

Research Paper :

Assessment of nutritional awareness in women of urban slums in Jodhpur city

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to assess the nutritional awareness in women of urban slums of Jodhpur city before and after training. Sixty samples randomized selected from three urban slums, the training programme was divided into three phases. In pre test, knowledge regarding nutritional awareness was collected through questionnaire. In experimental phase nutrition training was given to women with the help of various teaching aids and to evaluate the degree of awareness in women in post test phase, same questionnaire was given to them. Nutritional awareness was noted in entire five categories after the training programme but significant improvement was found in the category of food handling and cooking techniques.

Key words : Nutritional awareness, Urban slums, Training programme, Qwareness in urban slums women

India is predominantly a rural country. The progress of country depends on the progress of villages. It has been realized that mere increase in income does not lead to improvement in quality of life of people, therefore the goal of rural development efforts is to improve the awareness of people in rural area.

Housewife can work more effectively when she gets better opportunity and integrated experience to understand the value of good health and the ways of improving health habits, but unfortunately they are not acquainted with adequate training and education (Park, 1995).

Effective training is the key point to the success of any strategy and programme whether it is related to women/children of urban slum. Training has considerable impact on trainers, the experiences shown that quite often trainees do not get the things for which, they are called and thus the required results are not achieved. A number of apparent and inherent factors are responsible for this state of affairs. The main purpose of training and education is to help people to change their behaviour and practices in order to increase productivity and to raise standard of living. Training is always purposive when it is linked with trainees needs. Objectives of the training programme for women in urban slums, carry the basic points :

- Encouragement of woman to ask questions, to conduct experiments for herself.
- Helping women to collect the information about the world around and to persue the information in orderly way.
- Empowering women to develop self sufficient skills to learn for themselves.

METHODOLOGY

The conformity with main focus of the programme was to give emphasis on nutrition education and to create awareness in women of urban slums. The participants were purposively selected from three major areas of urban slums residing in different sections of Jodhpur. The aim was to improve their nutritional status with the availability of their own resources. A standard pre test questionnaire was developed for this purpose.

The topics which were included in creating awareness were divided in the following five major categories:

- Food handling and cooking techniques
- Sanitation and personal hygiene
- Purchasing of food stuffs
- Clean drinking water
- Diet in special condition

Sample criteria and sampling technique:

The test was performed on 60 purposively selected women of urban slums aged 18 to 35 years residing in Chopasing Housing Board, Masuriya side and Factory workers (Iscon surgical). Experimental design of the study has been shown in Table 1.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Level of education for the urban slums revealed that in Housing Board and Masuriya urban slums mostly the women were illiterate (92.5%) where as in factory workers urban slum, 40% were literate and 60% were illiterate. The level of education was not more than eighth standard. Among the total samples, 40 per cent of women

Table 1 : Experimental design of the study

Phase	Visit I	Visit II	Visit III	Visit IV	Visit V
Pre test phase (3 months) – Developing rapport with the women of urban slums – General introduction related to programme was given	In all of these visit the questionnaire were asked to the women of urban slums residing in three different section of Jodhpur and the information was collected in view of finding their response.				
Experimental phase (3 months)	Knowledge regarding food handling and cooking was discussed with the help of demonstration technique	Knowledge regarding personal hygiene and sanitation was introduced by making home visit and by giving lectures	Knowledge regarding purchasing of food stuff and knowledge regarding adulterated food were given on the basis of experimental test and lectures	Knowledge regarding drinking water was given to them by lecture and by showing charts and posters	Knowledge regarding diets in special conditions was given to them with the help of showing posters and charts and by giving demonstration
Post test phase (2 months)	Feed back was taken by discussion method and the same questionnaire was filled by the women of experimental group				

Source : Dhama and Bhatnagar (1998)

in Housing Board and Masuriya urban slums were employed. Most of them were working as maid in colonial houses.

Food handling and cooking techniques of three urban slums were taken. Table 2 indicates that lowest knowledge in pre test (20%) was found in Housing Board urban slum where as highest knowledge (25.5%) in pre test was found in factory workers. A study conducted by Street *et al.* (1996) reported that one third of the respondents adopting unsafe food hygiene practices like not washing hands before cooking food, unhealthy environment in kitchen and outside the space. In the post test Housing Board raised 89.5% awareness which was higher as compared to other two areas. The difference between pre and post test showed that although the awareness was developed in all the three groups but percentage was high in Housing Board urban slum. The reason being that the women of this group actively participated in the training programme. It was observed that most of the women wash vegetables, cereals and pulses but at the same time 80% women soak grains in water and throw the water before cooking, although

women in kitchen keep iron utensils but they do not use and cook food in those utensils. A study conducted on children revealed that children who fed food from iron pots had lower rate of anaemia and better growth than those children whose food was cooked in aluminum pots. Provision of iron cooking pots for households in less developed country may be a useful method to prevent iron deficiency (Adish *et al.*, 1999). On the other hand some good practices were also been observed in most of the women like using required quantity of water for cooking and 50% women cook food with covered pan. Due to lack of awareness, some of the women do not follow the practice of using flour with choker.

Awareness with reference to sanitation and personal hygiene of three areas had been taken into account and shown in Table 3 which reveals the lower percentage of knowledge (27.9%) was found in Masuriya where as 70% was found in factory workers women. The percentage of factory women was higher as compared to pre test phase in the same discipline. The difference in pre and post 22.6% was found among factory workers. The women working in factories follow the practices of

Table 2 : Percentage distribution of awareness related to food handling and cooking techniques

Urban slums	Pre test	Post test	Difference
Housing Board	20%	89.5%	69.5%
Masuriya	21.2%	84.9%	63.7%
Factory workers	25.5%	80%	54.6%
Total average	22.23%	84.8%	62.6%

$\chi^2 = 58.21$, d/f = 1, P < 0.05

Table 3 : Percentage distribution of awareness of sanitation and personal hygiene

Urban slums	Pre test	Post test	Difference
Housing Board	30.0%	50.0%	20.0%
Masuriya	27.9%	48.0%	20.1%
Factory workers	70.0%	92.6%	22.6%
Total average	42.6%	63.5%	20.9%

$\chi^2 = 19.83$, d/f = 1, P < 0.05

sanitation and hygiene with the same being followed in home. This could be the reason for obtaining higher level of awareness in factory women than rest of the women of two urban slums.

The percentage related to purchasing technique of food stuff of three areas had been shown in Table 4. The result indicates that higher knowledge regarding the techniques (31.0%) was found in factory workers women. This was slightly higher than rest of two other urban slums. The slight variation was found in the difference of pre and post test of three urban slums. It was found from the survey that about Rs. 350/- to Rs. 500/- per person/month was spent on food by Housing Board and Masuriya urban

Table 4 : Percentage distribution of awareness related to purchasing techniques of food stuff

Urban slums	Pre test	Post test	Difference
Housing Board	28.5%	82.5%	54.0%
Masuriya	28.6%	82.2%	54.6%
Factory workers	31.0%	84.2%	53.3%
Total average	29.2%	83.3%	55.0%

$$\chi^2 = 47.09, d/f = 1, P < 0.05$$

slums where as Rs. 400/- to Rs. 699/- per person/month was spent on food by factory workers of urban slum. In all three urban slums few of the women had knowledge about food adulteration. In 60% house food grain (wheat and bajra) storage was done in jute bag only. It was observed that no special techniques were being used for the storage of food grain in all homes of urban slums.

The awareness regarding the clean drinking water of three urban slums had been shown in Table 5. The results indicate that in pre test, knowledge regarding the clean drinking water was higher in women of factory workers (48%) in comparison to other two areas. The difference between pre and post test was 45% in Masuriya urban slum which was higher than the rest of the two areas. It was concluded that the awareness was created in all the three urban slums but the difference in percentage was found to be low in factory workers because they already had the knowledge of adopting clean

Table 5 : Percentage distribution of awareness of clean drinking water

Urban slums	Pre test	Post test	Difference
Housing Board	26.7%	65.0%	38.3%
Masuriya	28.3%	73.3%	45.0%
Factory workers	48.0%	83.0%	35.0%
Total average	34.3%	73.8%	39.4%

$$\chi^2 = 25.31, d/f = 1, P < 0.05$$

practices in their homes. It was also observed that all urban slums had underground tank. They used to get water from tankers after every 10th day to fill their tanks. This stored water is then utilized for doing all the household work including drinking. A study conducted in urban slums of Hyderabad city revealed that when water stored in overhead tank and other containers had higher bacterial count (Bhat and Jannalagadda, 1995).

Awareness regarding the diet in special conditions of three different urban slums had been shown in Table 6. The result indicates that in pre test, the knowledge was higher (43.8%) in factory worker women of urban slums as compared to Housing Board and Masuriya urban slums. After post test, the higher percentage of awareness (98.8%) was found in factory workers of urban slum. The difference between pre and post test was found to be 60% which was comparatively higher than Housing Board and Masuriya urban slums.

Table 6 : Percentage distribution of awareness of diet in special conditions

Urban slums	Pre test	Post test	Difference
Housing Board	35.0%	95.0%	60.0%
Masuriya	34.0%	94.0%	60.0%
Factory workers	43.8%	98.8%	55.0%
Total average	37.6%	95.9%	58.3%

$$\chi^2 = 52.6, d/f = 1, P < 0.05$$

The result indicates that the level of awareness was higher among factory worker women in pre test whereas after post test knowledge giving special attention on diet was seen in women of Housing Board and Masuriya urban slums.

Level of total awareness found in three different sections of urban slums :

In concluding the results, the distribution level of total awareness found in three urban slums was evaluated and the percentage has been shown in Fig. 1. The difference of pre and post test was almost same in Housing Board and Masuriya. In women of factory workers, the level of awareness was higher (43.6%) in pre test. The women of factory workers were literate, they interact their ideas with each other when they work together.

In concluding the result of the study it was found that there was increase in nutritional awareness after training in all three slums. The pre test percentage was 33.7%, which got raised to 80.8% in post test showing that 47% awareness was found to be increased in women after giving knowledge through different teaching aids. The awareness level in women was noted in all the five

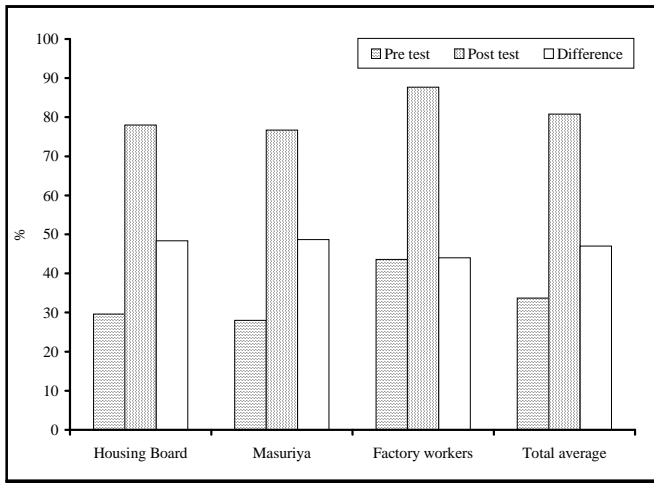


Fig. 1 : Level of total awarness found in three sections of urban slums

categories but better awareness was found in the category of food handling and cooking techniques. It was mainly due to the interest shown by the women which was also observed as purposive part of their daily activities.

It was found that if proper training programme is introduced in women of slums, nutritional and other awareness definitely will increase their level which is in need of today to improve the health status of women as a whole.

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