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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rural women's access to science and technology in the context of energy

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SUMMARY : It has been reported that even after the sixty five years of independence too many difficulties are faced by rural women. Science and technology solve all the challenges faced by rural women including labour-saving technologies related to domestic work such as, improved cooking technologies, lighting etc. Keeping this in view, a study was conducted in two villages namely, Achitpur and Chhota Mirzapur Khurd of Jamalpur Block of Mirzapur district to find out the association/relationship of personal and socio-economic characteristics of respondents with their knowledge of non-conventional energy sources.

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Science and technology (S and T) is a broad term that is in a continual process of reinvention. Many of the S and T break throughs of 20 or 30 years ago are part of everyday life today. In rural area of developing countries like India, there are a large number of people who do not have access to LPG and depend on traditional biomass such as wood, crop, and dung for cooking and kerosene for lighting (Kanagawa and Nakata, 2007). Science and technology offers solutions too many challenges faced by rural women including labour-saving technologies related to domestic work such as, improved cooking technologies, lighting etc.

Today India has been experiencing a gradual shift towards exploring renewable energy resources as a driving force for rural development. The lessons learnt from different demonstrations of RET projects reveal that with careful forward planning, non-conventional energy can provide far-reaching economic, environmental and social benefits to people living in remote rural areas (Mondal *et al.*, 2010). In view of above, present study was undertaken with the objectives to know the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, to find out the extent of knowledge among respondents about different non-conventional energy sources before and after the training and to find out the association/ relationship of personal and socio-economic characteristics of respondents with their knowledge of non-conventional energy sources.

EXPERIMENTAL METHODOLOGY

For the study, total 125 rural women (16 per cent of the total household) were selected randomly from the two villages Achitpur and Chhota Mirzapur Khurd of Jamalpur Block of Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. Seven days repeated demonstrations and trainings were given on the use of solar cooker, solar lantern, smokeless fuel efficient stove to the female respondents to make them aware of these new appliances. In the gap of one week, repeated demonstrations and trainings (five times) were given to the one twenty five respondents at the selected study area. During training, rural women were prepared different dishes like various varieties of rice, dal, vegetables and boiled eggs, kheer and roasted peanuts, chickpea (gram) etc. on solar cooker. They enjoyed solar lantern for lighting at night. Two smokeless fuel efficient stoves each in Achitpur and Chhota Mirzapur 'Khurd' villages were installed for demonstration and training of rural women respondents who cooked their