricultural commodities in that locality. This was suggested by 30% respondents. 25% suggested a subsidy for rural women as a remedy. 20% suggested that the migration of rural youth to urban areas for jobs should be controlled. 19% suggested that there should be no discrimination between men and women regarding remuneration. Only 12% suggested women should possess decision-making powers.

Table 3: Remedial measures overcoming economic constraints

S.No.	Remedial measures	Respondents (%)
1	Employment opportunities for rural women should be generated at their doors	38
2	Women need to be empowered with decision-making rights	12
3	Remuneration to men and women needs to be equalized with respect to the work they do	19
4	The migration of rural youth towards urban areas for jobs should be controlled	20
5	Local products should be checked for export out of the local area to control the price of agricultural commodities	30
6	Sufficient loans should be made conveniently available to women at a cheaper interest rate for agriculture and enterprise purposes	42
7	There should be a subsidy for rural women	25

F More than one remedial measure was given by respondents.

Table 4 reveals that 87% of respondents suggested that there should be a sufficient and regular supply of diesel and electricity at a reasonable cost during peak requirement periods while only 23% wanted a sufficient

supply of electricity and 19% wanted diesel as a remedial measure. 30% suggested training to enhance their technical knowledge and skills. Only 28% wanted a sufficient supply of quality agricultural inputs at the right time.

Table 4: Remedial measures overcoming technical constraints

S. No.	Remedial measures	Respondents (%)
1	Quality agricultural inputs be made sufficiently available at proper time	28
2	Training be organized for enhancement of technological knowledge and skill	30
3	Diesel be made sufficiently available at reasonable cost during peak irrigation and threshing periods	19
4	Sufficient electricity supply during peak irrigation and threshing periods	23
5	Both diesel and electricity be supplied regularly and at reasonable cost as per requirements	87

F More than one remedial measure was given by the respondents.

4. Conclusion:

The Indian economy is dependent on agriculture and more than 70% of our population living in rural areas is engaged in agriculture. Among the rural population, women are associated directly or indirectly with agriculture. They play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post-harvest operations, agro-social forestry, fisheries etc. Farm women must be recognized as an important unit contributing to the economic growth of the country. In Uttar Pradesh more than half of the farmers are women, but their participation in departmental training and extension programmes is very limited. This may be the reason why women face technical constraints. There must be growth and development of farm women by recognizing their technical and economic constraints and putting into place a structured and organized strategic plan to overcome these constraints. Government, non-government, local agencies and people themselves can take some steps to overcome these constraints. They can greatly enhance the capabilities of these women through funding and skill development by imparting training.

5. Recommendations:

The present study was undertaken in 2007-08. On the basis of the study findings, the

researcher makes the following recommendations:

- The cost of agricultural inputs must be reasonable
- Agricultural inputs must be made available at the right time by government seed/fertilizers stores for women farmers.
- Sufficient loans should be made conveniently available to women at lower interest for agriculture and enterprise purposes to overcome economic constraints.
- Both diesel and electricity should be supplied regularly and at a reasonable cost as per requirements to overcome technological constraints
- Equal pay for equal work to both men and women.
- Literacy rate of women in this area must be improved
- Women in this area need to be empowered.

Acknowledgement:

The researcher is grateful to Dr. N. P. Tewari, N D University of Agriculture & Technology for his guidance and help for collecting data and Dr. Indira Bishnoi, BHU, Varanasi for supervision in research work.

References:

Chandel, S.; Chandel, K.S.; Dogra, R. and Singh, S. (2008). Trends in women's contributions to

agricultural productivity – a sociological perspective in Himanchal Pradesh. *Kurukshetra*, 56 (3): 28-32.

Kaur, S. (1981). Role of farm women in selected agricultural operations of five villages of Ludhiana block. M.Sc. Thesis, Punjab Agril. Univ. Ludhiana.

Sadangi, B.N; Mishra, B. and Patel, J.B. (1996). Socio-personal dimension of participation of women in Farm Activities. *I.J.E.E.*, 32 (1 & 4):30-34.

Sharma, D.K. (1992). Farm women's participation in agricultural activities in Madhya Pradesh. *Rural India*, 55 (3): 74-78.

Vaish, S. (1999). Involvement of rural women in decision making relating to rice production technology adoption in community development block Milkipur, Faizabad (U.P.) M.Sc. (Ag.) Thesis, NDUAT, Faizabad.