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Awareness knowledge programmes for empowerment of rural women of Punjab

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ABSTRACT

Rural people's sources of livelihood are diverse. Farming is the major source of income to a large majority. Livelihoods that include women's participation are substance production, commercial agriculture and home based or small scale business enterprise activities. Despite the technical as well as social development taking place in India, rural women are still facing hardships and remain at the background of modernization. Therefore, in this context, under AICRP (All India Coordinated Research Project, Directorate Research on Women in Agriculture, Bhubaneswar) – FRM component made an attempt to empower the rural women under the objective of empowerment of rural women through Resource Management Practices and drudgery reducing technologies. For this purpose, five villages were adopted in Ludhiana District namely Mansura, Mohi, Gahaur, Bhanaur and Hassanpur. The need based trainings were conducted under Awareness Knowledge Programmes to the rural women for capacity building and to generate income for enhancing the quality of life of their families. These trainings were conducted on fabric painting, candle making, jewellery making and preparation of eco - friendly cleaning agents. Trainings were also imparted to make the rural women aware regarding the use of solar energy, conservation of water and fuel at household level, consumer rights and responsibilities and also drudgery reducing technologies. It is therefore, recommended that rural women need appropriate motivation to use and adopt the knowledge and skills given to them through these training programmes for capacity building and income generation.

KEY WORDS : Awareness, Knowledge, Empowerment, Drudgery reducing.

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In ancient India, women occupy a place of prominence in the society. However, due to unfavorable beliefs, women remained deprived of education and the social freedom for a very long time. The society remained dominated by men and women did not get equal opportunities for their development and growth. In independent India, much emphasis has been laid on the upliftment of women, but lot more needs to be done to give women due place in society. While the woman in the urban sector has the opportunities for education, the same has been found wanting amid the rural women folk. The rural woman is more prone to circumstances where nature intervenes and many times distorts her livelihood landscapes. The urban educated woman is more inclined to seek salaried jobs for becoming economically independent. Both the rural and urban woman alike however require to be exposed to the opportunities and the scope for self development through entrepreneurship. In rural areas micro enterprises can play an important role in the promotion of self employment, entrepreneurship and raising the level of income and standard of living of women. They could be helpful in providing opportunities to women for gaining direct access to income and developing competence in managing an enterprise. By promoting women's ventures and small enterprises, government and non government organizations can play a crucial role in supporting women as agents of change by encouraging the development of small and medium sized enterprises in their own areas. Therefore, in this context, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana center of All India Coordinated Research Project – Home Science, Directorate of Research on women in Agriculture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Bhubaneswar made an to empower the women through Awareness – Knowledge Programmes with the following objectives: to assess the awareness level regarding Fuel, water and energy used for home and farm, to know the awareness regarding drudgery reducing technologies for farm activities and to build the knowledge and capacity of farm women in Fuel, water and energy saving practices, entrepreneurial skills through Awareness Knowledge Programmes.

RESEARCH METHODS

A bench mark survey was carried out by Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana center of under All India Research Project – Home Science, of Directorate of Research on women in Agriculture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Bhubaneswar for this purpose five villages from the reachable vicinity of Punjab agricultural University, Ludhiaan were selected for five years *i.e.* from 2007-2012. These adopted villages are Mansoora, Mohi, Hussanpur, Bhanaur and Gahaur. 20 women respondents were selected randomly from each of the five adopted villages. Pre and post evaluation method through sample survey was done and data was collected through pre structured interview schedule on awareness levels and fuel and water management practices followed by respondents. Pre and post test was also conducted regarding awareness for drudgery reducing farm technologies on 15 women respondents from each selected village. Further, the impact of awareness knowledge training programmes was also accessed after providing them training on fuel and water management practices, drudgery reducing technologies in farm activities. The data was statically. Moreover, training programmmes were also conducted in these adopted villages regarding fabric painting, candle making and preparation of eco friendly cleaning agents to empower rural women economically by opening small scale entrepreneurial units in these areas.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data was collected on the awareness and knowledge of respondents regarding improved cooking devices, Renewable Energy alternatives, Different Sanitation measures taken for water filtration, water saving practices and awareness regarding drudgery reducing technologies and results are discussed below.

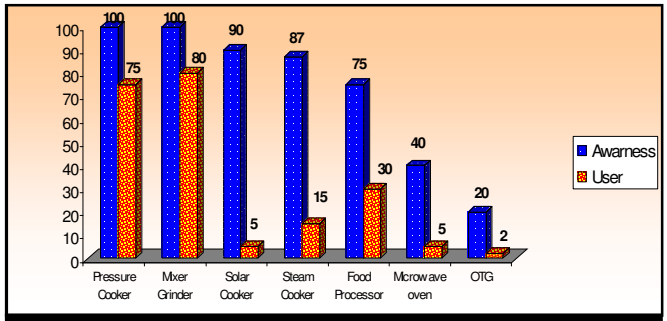

Fig. 1: Awareness and knowledge on improved cooking devices

It was observed (Fig. 1) that women had less awareness regarding new techniques of cooking through microwave oven and OTG. This may be due to the fact that very few people in the villages were having these technologies in their homes.

Regarding the use of these devices, most of the women used grinder mixer (80%) followed by pressure cooker (15%), food processor (30%) and steam cooker (15%). Very few of the women used microwave oven (5%), solar cooker (5%) and OTG (2%). It was also found that 25 per cent of the respondents don't know about OTG as they were not having it.

Table 2 shows the opinion regarding merits of improved cooking devices and results showed that most of the women agreed for the benefits of improved cooking devices in terms of fuel saving (90%), not requiring intermediate inspections (90%), easy to operate and maintain (80%), getting good and tasty food (68%) and preserving its nutritional quality (55%). But some of the women also faced problems regarding improved cooking devices as they felt that these are more time consuming (90%) followed by the reason of expensive fuel (80%). Some respondents (80%) were also having the opinion

Table 1: Awareness regarding Merits and demerits of improved cooking devices

Opinion	Percentage awareness
Saves fuel	90
Intermediate inspection not necessary	90
Preserves nutrient quality	55
Food is done well and tastes good	68
Improved cooking devices are easy to operate and maintain	80
Saves time in cooking	75
More than one item could be cooked using improved cooking devices	70
Fuel is expensive	80
Improved cooking devices are difficult to operate	68
Food is not cooked properly and quality is not acceptable	80
Takes more time	90
Improved cooking device is a cumbersome equipment	65
Cooking devices have indicators to monitor the cooking process	62

that food cooked by these devices is not acceptable by their family members as they are used of eating food made on traditional cooking devices like 'Hara' (slow cooking on *chulahs* Data in Table 3 show that majority of rural women were aware of solar cooker though very few were using it. They also know the different benefits of solar cooker but they agreed that initial cost of solar cooker is high that is why they are not allowed to buy it. They also suggested that some subsidy is to be provided on solar cooker so that they can use it to its maximum level. Regarding the other alternatives of renewable energy like solar dryer, solar light, solar water heater and solar pumps, very less awareness (10-15%) was noticed among the rural women. It was observed that none of the respondents were aware of solar distillation plant and solar laltane as renewable energy alternatives.

Table 3: Awareness regarding renewable energy alternatives

Renewable energy alternatives	Percentage awareness
Thermal conversion	
Solar cooker	90
Solar dryer	15
Solar distillation plant	-
Any other	-
Electrical conversion	
Solar light	10
Solar fan	0
Solar water heater	10
Solar pumps	10

Therefore, it is concluded that majority of the respondents were aware regarding merits and demerits of modern cooking devices but least awareness was found for solar energy devices. Thus, trainings are conducted to make the rural women aware for solar energy devices like solar cooker and solar dryer at household level.

Table 4 shows that at community level, chlorination and cleaning of tanks were the main sanitary measures (90%). Filteration work was done at the community level by government authority and few progressive local people were also involved in this action. Whereas, at domestic level, maximum of the respondents (60%) were boiling the water followed by use of aquagaurds (45%) and using cloth for filteration of water (25%). So it is clear that the people of the adopted villages were quite aware of the latest technique of water purification and some of the respondents also showed their interest to install new method of water purification in near future to get clean water.

Table 4: Different Sanitation measures taken at community level and domestic level for water filtration

Sr. No.	Sanitation measures taken	Practices adopted by respondents (Percentage)
	Community level	
1.	Chlorination	90
2.	Filtering	-
3.	Cleaning tanks	90
	Domestic level	
1.	Filtering	25
2.	Boiling	60
3.	Using water purifiers/Aqua guards	45

It was interesting to note (Table 5) that almost all the respondents were aware of the water consumption practices like 'taps should be tightened after use'' consume water after filtering or boiling' 'avoiding use of leaked pipes' and these practices were also followed by the respondents at their homes. Large number of respondents (70.00%) also showed their awareness regarding the water saving practices *i.e.* used water of the kitchen can be diverted towards kitchen garden and 50 per cent of respondents were even following this practice. But very few respondents (10.00%) were aware of the practice of The water was tested by using the water testing kits developed by department of microbiology PAU, Ludhiana under water conservation camps in adopted villages under AICRP, FRM.

The awareness level of respondents was observed in Table 6 and 7 regarding importance of drudgery reducing technologies and their impact on the health of respondents. The respondents were little aware for the benefits of these drudgery reducing technologies. For this

Table 5: Awareness and knowledge on water saving practices for domestic and agriculture consumption

Water management practices	Awareness (%)	Practices followed (%)
Taps should be tightened after use.	100	100
The surroundings around the water source should be kept clean.	100	100
Consuming water after filtration or boiling.	100	60
Avoiding use of leaked pipes.	100	80
Used water from kitchen can be diverted to kitchen garden	70	50
Digging pits or tanks for rain water storage	10	5

Table 6 : Awareness of respondents on drudgery reducing technologies

	No. of subjects	No. of technologies	score maximum	Pretest score & SD	Post test- 1 score & SD	Post test – 2 score & SD	t1@ 5% level	t2@ 5 % level
Women	15	5	10	2.21+ - 1.8	10+ - 1.8	10+ - 1.6	13.62	13.62

Table 7: Evaluation on adoption of technology by women on field validation

Identified drudgery prone activities	No. of users	Name of the technology field tried	No of farmers inclined to buy the technology	No. of farmers purchased the technology	No. of farmers rejecting the technology	Reasons for rejection / not buying
Vegetable plucking	15	Ring cutter	15	*5	-	non availability in local market
Maize shelling	15	Maize sheller	15	5	-	-
Improved sickle for harvesting	15	Improved sickle	10	10	-	non availability in local market, satisfied with local made cheap sickles available in market
Fodder collection	15	Fodder collector	8	-	4	Costly, non availability in local market, satisfied with old technology
Potato picking	15	Potato picker	10	-	4	Costly, non availability in local market, satisfied with old technology

purpose, five tools were identified which were either tested or modified under AICRP, FRM component. These tools included ring cutter, maize Sheller, improved sickle, fodder collector and potato picker. The training was imparted on these selected tools. Pre and post test data was collected on the awareness level of the respondents and T –test was calculated which was found significantly correlated.

Evaluation on adoption of Technology by women on Field validation (table 7) showed that majority of respondents were interested to buy the new drudgery reducing farm tools, some respondents were not willing to purchase these tools for different reasons like 'non availability in local market', 'satisfied with local made tools' and 'Costly'. Therefore, it is concluded that if these tools were made available to them the respondents will adopt the same. Besides, these awareness knowledge programmes, different training programmes were organized to develop entrepreneurial skills on fabric painting, candle making and preparation of eco friendly cleaning agents, so that rural women can become economically independent by establishing small scale units at their own end.

Conclusion:

In the present study, utility of aloe plant for dyeing of cotton silk and wool was explored. A solution of fresh aloe leaves was used for dyeing of cotton and protein fibres in different shades. When applied with introduction of few drops of nitric acid in aloe leaf solution, it rendered beautiful golden yellow colour on silk and wool. Shades obtained had outstanding wash fastness and colours had improved and deepened after washing. Cotton was dyed by introduction of different mordants or combination of mordants. This again produced a range of colours from yellow, pink, khaki to brown.

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