

Training Needs of Farm Women Towards Entrepreneurial Development

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ABSTRACT

The study revealed that majority (45.83%) of the Farm women had medium training need and 30.83 per cent of them had high training need in case of homestead vegetable production. In term of training need in nursery establishment, about 45.00 per cent of the Farm women fell under medium training need category while 35.00 per cent of them fell under high training need category. As regards to their training needs in livestock & poultry rearing, the majority (49.17%) of the Farm women had high training needs compared to 35.00 per cent of them having medium training needs. A big share (40.83%) of the Farm women had high training needs in food processing, while 33.33 per cent of them had medium training needs. Farmers' education, farm size, annual income, organizational participation and agricultural knowledge showed negative significant correlation, while fatalism had significant positive association with the training needs. The major problems faced by the Farm women in carrying out their EDPs were: lack of capital/credit, lack of irrigation water, lack of land, lack of knowledge about insect/disease control, marketing & communication facilities and attack of birds/animals, etc.

Women now make up the majority of the agricultural sector in developing areas, but recent evidence suggests that not only is their productivity constrained by a lack of appropriate skills training, but also that they are particularly vulnerable to environmental changes. In the face of changing and increasingly erratic agricultural conditions, there is a huge premium on women's ability to respond innovatively and to be adaptable, in order to ensure food security and the productivity of the agricultural sector in developing countries. On the economic point of view both men and women work shoulder to shoulder to increase the income of the family. The spirit for social and economic upliftment of members is the significant

contribution of each and every women.

Training needs of the Farm women refers to one's need for gaining knowledge and skills on different aspects of EDPs .Effective training program designed for the Farm women in carrying out their income generating activities for better livelihood will go a long way in their required daily expenditure. Hence, it is necessary to have a complete understanding of the needs of the Farm women before launching afore mentioned training programme.

In order to give proper direction to the study, the following objectives were set forth, which were: to study the extent of training needs of the Farm women in carrying out

various EDPs; to determine the problem confrontation of the Farm women in carrying out various EDPs; and to explore the relationships between the selected characteristics of the Farm women and their extent of training needs.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in ten villages of Veppanthattai block of Perambalur district of Tamil Nadu, namely, Brahmadesam, Valikandapuram, Annamangalam, VRSS Puram, Mettupalayam, Anukur, Venbavur, Narnamangalam, Eraiyur and Nergunam. Data were collected from a randomly selected sample of 120 Farm women by using an interview schedule. The interview schedule contained both open and closed form questions. Eleven selected characteristics of the Farm women were considered as the independent variables of this study i.e. age, education, family size, farm size, annual income, training experience, cosmopolitaness, organizational participation, extension media contact, fatalism and agricultural knowledge. Training needs of Farm women in carrying out entrepreneurial activities was the dependent variable in this study. The training need of the respondent were divided into four broad areas of EDPs, viz., homestead vegetables production, nursery establishment, livestock & poultry rearing, and food Processing.

The collected data were coded, compiled, tabulated, and analyzed in line with the objectives of the study. Qualitative data were converted into quantitative data by means of

suitable scoring, wherever necessary. Descriptive statistics such as range, mean and standard deviation were used for describing the variables of the study. Pearson's Co-efficient of correlation was used to explore the relationships between any two concerned variables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The majority (91.67%) of the Farm women were young to middle aged. Most of them (33.33%) were functionally literate but there were 40.84 per cent of them who could exceed primary level to collegiate, while rests of them were illiterate. Most of them (86.67%) belonged to medium to small family category. Almost all (85%) of the farm women were medium to small category in farm holdings. Maximum number of respondents (74.16%) was placed in medium to low income category. Almost half (48.33%) of them had no training at all. Only 38.33 per cent of them had short training experience. Around 83.33 per cent of them were low to very low in cosmopolitaness. In terms of organizational participation, almost all (78.34%) of the Farm women had low to no participation. Overwhelming majority (88.33%) of them had medium to low extension agency contact. Most of the respondents had low fatalism (51.67%) followed by medium category (41.67%). In term of agricultural knowledge, the Farm women had medium agricultural knowledge (70.83%) followed by low agricultural knowledge (20.00%).

Training needs of the Farm women in carrying out EDPs

About half (45.83%) of the Farm women had medium training needs in homestead

vegetable production compared to 30.83 per cent of them having high training need, 20.84 per cent having very high training need and only 2.50 per cent low training need. Thus almost 97.50% of the respondents had medium to high training need in homestead vegetable production. Establishment of homestead vegetable production is an important potential activity for the Farm women for increasing their family income leading to better livelihood. Feeling of high to very high training needs in this area is an indication that the Farm women might lack needed knowledge and skills in homestead vegetable production.

Findings indicated that 45 per cent of the Farm women had medium training needs in nursery establishment compared to 35 per cent of them having high training needs, 14.17 per cent having very high training needs and only 5.83 per cent having low training need. Thus, 94.17 per cent of the Farm women had medium to very high training needs in nursery establishment. These facts indicate that if proper arrangements are made for training of the Farm women in nursery establishment then that might have positive contributing effect on improving their work efficiency in carrying out various nursery activities (Table 1).

About half (49.17 %) of the Farm women had high training needs in livestock & poultry rearing compared to 35 per cent of them having medium training needs, 9.16 per cent having very high training need and only 6.67 per cent having low training need. The findings of the study indicate that overwhelming majority (84.17%) of the Farm women had

high to medium training need in livestock & poultry rearing. It is, thus, imperative that the concerned authorities should provide training opportunities for the Farm women, if their income levels are to be improved through livestock and poultry rearing.

About 40.83 per cent of the respondent, had high training needs in food processing compared to 33.33 per cent of them having medium training needs, 18.34 per cent having very high training needs and only 7.50 per cent having low training need. Thus, the overwhelming majority (74.16 %) of the Farm women had high to medium level of training needs regarding the food processing. The findings indicate that if arrangements are made for training of the Farm women in food processing then that would have a conducive effect in carrying out income generating activities.

Task wise extent of training needs in different broad areas

In case of homestead vegetable production task, insect and disease infestation in vegetables was a major problem mentioned by the Farm women. As a consequence, the overwhelming majority (83.34%) of the respondents indicated high to very high training needs in this aspect. Similarly, soil and fertilizer management was an important operation in vegetable production. About 75.84 per cent of the respondents expressed their training needs to the extent of high to very high in this respect. The training needs in selection of quality seeds and seedlings, seedbed preparation and seed sowing, land

Table 1.
Distribution of the Farm Women According to their Training Need
on Different Broad Area (n= 120)

Sl.No.	Broad Areas/Categories	No.of Respondents	Percentage
I	Homestead vegetable production		
1.	Low training need	3	2.50
2.	Medium training need	55	45.83
3.	High training need	37	30.83
4.	Very high training need	25	20.84
II	Nursery establishment		
1.	Low training need	7	5.83
2.	Medium training need	54	45.00
3.	High training need	42	35.00
4.	Very high training need	17	14.17
III	Livestock & poultry rearing		
1.	Low training need	8	6.67
2.	Medium training need	42	35.00
3.	High training need	59	49.17
4.	Very high training need	11	9.16
IV	Food Processing		
1.	Low training need	9	7.50
2.	Medium training need	40	33.33
3.	High training need	49	40.83
4.	Very high training need	22	18.34

preparations and seedling transplantation, and irrigation and drainage management were mostly high to medium. The respondents either felt low training needs (38.33%) or no training needs at all (30%) in performing various intercultural operations in vegetable production, while their training needs in vegetable harvesting, preservation and marketing were mostly medium (39.17%) to low (34.17%).

These facts lead to the conclusion that deriving meaningful income from the homestead vegetable production will be difficult unless effective steps are taken to provide effective training in insect & disease control, soil & fertilizer management, and other important aspects of the vegetable production.

In case of nursery establishment, 81.66 per cent of the respondents had high to very high

training needs in asexual propagation of planting materials such as cutting, budding and grafting management while about 82.50 per cent of them had high to medium training needs in site selection for establishment of a nursery. The training needs were also high to medium on seed bed preparation and seedling raising (79.17%). Although management of mother plants is a very important task for the establishment and management of a nursery, 71.67 per cent of the Farm women expressed their training needs with extent of medium to low. Similarly, medium to low training needs in nursery product marketing were expressed by 70.84 per cent of the respondents. Possibly there might be some gaps in the proper knowledge and understanding of these tasks in nursery management among the respondents.

The most important aspect of the livestock and poultry rearing in which the overwhelming majority (84.17%) of the Farm women expressed their high to very high training needs was 'disease control of livestock and poultry'. In other aspects the training needs were mostly high to medium. The Farm women expressed medium to low (66.67%) training needs in preservation and marketing of livestock & poultry products. Pig rearing is a special enterprise for the Farm women, 27.50 per cent of them did not feel that they need any training on pig rearing while another 30.00 per cent of them expressed low training need.

For increasing their family income through various food processing activities, the overwhelming majority (75.83%) of the Farm women expressed their feelings for high to very

high training needs in packaging and branding. The other important activities under food processing in which the majority of the respondents expressed high to very high training needs was, value addition of vegetables (68.34%) The activity, grading of fruits and vegetables was with 50 per cent from high to very high and 69.16 per cent from medium to high. High to medium training needs existed among most of the Farm women on activities such as, value addition of millets, pulses, cereals and fruits and the marketing of the value added products.

Constraints in carrying out EDPs

The Farm women faced different constraints in selected EDPs. The most important constraints as perceived by the respondents towards homestead vegetable production ranked from lack of irrigation facilities, lack of capital, lack of land/suitable soil, lack of marketing facilities, lack of training facilities, scarcity of labour, high cost of fertilizer, seed & fuel, lack of extension contact, lack of knowledge of disease/insect control, attack of birds and animals, lack of HYV seeds etc.

The most important constraints as perceived by the respondents towards nursery establishment ranked from lack of irrigation facilities, lack of capital, scarcity of labour, lack of training facilities, lack of marketing facilities, attack of birds and animals, lack of land/suitable soil, lack of knowledge of disease/insect control, lack of extension contact, lack of HYV seeds, high cost of fertilizer, seed & fuel etc.

The most important constraints as perceived by the respondents towards livestock and poultry rearing ranked from lack of capital, lack of knowledge of disease/insect control, scarcity of labour, lack of feed for livestock & poultry, lack of training facilities, lack of extension contact, lack of marketing facilities, attack of birds and animals etc.

The most important constraints as perceived by the respondents towards food processing ranked from lack of capital, lack of training facilities, lack of resources, scarcity

of labour, lack of extension contact, lack of marketing facilities etc.

Relationship between selected characteristics of the Farm women and their training needs in EDPs:

Education, farm size, annual income, organizational participation and agricultural knowledge had negative significant correlation, while fatalism had positive significant correlation, but rest of the variables had no significant correlation (Table 2).

Table 2.
Correlation Between Independent and Dependent Variables (Training Needs in EDPs)

Independent Variables	Correlation co-efficient (r)
Age	-0.035
Education	-0.203*
Family size	-0.137
Farm size	-0.271*
Annual income	-0.262*
Training experience	-0.128
Cosmopolitaness	-0.121
Organizational participation	-0.326**
Extension media contact	0.159
Fatalism	0.282*
Agricultural knowledge	-0.234*

*Significant at 5 per cent level;

**Significant at 1 per cent level; Table value at 0.05 level = 0.202 and at 0.01 level = 0.333 with 93 df

These indicated that the Farm women with higher level of education had less training needs. Education enabled individuals to gain knowledge which influenced to increase their skills in carrying out income generating activities. Because of the interplay of these variables, the educated Farm women might have gained adequate knowledge and skills on various activities of EDPs from different

sources viz. electronic media, printed material, agricultural office etc. and consequently expressed lower training needs. In addition, the Farm women with bigger farm size were expected to produce more diversified field crops and look for other off-farm or on-farm occupations because of their better economic standing, higher contact with extension media, and possession of higher agricultural

knowledge. On the other hand, the Farm women having smaller farms and being economically poor would be willing to increase their family income by growing vegetables in and around their homesteads. As they had less extension media contact and less agricultural knowledge, it was obvious that they would try to improve their knowledge and capabilities of producing vegetables through the process of training. Accordingly, a significant negative relationship between farm size and training was observed. Moreover, it can be concluded that the annual income of Farm women had a negative significant relationship with their training. This means that the Farm women with higher annual income had lower training needs. High annual income makes the economic base of a family strong which contributes to the development of cosmopolite behaviour among the individuals. Furthermore, the Farm women with high annual income were more educated and cosmopolite as well as they had more extension media contact and more agricultural knowledge. Therefore, they would logically express lower training needs. Besides, the Farm women who had higher organizational participation also had higher agricultural knowledge and higher extension media contact. Organizational participation increases an individual's opportunities to gain knowledge and experiences through mutual interaction and sharing of ideas and opinions. Those who had higher organizational participation also had larger farms and higher extension media contact. As large Farm women with higher extension media contact

might not be so interested in EDPs, their training needs in this respect were also lower. On the other hand, the Farm women who had higher fatalism also had higher training needs. Farm women with such characteristics are likely to engage different EDPs as a source of their family income. However, the Farm women, who had higher agricultural knowledge, had lower training needs in EDPs. The explanation put forward for the negative relationship between agricultural knowledge of the Farm women and their training needs in this case.

CONCLUSION

The Farm women are a special interest group of the population of Tamil Nadu. Among the various EDPs executed for their entrepreneurial homestead vegetable production has been found as one of the major areas. Farm women engaged in homestead vegetable production need training for improving their work efficiency in carrying out various vegetable production activities. In addition, they need proper training on asexual propagation for establishing nursery. It is also imperative for respective authorities to offer training opportunities on livestock and poultry rearing for the Farm women to augment their income levels. Training on disease control of livestock and poultry is also a major thrust sector for getting attention of authority. It might also be said that if arrangements are made for training of the Farm women on food processing, it would have a salutary impact on the livelihood of the rural people.