

Check Points for Gender Sensitization of Stakeholders

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Abstract

Farm women are intensively involved in various field activities covering production of crops, vegetables, fruits, milk, fish, meat, egg, mushroom, honey bee, etc. and are responsible for food storage, processing and marketing. They take more burden in farming as men migrate to non-farm sectors. In spite of that, women face persisting gender gaps in access to resources, benefits, information, agri-inputs, technology, credit, capacity building, mobility, decision making and employment. The women are less recognized and ignored or bypassed in decision making process. It may happen as our agricultural R & D system not yet gender aware and responsive. Most of the time with stereotype mentality, the researchers and development workers do not add gender perspective in their projects and programmes. According to Rajesh and Sohane (2024), The cutting-edge extension functionaries as well as middle level extension functionaries need more motivational training, so that they will be able to communicate in better way to the farm families and also motivate the male members of farm family to change their attitude towards women. Therefore, to address these issues, some gender sensitive strategies and approaches are required and gender sensitizing

programmes should be organized for stakeholders for engendering agri-food system. Keeping this in mind, ICAR-CIWA has identified some checkpoints to create gender sensitivity among all the stakeholders including researchers and extension workers for bringing gender sensitive policies, programmes and technologies which are described in the following areas.

Gender Sensitivity of Working

Environment: Gender sensitive working environment provides a safe and secure workplace for women staff which is free from sexual harassment/ discrimination with leisure, health and hygiene and ensures justice. A lot of research in the past had evaluated the similar kind of relationships in which changing environments and the factors of environments of workplace had significant contribution towards the job performance of employees (Saragih *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, these checkpoints may be used as reference while assessing the gender sensitive working environment of ICAR and other institutions for supporting gender sensitive research. Further, this will provide opportunity for self-gender sensitization among the staff on how to improve working environment by addressing gender.



Checkpoints:

- i. Is the institute providing flexible working hours to women staff?
- ii. Whether active crèche facility exists in the institute?
- iii. Whether exists active women complaint cell in the institute?
- iv. Whether authority considers problems of women staff while deputing outstation assignments?
- v. Whether programmes are conducted to sensitize staff members towards gender issues?
- vi. Is there a gender balanced representation in the Institute Management Committee?
- vii. Does the authority provide opportunities to all staff members without any gender bias?
- viii. Does the institute have adequate female staff to meet the needs of female trainees?

(ii) Gender Sensitivity of Institutional

Programmes: For making the programme gender sensitive, gender components should be incorporated in every major stages (planning, rapport building, execution and impact assessment) of programme implementation. Women's participation in economic or social groups is also positively associated with greater crop diversification, as measured by an increase in land allocated to vegetables and fruits and a decrease in land allocated to cereals (De Pinto et al., 2020). Here, effort has been made to

prepare checkpoints to be used by the programme coordinator as reference while developing a programme.

Checkpoints:

- i. Had you targeted both men and women farmers as a beneficiary of project?
- ii. Had you organised any gender awareness programme for them?
- iii. Had you collected gender disaggregated data?
- iv. Was any of the project staff/team aware of gender concepts?
- v. Had you considered the personnel, time and location accessible to both men and women farmers for the project activities?
- vi. Had you developed/used methodology for measuring gender indicators?
- vii. Was any of the project/programme objectives addressing to gender?
- viii. Was any woman scientist/technical personnel in project team?

(iii) Gender Sensitivity of Extension

Methods: Equal access to resources such as land, water, livestock, labour, modern inputs, technology, education, information and financial services is a critical determinant of agricultural productivity. Mishra, *et al.* (2024), Through the implementation of gender-sensitive strategies, customised training, and the participation of female extension workers, these services have a crucial role in reducing the disparity between genders and promoting an all-encompassing agricultural environment. This will be possible through only gender

sensitive extension methods. Towards this end, an honest effort has been made to develop some checkpoints for ensuring gender sensitivity to the maximum extent in extension methods.

Checkpoints:

- i. Did you consider both farm men and women as an audience?
- ii. Did you identify farm men and women key communicators in village before communication?
- iii. Did you use local language for communicating to farm men and women?
- iv. Did you select gender friendly audio-visual aids for effective communication?
- v. Did you consider the personnel, time and location accessible to both farm men and women during extension activities?
- vi. Did you maintain the gender disaggregated data?
- vii. Did you ensure the participation of farm men and women in extension activities?
- viii. Did you allow both farm women and men to raise their issues during the programme?

(iv) Gender Sensitivity of Agricultural

Technologies: Technology is essential to women's economic advancement, to increase their productivity, to create new entrepreneurial ventures and access new income-generating pursuits. Chetan (2021) says, Investments that provide access to labour saving technologies

can reduce women's labour burden in contract farming, but in agro-processing and plantation agriculture, female waged labourers face longer working hours. Hence, women friendly technologies can be identified from the pool of technologies by considering few parameters while evaluating. Its software and hardware components should be specific to her physique and location. So the following checkpoints will be very useful for research, extension and development workers in selecting the most appropriate technology for women thereby ensuring better penetration and adoption of it to rural women.

Checkpoints:

- i. Is it compatible with the existing socio-cultural climate of the society?
- ii. Is it easily accessible and affordable to both the genders?
- iii. Is it simple to understand by both farm men and women?
- iv. Is it easy to handle and operate by both farm men and women?
- v. Is it efficient to reduce drudgery of both farm men and women?
- vi. Does it reduce workload of women?
- vii. Does it boost efficiency and productivity of both the genders?
- viii. Is it flexible to get modified according to the needs of both gender?

(v) Integrating Gender Perspective in Agricultural Extension Research Project:

The major gender gap exists in Indian agriculture is farm women's unequal access to



land and other productive resources like credit, critical agricultural inputs, farm technologies, etc. Hence, there is need for special reforms to focus especially on gender aspects which can reinforce to take in account both farm men and women equally. New thinking on agri-food systems has also led to recognition of the multiple relationships between women's empowerment and gender equality and food systems outcomes (Njuki et al., 2022). Therefore, these checkpoints can be used as a planning guide for bringing gender perspective in new extension research projects, as a review procedure for the extension research projects in progress, and as a criterion for gender assessment of completed extension research projects.

Checkpoints:

- i. Have the existing needs for farm men and women been identified?
- ii. Have gender balanced and gender aware project team been selected?
- iii. Are the project objectives addressing to identified gender issues and needs?
- iv. Have methodology for analysing the data from gender perspective been developed?
- v. Have the gender balance in selecting project beneficiaries been ensured?
- vi. Are the targeted beneficiaries from vulnerable social groups?
- vii. Have the personnel, timing and location relevant and accessible to both farm men and women for the project activities been determined?
- viii. Have the strategies for ensuring project's extension system delivery reach to both farm men and women been planned?

Conclusion: The use of gender sensitive checkpoints will support for enhanced leadership, access to and control over resources, decision making, knowledge and skill, employment and income, and, reduced drudgery leading to empowerment of farm women. Additionally, gender sensitive checkpoints will help women to get opportunity to be involved in planning, implementation and evaluation of the programmes.

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