PERCEIVED ATTRIBUTES OF POULTRY FARMING AMONG SCHEDULED CASTE RURAL WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Data were collected from 300 Scheduled Caste women to explore need and attributes of poultry farming as perceived by them. Findings revealed that poultry farming was found to be one of the most needed areas among income generating activities. Hundred percent respondents had heard about poultry farming, majority did not have any knowledge or training but were interested to undertake training and start poultry as income generating activity in future. Poultry Farming enterprise was perceived as very easy to understand and use, profitable, observable, physically and culturally most compatible, labour efficient, easily marketable but somewhat risky enterprise by majority of respondents.

Key words: Poultry farming, Perceived attributes, Scheduled caste women, Training need.

INTRODUCTION

Sixteen percent of India’s population is Scheduled Caste, majority of them residing in rural areas. A critical look at India’s development experience since 1950 reveals that the socio-economic progress made since independence has not been fair, fast and equitable in everybody’s experience - particularly of those belonging to the weaker sections of society like women and children. As a combined result of social neglect and denial of opportunities, these communities have not been able to realize their potential. Capacity building through economic enterprises is the first and foremost strategy suggested to integrate scheduled caste women and youth into “mainstream” of Indian society. It has been observed that there is lot of scope for backyard poultry in the villages especially for SC population. With just peripheral support, it has the potential to supplement the income of poor rural households, especially those of landless labourers and marginal farmers. Indian poultry industry is flourishing in and around urban areas while villages remain untouched. However, villagers cannot adopt scientific approach to poultry farming because of lack of proper knowledge or training and resources. Therefore present study was planned to identify the needs and attributes of poultry farming as perceived by scheduled caste women so as to explore the potentiality and prospects of backyard poultry farming for their capacity building.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana State. From Hisar district, six villages having predominantly large number of Scheduled Caste population viz; Ludas, Shahpur, Mangali, Balawas, Kharkhara and Gabipur were selected. Fifty SC women from each village were selected by purposive random sampling technique, thus making a total sample of 300 women. Perceived need was operationized as the desire of respondents to undergo training or adopt poultry farming enterprise along with reasons. Interview schedule was used to measure the same. The classification of attributes of innovation given by Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) was taken as base for measuring attributes of poultry farming. Some more attributes were also

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added as per available literature. Scores 5 to 1 were given for most to least perception of the attributes. Well structured pre tested interview schedule was used to collect data personally by the researcher.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

1. **Training needs of income generating activities perceived by SC women:** Table 1 shows the training needs relevant to income generating activities as perceived by SC women. Out of a list of twenty incomes generating activities, four activities i.e. Beekeeping, Poultry farming, Vegetable farming, Soap and Detergent making were scored weighted mean more than 2.40. Although the maximum weighted mean (2.43) was scored by both Poultry farming and Vegetable farming but only Poultry farming was selected for the study.

Anonymous (2007) also reported many people went into poultry farming for a different number of reasons. Some do poultry farming for fun, others for the chicken meat and egg production while many go into poultry farming in order to generate manure for fertilizer and for weed and pest control.

2. **Awareness and need of poultry farming as perceived by Scheduled Caste women:** Table 2 depicts about awareness/need of poultry farming perceived by SC women. It is clear from the table that hundred percent respondents had heard about poultry farming. Regarding awareness, 63 per cent respondents had no knowledge about poultry farming, while 37 per cent had some knowledge.

Regarding training, nobody had undertaken training on poultry earlier, while 54 per cent respondents were interested to undertake training on poultry farming.

As far as their willingness to start poultry as an income generating activity was concerned, 54 per cent were interested to start poultry as income generating activity. However, 21 per cent respondents were disinterested. Out of interested respondents, 48.7 per cent said that they ‘will certainly undertake in future’, followed by ‘may undertake’ (29%), and ‘highly interested as early as possible’ (8.6 %) respondents.

3. **Perceived attributes of poultry farming:** A list of nine attributes related to poultry farming was prepared and responses were obtained on a five point continuum for each attribute, as mentioned in methodology.

It is clear from the data presented in Table 3 that regarding simplicity/complexity, most of the respondents (48.3%) perceived the poultry farming...
enterprise as ‘easy to understand’ and 42.7 per cent considered it as a ‘most profitable’ business. Most of the respondents found poultry farming a culturally and physically compatible and a labour efficient activity. Amos (2006) also observed that poultry production is one of the most promising sources of additional income and backyard poultry production (Layers and Broilers) is a profitable venture.

Regarding perception about marketability of poultry products, majority of respondents (42.3%) considered them ‘easily marketable’ followed by 18.7 per cent of respondents who found it as ‘neither easy nor difficult’ to market. Most of the respondents considered poultry farming a food venture as inputs were ‘somewhat easily available’ and the operation was ‘observable’. However, it was perceived as ‘somewhat risky’ venture by majority of respondents (Table 3).

It is heartening to note that quite a good number of rural women (54%) were interesting to undertake training on poultry farming, 49% wanted to start in future and eight per cent wanted to start as early as possible. Further, poultry technology was perceived as very easy to understand and use, profitable, physically and culturally most compatible, labour efficient, easily marketable, observable, input availability and somewhat risky technology by majority of respondents. They might have perceived it like this because of evidence of some villagers who have already been practising poultry in the village or in nearby villages.

**CONCLUSION**

To conclude, the parameters identified for need assessment can be given wide circulation to other disciplines for guidelines in bringing out educational package. Majority of SC women did not have any knowledge or training but were interested to undertake training and start poultry as income generating activity in future, therefore, it is suggested that more and more training programmes should be organized in the villages so that maximum women can benefit. Poultry technology was perceived as easy to understand and use, most profitable, culturally and physically most compatible, observable and somewhat risky technology.
However attributes such as, labour efficiency, marketability and input availability were not perceived very high by the respondents. Hence extension agencies should look into these problems and help poultry farmer in availing quality inputs at reasonable price and help marketing their produce.

REFERENCES