

Ergonomic assessment of traditional method of cotton picking

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Cotton is one of the most important fibres as it plays a key role in the economic and social affairs of the world. Despite huge production of cotton in India, cotton picking is still practiced manually in India and is a tedious and highly laborious work. Cotton picking is one of the major labour intensive operations in cotton cultivation involving major share of expenditure. Since the varieties used in our country require picking at several stages feasibility of using mechanical cotton picker is remote, hence, the only option left is selective picking method. An adult person can pick about 25-30 kg seed cotton per day. Punjab state, being third in its contribution of cotton crop to the national pool indicates intensive involvement of rural women in this activity. They work intensively during a particular season (Oct.- Nov.) which ranges from 50-60 days and spend approximately, 8-9 hours per day in cotton picking activity and constitute majority of labour. Further, they perform this activity with drudgery prone methods thus, putting large demands on their time and energy. Therefore, All India Coordinated Research Project on Home Science, FRM Component of PAU, Ludhiana have done the ergonomic assessment of existing cotton picking practices being performed by women workers. The parameters for ergonomic assessment were working heart rate, energy expenditure and drudgery scores on five point scale. The results revealed that as no improved technology and methods were used/available for cotton picking ,this activity was considered as drudgery prone activity by the women workers.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Ergonomic evaluation, Physiological cost of work, Energy expenditure, Drudgery scores

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