

Gender Specific Interventions- Earlier Programmes/ Experiences

The erstwhile Farm Women Development Unit of Directorate of Extension has been responsible for planning, formulation, execution, monitoring & evaluation of special projects/programmes for women in agriculture and allied sectors. These projects have remained in operation for over 23 years and have been instrumented in providing training, extension, input, managerial, entrepreneurial and other support services to the small and marginal farmers in 143 districts of 21 States of the country.

All these projects have aimed at strengthening agriculture base and augmenting rural incomes with a focus on skill-transfer through a combination of theoretical training & practical demonstration supplemented with a 'hands on' experience in the fields of women farmers. Different approaches & strategies were followed in all these projects to bring about a significant improvement in their status and income levels. These projects included:

A. Central Sector Scheme of Women In Agriculture- (With Domestic Funding)

The Central Sector Scheme of Women in Agriculture was launched on pilot basis during the VIII Plan in one district each of the 7 selected States of the country viz. **Punjab, Haryana, U.P. Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala and Rajasthan**. It was extended during the IX Plan period to one district each of 8 North-Eastern Hill States namely **Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Assam and Sikkim** to cover one district each of 15 States in all with a total budget outlay of Rs.4.96 crores.

The Scheme envisaged motivating, mobilizing and organizing women farmers to form new groups or identify and consolidate the existing groups of practicing women farmers. All the agricultural support services such as technology, input, extension, credit etc. were channelized through the network of these groups. To ensure sustainability, most Farm Women Group were registered as Registered Society or with Panchayat/District Agriculture Office.

A composite package of recurrent training was provided in the form of Village-based Training to women farmers of Phase-I districts (8 NEH States) and Sandwich/Refresher Training to the women farmers of Phase-II districts (7 old Districts/States) with a view to help them adopt the new technologies in agriculture and allied sectors such as Crop Husbandry, Agronomy, Soil Sciences, Plant Protection, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry etc. Thrust was also being given to the emerging areas in which women have special aptitude and skills such as organic farming, vermi-composting, bio-technology, nursery raising including Tissue Culture of Horticulture plants etc. In addition, the women farmers were trained in managerial, entrepreneurial and decision-making skills.

Activities: The scheme had following main **Training & Extension** components:

Training Component:

- Sandwich/Reinforcement Training of Farm Women of Phase-II districts (7 old district) (for 10 days in first year & 5 days in subsequent years);
- Village-Based/Refresher Training (for 3 days each at 3 different intervals in first year and again at 2 different intervals in subsequent years);
- Link Workers Training for the Conveners of the Farm Women Groups (for 3 days at 2 different intervals);
- Induction/Refresher Training of Facilitators (for 4 weeks duration in first year and 2 weeks in subsequent years).

Extension Component:

- Result/Method Demonstration in the fields of Women Farmers (4 demonstrations/Farm Women Group i.e. 2 in each cropping season);
- Organization of Mahila Goshties (1 per year involving approximately 600 Farm Women);
- Study Tours (2 per year – one within & one outside the State)

Impact:

The impact of the scheme has been assessed through the Reports of the Review Teams/Missions which have revealed that the Scheme had a positive impact on the general awareness levels of women farmers and has achieved a major breakthrough in addressing their technological and extension needs.

These studies have further revealed that the production and income levels of women farmers had markedly increased after they had put to practice the technologies/skills learnt under the Scheme which has led to their overall empowerment especially with reference to their access to information, training, skill up gradation, capacity building, inputs etc.

B. Externally Aided Projects for Training Of Women In Agriculture

1. Danish supported Farm Women Projects:

(i) Women Youth Training and Extension Project (WYTEP): Karnataka

Women Youth Training and Extension Project, Karnataka (WYTEP) was signed between Govt. of India and Royal Danish Government in September, 1982 for a period of 5 years. The Phase I of the project covered the districts where the Training Centres of the Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Karnataka existed. Thus 8 Farmers Training Centres and 2 Rural Development Training Centres at Kumta were established which were chosen to organize the programme.

The implementation of second Phase commenced in July 1989 with a financial outlay of Rs.18.89 crores. Apart from consolidating the achievements gained in first phase, the geographical coverage of the project was extended to all the districts of the State except Bidar district. The second phase was extended to run upto May, 2000.

The project in its third phase which ran from June, 2002 to 1.5.2005 covered all the districts with a total cost of Rs.44.93 crores. Over 7000 Farm

Women Groups have been constituted under the project and over 2.10 lakh women have been trained.

(ii) Tamil Nadu Women in Agriculture (TANWA): Tamil Nadu

The Tamil Nadu Women in Agriculture (TANWA) was signed between Government of India and Royal Danish Government in June, 1986. The project was for a period of 7 years with a financial outlay of Rs.3.21 crores. The project started operating in Tamil Nadu from October, 1986. However, the project was implemented in six districts which were later reorganized into ten districts of Tamil Nadu.

The Phase II of the project was signed on 1st October, 1993 for an amount of Rs.33.92 crores covering all the districts of the State excluding Ramanathapuram (this district was completely covered during Phase I) and Chennai. Phase II was initially signed for a duration of 7 years, which was later, extended upto March, 2003. 2000 Farm Women Groups have been constituted under the programme & over 1.03 lakh women have been benefitted.

(iii) Training and Extension for Women in Agriculture (TEWA):

Orissa

Training and Extension for Women in Agriculture (TEWA) was signed between Government of India and Royal Danish Embassy in December, 1987. The project was planned to have 2 phases of 5 years each. The first phase was implemented from January, 1988 and was completed on 30th June, 1995. The Phase-I of the project was implemented in 4 erstwhile districts namely Bolangir, Dhenkanal, Ganjam and Puri districts of Orissa. The second phase of TEWA which commenced on 1.7.95 with a financial outlay of Rs.11.85 crores concluded on 31.3.2003. Four additional districts namely Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Koraput and Sambalpur were covered in the second phase. 10,143 Farm Women Groups have been constituted under the programme and over 6.71 lakh women farmers have been benefitted.

(iv) Madhya Pradesh Women in Agriculture (MAPWA): Madhya Pradesh

The Madhya Pradesh Women in Agriculture (MAPWA) project was signed between Government of India and Royal Danish Government in November, 1993 for a period of 5 years with a financial outlay of Rs.6.24 crores. Phase-I of the project that concluded on 31.1.02 covered 9 districts namely **Jabalpur, Narsinghpur, Chhindwara, Mandla, Rewa, Shahdol, Umaria, Bilaspur and Raisen**. Phase-I of the project completed on 31st January, 2002. The Phase-II of the project which commenced from 1st Feb., 2002 covered 14 districts namely **Jabalpur, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Chhindwara, Rewa, Shahdol, Raisen, Katni,, Umaria, Satna, Seoni, Anoopshahar, Balaghat & Dindori** with a total cost of Rs.13.12 crores has concluded on 31.12.05. 4043 Farm Women Groups have been constituted under the programme and approximately 60,000 women farmers have been benefitted with the project intervention.

2. Dutch supported Farm Women Projects:

(i) Training of Women in Agriculture (TWA): Gujarat

The Training of Women in Agriculture Project (TWA) was signed between the Government of India and the Government of Netherlands in May, 1989. The Phase I of the project essentially included 6 districts of Gujarat viz. **Dahod, Surat, Banaskantha, Bhavnagar, Junagadh and Kutch** and was sanctioned for five years with a total cost of Rs.4.97 crores.

Looking into the positive impact of the project on productivity and women's decision-making abilities, the Netherlands Government agreed to extend the project for another 5 years from 1997 to 2003. The Phase-II of the project was sanctioned from July for a total cost of Rs.12 crores covering 6 additional districts namely **Valsad, Broach, Sabarkantha, Rajkot, Surendranagar and Amreli**. The project has been concluded on 31.9.2003. 596 Farm Women Groups have been constituted under the programme and approximately 1.67 lakh women farmers have been trained.

(ii) Andhra Pradesh Women in Agriculture (ANTWA): Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh Training of Women in Agriculture Project (ANTWA) was signed between Government of India and Government of Netherlands in August, 1993. The project was for a period of 5 years with a total cost of Rs.5.87 crores. The project started operating in Andhra Pradesh only in August, 1994. The Phase I of the project was being implemented in 6 districts of Andhra Pradesh namely **Rangareddy, Nalgonda, Kurnool, Ananthpur, Prakasan and Vishakhapatnam**.

The Phase II of the project was signed in August, 2001 for a total cost of Rs.44.03 crores covering 6 more districts of the State namely **Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Cuddapah, Chittoor, Khammam and Warangal**. 1777 Farm Women Groups have been constituted under the programme. While Phase II was for the duration of 6 years i.e. upto November, 2007, however, due to the Shift in Policy on bilateral funding, Dutch support has been withdrawn from 'ANTWA' project w.e.f. 1.4.04. Realizing the huge investments made in this project in terms of time, resources and efforts and also to sustain the benefits accrued under this project so far, DEA has taken a decision to continue selected Dutch supported projects including ANTA projects with DFID internal funding under Additional Central Assistance.

The activities of the programme are accordingly being supported with Macro Management support.

3. UNDP-GOI FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME

The Government of India and UNDP signed an agreement on 13th February, 1998 for funding the Program Support for Food Security involving US \$ 13 million to be given by UNDP for Five Years starting from 1st April, 1998.

Six sub-programmes were under implementation under the umbrella programme. These were: (i) Development & large Scale Adoption of Hybrid Rice Technology by ICAR (ii) Maize Based Cropping System for Food Security in India by TMOP&M Division of DOAC; (iii) Sustainable Dry land Agriculture by Mahila Sanghams: Andhra Pradesh (5 districts); (iv) Empowerment of Women for Food Security in U.P. (11 districts); (v) (a) Strengthening Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Livelihoods for Women of Tribal Areas of Orissa (7 districts); (b) Supplementary Programme for Cyclone affected districts of Orissa (4 districts); & (vi) Management Support for Food Security.

The umbrella programme laid focus on drought-prone and rain-fed agricultural areas in a holistic and sustainable way. Redevelopment of fallows for productive agriculture, providing women's groups access to croplands through long-term lease of dry-land, storage/distribution of locally grown subsistence crops by the women's groups and processing for easy cooking and marketing etc were inbuilt components of these sub-programmes.

The sub-programmes also aimed at enhancing the capacities of poor farmers in rain-fed and other areas by increasing production and productivity through training, demonstration and exposure to best practices. On-going initiatives involving women in agriculture were being supported by providing appropriate technologies for organized and trained farmwomen.

Under the women specific UNDP sub-programmes in the States of U.P., A.P. and Orissa, 2035 farm women groups have been mobilized and 50,875 farm women have been directly trained. As against the signed agreement of US \$ 13 million (Rs.45.12 crore) an expenditure of Rs.46 crore has been made taking into account the difference in dollar: rupee conversion rate.

Impact:

As revealed through an independent Mid Term Evaluation Report (MTER) of two gender programmes in A.P & Orissa and the desk reviews and field appraisals of all the three gender sub-programmes, the innovative approaches viz. improving women's access to land by long-term leasing of community wasteland/fallow land to women SHGs for collective farming; land development, grain storage facilities; seed banks, implements & infrastructure support and Micro Capital Assistance have proved to be immensely successful. Financial support in the form of Micro Capital Assistance, has led to procurement of 1041 acres of land on long-term lease for cultivation by 2087 members in 3 States. Further, Food Security at household level has been adequately strengthened breaking the cycles of indebtedness through internal lending among group members.

Approximately 50% of Women Groups have over Rs.50,000 - Rs.100,000 in their accounts with the money having been successfully revolved two to three times. The dependence on money lenders has substantially reduced and the lands of women farmers mortgaged to money lender has been got released.