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ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING NEEDS OF FARM WOMEN IN NUTRITION

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with an objective to assess the training needs of farm women in nutrition. The study was conducted in one randomly selected Panchayat Samiti namely Girwa of district Udaipur with 200 farm women of reproductive age group (15-45 years), purposively selected. The data was collected by using interview schedule and PRA with group discussion and analyzed using frequency, percentages, mean percent scores and coefficient of correlation. Findings of the study indicated that the knowledge gap was highest in sprouting, followed by balanced diet; save nutrients while cooking in that rank order with (MPS 9.83-59.18). Similarly their practices were also not encouraging. On the basis of the findings it was suggested to provide intensive trainings to farm women to improve their nutritional status.

INTRODUCTION

Our country has made strenuous efforts to improve the food and nutritional situation, but hunger and malnutrition still remains as serious problem, particularly diet related chronic diseases are emerging as a serious health hazard among rural masses and many are still struggling to grapple with an environment that has spelt drudgery and disaster for their health. The worst sufferers are the vulnerable section of society i.e. women and children. The survey carried out by National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB 1999) indicated that the large proportion of women is under nourished. The accorded reasons for these problems are that their pattern of nutrition is limited to their earning and their knowledge does not go beyond the freedom from hunger. Besides ignorance, poverty, age old methods of cooking, food taboos, and attitudinal constraints such as innate conservatism, resistant to change and gender bias approach of technology transfer system is further blocking the road to progress and prosperity of women in our country. There is thus a need to identify the training need of farm women in nutrition. The present study was therefore undertaken with an objective to study existing knowledge and practices of farm women in nutrition and the training gaps in nutrition.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in one randomly selected Panchayat Samiti namely Girwa of district Udaipur. Total 5 villages were selected for the study.The sample comprised of 200 farm women of reproductive age group (15-45 years), purposively selected. The data was collected by using interview schedule and PRA with group discussion and analyzed using frequency, percentages; mean percent scores and coefficient of correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents in the study were equally divided with respect to age i.e. young and middle (49.5-50.5%), majority were from nuclear family, and had farming as their main occupation (58%) were illiterate, possessed 1-2.5 bigha land, small herd size and had their own TV sets. Majority of them belonged to medium socio-economic status.

Concept of Balanced Diet and Basic Four Food Groups: Data in Table 1 show that only a few respondents (8.0%) correctly knew the concept of

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balanced diet and a vast majority of them (92%) had no knowledge about it.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by their Knowledge about Concept of Balanced Diet, and Basic Four Food Groups

n=200

S. No.	Items	f	%
1	**Concept of balanced diet**		
	Knew correct concept	16	8.0
2.	**Basic four food groups**		
	Cereals		
	• For survival	141	70.5
	• To provide energy / strength to our body	142	71.0
	Pulses		
	• For proper growth and development of the body	96	48.0
	• Repair and maintenance of body cells and tissues	26	13.0
	Vegetables and fruits		
	• To help in blood formation	9	8.5
	• To protect the body from diseases	2	1.0
	• To remove constipation	57	28.5
	Milk and milk products		
	• For strong bones	37	18.5
	• For good vision of eyes	56	28.0
	• For healthy teeth	4	2.0

Regarding basic four food groups, Table shows that, cereals were known as energy providing food, important for survival to majority of the respondents (70.5%). Pulses were also considered essential for proper growth and development. But repair and maintenance of the body cells and tissues, and importance of including vegetable, fruits and milk and milk products was known to very few respondents (8 -28.5%). Pandey (2001) also reported alike that the respondents had poor knowledge in nutrition for vulnerable groups with MPS 9.79 only.

Practices - With respect to the practices, Table 2 reveals that, a majority of the respondents (75-100%) had the practice of including cereals and pulses regularly in their diet because of tradition. Milk and milk products were also consumed daily by the respondents as majority of them possessed milch animals and also there was a practice of including rab regularly in the diet. The consumption of vegetables was comparatively less percent and the intake of fruits was negligible.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Practices about Basic Four Food Groups in the Diet

n=200

S. No.	Food groups	f	%
1.	Cereals	200	100.0
2.	Pulses	150	75.0
3.	Vegetables and fruits	85	42.5
4.	Milk and milk products	173	86.5
5.	Included all food groups daily	20	10.0

Save Nutrients while Cooking Food - Table 3 reveals that a large proportion of respondents (73 to 78.5 %) knew only few important tips of conserving nutrients while cooking food like vegetables should be washed and cut just before cooking, use excess water if any in cooking other food or in making animal feed. They were also keeping all these points in mind while cooking food.

Nearly 60.5-78.5 percent respondents mentioned that food should be cooked in covered pan and that only required water should be taken for cooking foods etc. As many as 41 percent respondents said that cooking soda should not be used for cooking food while 31.5% respondents were using it for preparing puri, bati, Khaman, pakoda, dhokli etc to make them soft and tasty. But their practices about all these important tips of cooking vegetables were poor.

The findings of the study gets support from the study conducted by Kaur and Sehgal(1995) reported that rural women were following wrong and undesirable cooking practices as washing of vegetables after cutting, removing thick peels, cutting vegetables into small pieces etc. Nutrition education was suggested as the measure to overcome the problems.

Sprouting and Food Combinations to Enhance Nutritive Value of Food -

Generally in rural areas the split pulses with or without husk are included in the diet. Some times they consume whole pulses like chana, moong etc. but they are ignorant about other ways of including

whole pulses in diet. Sprouting is one of the simple and in expensive way to enhance nutritive value of cereals and pulses. Hence an effort was made to assess the knowledge of the respondents about sprouting.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by their Knowledge and Practices about Points to be Kept in Mind while Cooking Food

n=200

S. No.	Tips of saving nutrients while cooking	Knowledge		Practices	
		f	%	f	%
1.	Wash vegetable before cutting	157	78.5	143	71.5
2.	Cut vegetable just before cooking	153	76.5	156	78.0
3.	Use excess / extra water if it is there in making dough	146	73.0	147	73.5
4.	Cook food in covered pan	137	68.5	137	63.5
5.	Use required amount of water for cooking dal, rice or vegetables	130	65.0	121	60.5
6.	Avoid use of cooking soda	82	41.0	63	31.5
7.	Peel vegetables thinly	16	8.0	21	10.5
8.	Cut vegetables in big pieces	12	6.0	7	3.5
9.	Use soaked water for cooking	7	3.5	4	2.0
10.	Cook food on slow fire	4	2.0	3	1.5

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by their Knowledge about Concept and Importance of Sprouting and Food Combinations

n=200

S. No.	Concept, importance and process of sprouting	f	%
1.	Knew about sprouting	41	20.5
2.	**Importance**		
	• Quantity of vitamin B and C is increased	0	0
	• Easy to digest / easily digestible	4	2.0
3.	Knew the correct process of sprouting	22	11.0
4.	**Importance of food combinations**		
	• To improve nutrient content of food	0	0
	• To provide balanced diet to family	0	0
	• To avoid monotony in the diet	0	0

The Table 4 reveals that only 20.5 per cent respondents knew about sprouting. Only 11 per cent could tell about the process of sprouting while their knowledge about the importance of including sprouts in diet and food combinations was completely lacking. They were also not practicing these in their diet.

Practices

On enquiry from respondents about the practices, majority of the respondents (70%) reported that they prepared dishes like khichadi, moongdal dalia, stuffed paranthas, etc. Cereals with milk and milk products were also a popular combination used to prepare rab as reported by a majority of the respondents (86.5%). Very few respondents (6.5 - 28.5%) had the practice of using other combinations such as cereals + vegetables + pulses etc.

Training gaps of Farm Women in Nutrition

Data in Table 5 show that in general there was a wide training gap on both the parameters i.e. knowledge and practices of the respondents as overall MPS gaps ranged from 56.8 to 58.4 per cent. The component wise training gap ranged from 40.82 to 96.10 per cent in both knowledge and practices.

Table 5. Component-wise Training gap in the Knowledge and Practices of the Respondents about Nutrition

n = 200

S. No.	Components	Knowledge			Practices			'r' value
		MPS	Gap	Rank	MPS	Gap	Rank	
1.	Balanced diet	34.43	65.57	II	58.6	41.38	IV	0.582**
2.	Save Nutrients while cooking	47.84	52.16	III	46.8	53.16	II	0.944**
3.	Sprouting	9.83	90.17	I	3.9	96.10	I	0.538**
5.	Food combinations	59.18	40.82	IV	52.3	47.65	III	0.839**
	Overall gap	100 – 37.82 (62.18)			100-40.4 (59.6)			

**Significance at 1 per cent level

The data further clarifies that the knowledge gap was remarkably high in sprouting (90.1 MPS) followed by balanced diet (65.6 MPS), in that rank order. Regarding practices, the table reveals that the gap was highest in sprouting (96.10 MPS), followed by save nutrients while cooking (53.16 MPS). The least gap was in balanced diet, as the MPS was 41.38. The 'r' values further indicates that there was significant and positive correlation between knowledge and practices of the respondents about nutrition clarifying that with increase in knowledge practices can also be improved and vice-versa.

Das and Sharma (1997) in their study on "Identification of perceived needs of rural women in home making" also reported that knowledge of women in nutrition was lacking and should be given high priority.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of such findings it could be concluded that in the components where the knowledge gap of the farm women was more, their practices were better and the vice-versa. Sprouting was the only component where knowledge and practices both were poor. Hence there is a need to provide intensive training to farm women to improve their nutritional status.

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