

**EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF EXTENSION AND ADVISORY  
SERVICES OF STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BY THE FARM WOMEN IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT**

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**ABSTRACT**

Women play a crucial role in agricultural development in the country. Agricultural extension services transfer new technologies from research and other sources to the farmers for enhancing the production through provision of information, advice education and training. Women play a key role in agricultural sector and its productivity. But they have virtually no access to agricultural information, services or production assets and have limited control over their earning. Agriculture extension needs to assume new challenges and reform itself in terms of content, approach structure and process. The present investigation was made to know the extent of utilization of EAS of State Department of Agriculture provided through sub-organization, in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu with a sample size of 300 farm women beneficiaries based on proportionate random sampling method. Data were collected using interview schedule to know the extent of utilization of EAS. The survey reveals that utilization of EAS among the farm women provided by sub-organizations were found to be medium.

**Keywords:** Extension and advisory services, Farm women, Sub-organization.

## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is considered as the principle engine of economic growth in many of the developing countries including India. Farming, being labour intensive is usually perceived to be a man's profession. However, women constitute around 50% of the total work force on a farm, and contribute significantly at every stage of farming, yet their contribution is largely ignored while planning extensions interventions and strategies (Ansari and Jantwal, 2019).

They play a crucial role of all stages of farming from seed selection to post harvest activities and also other allied activities, such as dairy, cattle management, poultry farming, goat or sheep rearing *etc.*, ultimately engaging rural women in income-generating agricultural activities and enhancing agricultural production could improve the quality of their livelihoods, thus there is a need for effective EAS services. Women, more than men, are exposed to a range of challenges that prevent them from accessing EAS. Gender bias also impacts women's access to EAS in that many institutions do not recognize women as farmers but instead view them as additional household labour or simply housewives.

Department of Agriculture, Co-operation and Farmers Welfare implements various programmes for farmers including women in agriculture sector. As per the directives for women in component plan, the state government has been asked to ensure flow of funds to the tune of 30% for the benefit of women farmers. EAS providers play a pivotal role in delivering services as they can potentially tailor their extension programs to meet the specific needs of female and male rural clients. Hence, the present investigation deals about the extent of utilization of extension advisory services provided through sub-organisations of state department of agriculture by the farm women in Cuddalore district.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To identify and select the sub-organisations rendering EAS under the state department of Agriculture.
2. To study the extent of utilization of EAS provided through sub-organisations of State department of Agriculture.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Data were collected from secondary source on the statistics about women cultivators in Cuddalore. The data regarding area under major crops under various blocks of Cuddalore district was collected to finalize the selection of blocks. According to the statistical report of Cuddalore district, area under paddy cultivation was found to be the maximum compared to other crops. The three blocks of Cuddalore district *via*. Keerapalayam, Bhuvanagiri and Cuddalore have maximum cultivable area under paddy production and also had maximum number of women engaged in paddy cultivation. Hence, the present investigation on assessing the extent of utilization of extension and advisory services by farm women is proposed to be taken up in the above three blocks of Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu with a sample size of 300 farm women based on proportionate random sampling method. Extent of utilization of EAS through sub-organizations was studied on a two point continuum *viz.*, utilized and not utilized with the scores 2 and 1 respectively.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The data collected on extent of utilization of EAS of State department of Agriculture provided through sub organizations. Mean scores were worked out and discussed in the following table.

It is quite evident from the data in Table 1, that 62.33 per cent of farm women had high level of utilization of services of sub organizations followed by 20.00 and 17.67 per cent of farm women under medium and low level of utilization of services of sub-organization. This may be due to middle age, educational status, medium level of extension agency contact, information seeking behaviour and also achievement motivation. This finding is in line with the findings of Saikia *et al.* (2017).

It could be observed that majority of the farm women 43.33 per cent came under low level utilization of schemes provided by sub-organization. 42.00 and 14.67 per cent of farm women utilized schemes. This may be due to the allocation of subsidy for farm women is very low compare with farmer and also services offered by SDA for farm women are very low. This finding is in line with the findings of Pandey (2015).

The data in the table showed that majority 63.00 per cent of farm women utilized mass media for information as low level. About one fourth (25.00 per cent) of farm women came under medium level of utilization of services. 12.00 per cent of farm women used mass media in high level for agricultural information service. This finding is in controversion with the finding of Sharma (2012).

The data in Table reveals that the majority 56.00 per cent of farm women had utilized EAS on medium level followed by 31.67 and 12.33 per cent low and high level of utilization. This may be due to awareness about EAS is in medium level farm women had medium level of scientific orientation extension agency contact and achievement motivation. This finding is in line with the finding of Umeta *et al.* (2011). Hence it could be concluded that overall utilization of EAS of SDA was found to be medium.

Among the 37 services provided by SDA through sub-organization, the farm women highly utilized the services such as, distribution of soil health cards to the farmers at free of cost (96.67 per cent), providing updated information (94.33 per cent), conducting demonstrations in agri and allied sectors (91.66 per cent), imparting training on pre and post harvest technologies (86.33 per cent), distribution of foundation/certified seeds of paddy for production of quality seeds – Subsidy for a maximum of one acre per farmer Rs. 10/-per kg for paddy (66.66 per cent), supply of Biofertilizer at subsidized rate – *Azospirillum*, *Rhizobium* and Phosphobacteria - Rs. 6/- per packet of 200 g (50.00 per cent), providing technical service for the assessment for seed quality (43.33 per cent), providing subsidy assistance to farmers for purchase of Agrl. Machineries/implements (40.00 per cent).

Hence, it could be concluded that among the eight different organization, the utilization mean score for IAEC was found to be high followed by ABC. Because IAEC as one door step organization provide more services.

## CONCLUSION

Hence, it could be concluded that the farm women had utilized the various EAS provided through sub-organisations of state department of agriculture at medium level. It may be suggested that the extension service should be more gender sensitive when organizing extension activities, so that women farmers have full and appropriate access to extension meetings, demonstrations, field days and other activities. A proportion of women farmer participants should be targeted in each extension activity that can specially benefit them. Agricultural extension program policy makers should monitor and evaluate the implementation process of the agricultural extension service on the ground to augment the reliability, sustainability and users expectation.

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**Table 1. Distribution of farm women according to their overall utilization of EAS provided by sub-organization, scheme and mass media**

(n=300)

S. No.	Category	Sub-organization		Scheme		Mass media		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Low	60	20.00	130	43.33	189	63.00	95	31.67
2	Medium	53	17.67	126	42.00	75	25.00	168	56.00
3	High	187	62.33	44	14.67	36	12.00	37	12.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2. Service-wise utilization of EAS provided by sub-organization**

S.No.	Extension Advisory Services provided by various organizations	Frequency	Percent
<b>I</b>	<b>Integrated Agricultural Extension Centre (IAEC)</b>		
1	Providing updated information	283	94.33
2	Information on selling of major crops	278	92.67
3	Providing various information through displaying of different teaching aids	251	83.67
4	Supply of agricultural inputs	226	75.33
5	Organizing method demonstrations on new technologies	120	40.00
6	Arranging result demonstrations to show the value of new technology to farm women	170	56.67
7	Educating the farmers on agricultural technology through mass media	248	82.67
8	Conducting interactive meetings	189	63.00
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>73.54</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>State seed farm</b>		
1	Distribution of Foundation/Certified seeds of Paddy for production of quality seeds – Subsidy for a maximum of one acre per farmer Rs.10/- per kg for Paddy	200	66.66
2	Distribution of Foundation/Certified seeds of Pulses for production of quality seeds – Subsidy for a maximum of one acre per farmer Rs.25/- per kg for Pulses.	175	58.33
3	Providing assistance for F seed per acre for varieties less than 15 years	150	50.00
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>58.33</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Biofertilizer production unit</b>		
1	Supply of Biofertilizer at subsidized rate – <i>Azospirillum</i> , <i>Rhizobium</i> and Phosphobacteria - Rs. 6/- per packet of 200 g	150	50.00
2	Supply of Blue Green Algae at subsidized rate Rs.2.75 per kg	50	16.66
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>33.33</b>
<b>IV</b>	<b>Farm Machinery and power supply</b>		
1	Providing subsidy assistance to Farmers for purchase of Agrl. Machineries/implements	120	40.00
2	Providing subsidy assistance to Farmers for purchase of tractors, power tillers, rotavators, and brush cutter	59	19.66
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>29.83</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>ATMA-Agricultural Technology Management Agency</b>		
1	Conducting training of farmers within State	152	50.67
2	Conducting training of farmers within District	207	69.00
3	Conducting demonstrations in Agri & Allied sectors	275	91.66
4	Providing exposure Visit of farmers - interstate	19	6.33
5	Providing exposure Visit of Farmers - within the State	169	56.33
6	Providing exposure Visit of Farmers - within the District	271	90.33
7	Mobilization of different Farmers' groups including Farmers' Interest Groups, Commodity Interest Groups and Farmer Co-Operatives etc. through Capacity building, Skill development and support service	230	76.67
8	Mobilization of different Farmers' groups including Farmers' Interest Groups, Commodity Interest Groups and Farmer Co-Operatives etc. by providing Seed Money/revolving Fund	215	71.67
9	Rewards and incentives for the Best organized group - 5 groups representing different enterprises @ 20,000/- per year/group	4	1.33
10	Farmer Scientist Interaction at district level for participation of 25 farmers for 2 days @ 20,000/- per interaction	32	10.67
11	Participation in field days and Farmers' Day to strengthen research – extension – farmers linkage @ 15,000/- per Farmers' Day/block/season	157	52.33
12	Participation in Agri- Entrepreneurs training under Agri-Clinic scheme @ 25,000/- per block	151	50.33
13	Participation in Farm School – Minimum 3 Nos. of Farm Schools per block in the fields of progressive farmers @ 29,414	155	51.67
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>49.67</b>
<b>VI</b>	<b>Soil testing lab &amp; water testing lab</b>		
1	Distribution of Soil Health Cards to the farmers at free of cost	290	96.67
2	Advising on the nutrient management of soils	280	93.33
3	Providing concession for the fees to analysis of Macro and micro nutrient of soil @ 10/- per each sample	77	25.67
4	Providing concession fee of ` 20/- per sample for analysis of water sample.	25	8.33
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>51.23</b>
<b>VII</b>	<b>Seed Testing Lab</b>		
1	Providing technical service for the assessment for seed quality	130	43.33
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>43.33</b>
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Agri business centre</b>		
1	Formation of commodity groups for various Agricultural groups	233	77.67
2	Imparting Training on Pre and Post Harvest technologies	259	86.33
3	Forecasting price information and marketing of agricultural produces	248	82.67
4	Providing storage information of agriculture produce	90	30.00
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>69.17</b>