RESEARCH ARTICLE

Training needs of farm women in post harvest technology

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ABSTRACT

The large number of working women in India are engaged in farm operations either as cultivators or as agricultural labourer. They participate mainly in post harvest activities, like harvesting, grading, storing, processing and preservation of farm products. Therefore, it becomes necessary to train the farm women in post harvest operations. The present study was undertaken in Ahmednagar disrict of Maharashtra to identify training needs of farm women in post harvest technology. The study revealed that most needed areas of training as perceived to be most needed by farm women were methods of safe storage (94 per cent), control measures against storage pests (92 per cent), different storage pests and their nature of damage (88 per cent) and drying period for safe storage (84 per cent).

INTRODUCTION

The large number of working women in India are engaged in farm operations either as cultivators or as agricultural labourer. Their participation in seed treatment, sowing of seeds, interculturing, water management, crop harvesting, drying, winnowing, storing of seeds and farm products is well recognized. The contribution of women in agriculture is roughly estimated to be about 70 to 80 per cent.

They participate mainly in post harvest activities, like harvesting, grading, storing, processing and preservation of farm products. Once the farm produce is brought to the house, future responsibility rests with women. Post harvest technology is a multi-disciplinary applied science and engineering, evolved for scientific conservation of agricultural produce by eliminating avoidable losses and for making available the nutritive food and high value products. Inspite of the fact that fairly good training programmes are conducted for rural reconstruction, not much attention is paid to improve skills and to utilize the potential of the farm women in agriculture. Therefore, it becomes necessary to train the farm women in post harvest operations. The present study was undertaken with the main objective of determining the training need of farm women in post harvest technology.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Madhewadgaon and Kashti village of Shrigonda Tahsil in Ahmednagar district from which 150 respondent women were selected by multistage random sampling. The data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule by personally interviewing the farm women. Frequency, percentages and coefficient of correlation were worked out for analyzing and interpretation of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is evident from Table 1 that farm women perceived the highest need of training in the method of storage of agricultural produce with 2.94 score followed by the other major areas *viz.,* control measures for storage pests (2.92), storage pests and their nature of damage (2.88), drying period for safe storage (2.85), with about 84 per cent to 94 per cent farm women identifying as most needed areas of farming. The other areas of training need were low cost storage structures and preparation of processed products with 2.3 and 2.06 training need score and 58 and 41 per cent of respondents mentioning most needed areas of training, respectively. Moreover, 32 per cent respondents mentioned grading, packing, transporting of fruits and vegetables as most needed item of training.

Overall training need:

Table 2 indicates that the majority of the farm women (58.0 per cent) needed medium training, while 30.67 per cent needed high and

Sr. No.	Main area of post harvest technology	Training needs			Mean score	Rank
		Most needed	Needed	Not needed		
1.	Identifying maturity signs of grain / fruit crops	10 (6.67)	42 (28.0)	98 (65.33)	1.41	IX
2.	Modern machinery for harvesting	38 (25.33)	87 (58.0)	25 (16.67)	2.09	VI
3.	Drying period for safe storage	127 (84.67)	23 (15.33)	0 (0.00)	2.85	IV
4.	Safe storage methods	141 (94.0)	9 (6.0)	0 (0.00)	2.94	I
5.	Storage pests and their nature of damage	132 (88.0)	18 (12.0)	0 (0.00)	2.88	III
6.	Control measures against storage pests	138 (92.0)	12 (8.0)	37 (24.67)	2.92	II
7.	Grading, packing, transporting of fruits and vegetables	48 (32.00)	65 (43.33)	37 (24.67)	2.07	VII
8.	Making of preserved products of fruits and vegetables	61 (40.67)	37 (24.67)	52 (34.66)	2.06	VIII
9.	Low cost storage structures	87 (58.0)	21 (14.0)	42 (28.0)	2.3	V

Table 2: Distribution of farm women according to their levels of training needs in post harvest technology

Sr. No.	Training needs	No.	Per cent
1.	Low	17	11.33
2.	Medium	87	58.00
3.	High	46	30.67
	Total	150	100.00

11.33 per cent needed low training in post harvest technology.

Relationship of selected characteristics with training needs in post harvest technology:

To study the relationship between training needs of farm women and personal characterstics, correlation coefficient (r) was worked out which is presented in Table 3.

It could be observed farm Table 3 that the independent variables like education, farm size, state of modernization, source of information, involvement in

Table 3 : Relation of training needs of the farm women with selected personal characteristics

Sr. No.	Independent variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
1.	Age	- 0.302**
2.	Education	0.223**
3.	Socio-economic status	0.134
4.	Farm size	0.271**
5.	Modernization	0.220**
6.	Social participation	0.048
7.	Source of information	0.231**
8.	Cosmopoliteness	0.187*
9.	Involvement in farming	0.254**
10.	Knowledge	0.229**

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

farming and knowledge showed positive and highly significant correlation with training needs of the farm women at 0.01 of probability while cosmopoliteness exhibited positive correlation at 0.05 level probabilities.

However, age was found to be negatively correlated with training needs of the farm women in post harvest technology. The other independent variables *viz.,* socio-economic status and social participation did not show any relation with training needs of the farm women in post harvest technology. The present observations are in confirmity with the findings of Jondhale and Chole (1989), Shirolkar (1991), Varma and Dahiya (1994) and Wairagade (1988).

Thus it could be concluded that farm women perceived methods of safe storage, control measures against storage pests and nature of damage and drying period for the safe storage as most needed areas of training in PHT. The personal correlates *viz.,* education, farm size, modernization, sources of information, cosmopoliteness, involvement in farming and knowledge were found to be positively related while age was negatively related with training needs.

Based on the finding of the study, it is suggested that training for farm women may be organized preferably on the topics like methods of safe storage, control measures against storage pests, different storage pests and their nature of damage, and drying period for safe storage. Trainings may also be organized on low cost storage structures and preparation of processed products from fruits and vegetables.

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