

INFORMATION NEEDS OF FARM WOMEN OF ASSAM RELATED TO CULTIVATION OF VEGETABLE CROPS

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ABSTRACT

An investigation was designed to know the information needs of farm women related to different aspects of cultivation of vegetable crops. The study was conducted in six villages of Jorhat subdivision of Jorhat district of Assam. The total respondents included in the study were 120. Interview cum questionnaire method were used for data collection. Statistical techniques viz., frequency, percentage, mean, standard error, standard deviation and co-efficient of correlation were used for analyzing the data. The findings revealed that 51 per cent of farm women had low level of knowledge regarding cultivation of vegetable crops. It was further observed that majority of respondents needed information in the area of plant protection (90.8%) followed by nutrition management (88.6%) and production practices (57%) respectively.

Key words : Information needs, Farm women, Knowledge of vegetable cultivation

Farm women in India constitute an important work force in agriculture. They play a significant and crucial role in all the stages of crop production from seed selection to post harvest activities and in other allied enterprises such as dairy, cattle management, fish and poultry farming, sheep rearing etc., besides fulfilling their responsibilities of home making and child rearing. In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the need to integrate women into mainstream development efforts. The economic rationale behind the approach is that the full use of productive potential of human resources (male and female) cannot be realized if women who make sustainable contribution to food output, do not have adequate access to resources, productivity enhancing inputs and services. Realizing the importance of the full participation of women in development activities the government of India has given much attention to development projects and supportive services to motivate women farmer to become partner in socio-economic development.

Vegetables play a vital role in human diet, which is rich source of minerals, vitamins and carbohydrates. At present, both the production and consumption of vegetables in the country is very inadequate. At the same time the vegetables available for consumption are mostly stale, less nutritive and produced and handled under unhygienic condition. Since, vegetable growing areas are

of very high cropping intensity thus insects, pest and diseases cannot be easily eradicated. Women in rural areas are generally less responsive to improved techniques due to lack of knowledge. To raise the contribution of farm women in development of the nation, it is imperative that the farm women be informed or trained in agriculture and household areas to keep them abreast of the latest innovations. This may help them to work with more competence among the growers for sustainable vegetable production. Farm women generally have no access to new technologies, training and demonstrations and they have to learn from others, mainly from their male counterparts. As such, farm women deserve increased attention in agricultural extension services in every developing nation. There is a need for an action oriented plan to reach the millions of women in agriculture who fill the bread baskets of the third world. With the fast development of new agriculture technologies, it is increasingly felt that the technical knowledge of farm women acquired over the generation is not being updated. They are urgent need of understanding and acquiring new knowledge and skills, so that they could contribute more effectively to the production process. There is some evidences that farm women are not being well served by the existing extension system. Therefore, it is very important to know the farm women need areas to train them for changing their knowledge, skills and attitude.

It is observed from the literature that very few studies have been conducted in the state of Assam in these areas. Hence, it was proposed to undertake the present study