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Perceived training needs assessment of tribal farm women engaged in livestock sector of Assam

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to assess the perceived training needs of tribal farm women of Assam in Animal husbandry practices. The study was conducted purposively in three numbers of selected districts of Assam which had considerable population of Tribal families belonging to Deori Tribe. Data were collected through a structured interview schedule from 120 tribal livestock owners by personal interview method. The weighted mean score method was adopted for assessing training needs of tribal livestock farmers. The major five thrust areas of animal husbandry practices namely; breeding, feeding, health care practices, management practices and marketing practices were included. The findings of the study revealed management was perceived as the most important area and was ranked first by the respondents for the purpose of training (mean weighted score 2.83). The second rank was assigned to the area of feeding practices with a mean weighted score of 2.67 followed by marketing practices (mean weighted score 2.66), breeding practices (mean weighted score 2.58) and health care practices (mean weighted score 2.46) respectively. Therefore need based training programme should be planned to enhance the knowledge level of tribal farm women. Simultaneously, it can also be suggested that the tribal farm women should be acquainted with improved Animal Husbandry practices in general with respect to management and feeding practices in particular through appropriate extension programmes to obtain more profit from their livestock enterprise.

Keywords: Perceived training needs, tribal farm women, livestock, animal husbandry

Introduction

Training is the acquiring of specific skills to perform a job in a better way. Training provides systematic improvement of knowledge and skills which in turn helps the trainees to function effectively and efficiently in performing their task on completion of training (Shyam *et al.*, 2016) ^[10]. Training has specific goals of improving one's capability, capacity, productivity and performance. Any training programme starts with identification of training needs and need assessment is the most important step in organization of any training programme. Training need assessment refers to the process of identifying performance requirements and the gap between what levels of performance is required and what present level of performance is. If there is a variance between the desired and actual levels, a needs assessment explores the causes responsible for the gap and methods for closing the gap. (Deka *et al.* 2020) ^[2]. Training needs assessments will help in determining the importance of changes in knowledge, skill, attitude, and behaviour that will have the greatest influence on accomplishing organizational or individual goals. So, the current study was carried out in order to identify the perceived training needs assessment of tribal farm women engaged in livestock sector in Sivsagar, Charaideo and Jorhat districts of Assam.

Methodology

Farm women training needs was assessed in five areas *viz.*, breeding, feeding, health care, management and marketing practices which included a total 27 different sub-areas in livestock farming.

Responses were taken on three point continuum i.e. most needed, needed and least needed with respective scores as 3, 2 and 1. The maximum achievable score was 81 and minimum was 27. The summation of scores obtained by the respondents over each statement in each sub-area constituted the level of perceived training needs. The assessed training needs in sub-areas were ranked based on the total weighted mean score.

$$\text{Total weighted mean score} = \frac{\text{Total score obtained by each respondent}}{\text{Total number of respondents}}$$

Locale of the study

The study was carried out purposively in three districts of Assam namely Charaideo, Sivsagar and Jorhat which had considerable population of Tribal families belonging to Deori Tribe.

Sampling method

For the present study, 120 nos of farmers, farm women engaged in livestock rearing who attended the training programmes conducted at Charaideo (Kurukani gaon), Sivsagar (Borpathar gaon) and Jorhat (Nam Deuri gaon) districts of Assam by Assam Livestock and Poultry Corporation, Ltd. on the month of October 2023 were selected purposively. Majority of the training were imparted on scientific management of livestock.

Selection of trainee farmers

A total of 300 farm women participated in the training programme conducted in three different locations. A total of

40 tribal women farmers from each district were selected purposively making the total sample size of 120 farmers. For selecting the farmers in the ultimate sample, the criterion of having a minimum experience of 10 years in livestock farming was considered. The data was collected by direct interview method with the help of semi-structured interview schedule. The collected data was analyzed using suitable statistical tools.

Results and Discussion

The socio economic characteristics of respondents were analysed and presented in table 1. The table indicated that majority (45.8 %) of the respondents belonged to middle age group followed by old age (29.2 %) and young age (25 %) group. This indicates that younger women were less involved in management of their livestock. Similar results were reported by Dhaka *et al.* 2017 [3] amongst the women farmers of Rajasthan in their study. Majority (31.7%) had high school level of education followed by primary (30%), intermediate (21.7%), Graduate (8.3%) and Illiterate (10%). Similar results were reported by Deka *et al.* 2020 [1] in their study of training needs of livestock and poultry farmers in Baksa district of Assam. Majority (59.2%) of the respondents reared 10 to 20 animals which included pig, goat and cattle. With respect to annual income from livestock farming, 66.7% of the respondents had an average income of Rs. 15 to 20 thousand. Similar findings were also reported by Shyam *et al.* 2013 [9] in their study of motivational factors related to piggery in Kamrup district of Assam where average annual income from piggery farming was Rs. 24,950.

Table 1: Socio economic profile of the respondents (N=120)

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Young (>30)	30	25.0
	Middle (30-50)	55	45.8
	Old (<50)	35	29.2
Education	Illiterate	10	8.3
	Primary	36	30.0
	High School	38	31.7
	Intermediate	26	21.7
Livestock Holding	Graduate	10	8.3
	Low (>10)	29	24.2
	Medium (10-20)	71	59.2
Annual Income from Livestock (in Thousand Rs)	High (<20)	20	16.7
	Low (>15)	15	12.5
	Medium (15-30)	80	66.7
	High (<30)	25	20.8

Table 2: Training needs of the respondents about different animal husbandry practices. (N=120)

Thematic areas needed for training	Most required	Required	Least Required	MWS	Rank
Breeding practices					
a) Selection of animal	90	20	10	2.67	I
b) Knowledge about different breeds	80	30	10	2.58	II
c) Identification of heat symptoms	70	35	15	2.46	IV
d) Knowledge about A.I.	70	25	25	2.38	VI
e) Pregnancy diagnosis	70	40	10	2.50	III
f) Identification of fertility problems	70	30	20	2.42	V
Feeding practices					
a) Preparation of balanced ration	100	20	0	2.83	I
b) Feeding of newly born	90	15	15	2.63	IV
c) Feeding of pregnant /Lactating animals	95	25	0	2.79	II
d) Feeding of sick animals	90	20	10	2.67	III
e) Preparation of mineral mixture	85	20	15	2.58	V
f) Importance of clean water for drinking	80	25	15	2.54	VI
Health Care practices					
a) Knowledge about common diseases	90	20	10	2.67	III
b) Deworming of animals	90	30	0	2.75	II

c) Care of sick animals	75	25	20	2.46	V
d) Vaccination schedule for animals	95	25	0	2.79	I
e) First aid treatment for simple ailments	80	30	10	2.58	IV
f) Deficiency diseases of animals and its symptoms	70	30	20	2.42	VI
Management Practices					
a) Cleaning of farm premises	95	25	0	2.79	II
b) Castration of piglets/kids	80	30	10	2.58	IV
c) Care during pregnancy	100	20	0	2.83	I
d) Care and Isolation of sick animals	85	25	10	2.63	III
e) Care of newly born kids/piglets/calf	75	35	10	2.54	V
Marketing					
a) Knowledge about credit facilities	120	0	0	3.00	I
b) Marketing of livestock	90	20	10	2.67	IV
c) Marketing of Livestock products/Value Addition	95	25	0	2.79	III
d) Insurance of livestock	100	20	0	2.83	II

Training needs of the tribal farm women about different animal husbandry practices

The training needs of tribal farm women in relation to improved animal husbandry practices included the major practices of animal husbandry viz., Breeding, Feeding, health care, management practices and marketing.

Training needs on breeding practices

The data (Table 2) revealed that according to need hierarchy in breeding management, the tribal farm women assigned first rank to selection of animals with a mean weighted score of 2.67 followed by Knowledge about different breeds (MWS-2.58). The farmers stated that increase knowledge in selection of animals and different breeds will results in improvement in production performance of their livestock along with improvement in growth rate, reproduction and production. Knowledge regarding pregnancy diagnosis was ranked third with a mean score of 2.50 followed by identification of heat symptoms (MWS-2.46), identification of fertility problems (MWS-2.42) and knowledge about AI (MWS-2.38) respectively.

Training needs on Feeding practices

With respect to feeding management, preparation of balance ration was ranked first with a mean score of 2.83. Similar findings were reported by Jahan *et al.* 2023 [5]. Farmers stated that feeding balanced ration can enhance the productivity of their animals and ultimately increase their income. Feeding of lactating/pregnant animals was ranked second (MWS-2.9) followed by feeding of sick animals (MWS-2.6, Rank-III), feeding of newly born (MWS-2.63), preparation of mineral mixture (MWS-2.58) and importance of clean water for drinking (MWS-2.54) respectively

Training needs on Health Care Practices

The data presented in Table 2 show that the training needs in scientific health care practices, vaccination schedule for animals (MWS=2.9) was reported to be highest by majority of the women farmers and ranked first in the rank hierarchy, followed by training need in deworming of animals (MWS=2.75) and knowledge about common diseases in animals (MWS=2.67). Similar findings were also reported by Reddy 2023 [4]. First aid treatment for simple ailments was ranked fourth with a mean weighted score of 2.58 followed by care of sick animals (MWS-2.46) and deficiency diseases of animals and its symptoms (MWS-2.42) respectively.

Training needs on manage mental practices

The data presented in Table 2 shows that among the various sub-areas of management practices, Care during pregnancy

was the most important area ranked first by the tribal livestock owners with a mean weighted score 2.83. The second rank was given to the sub area of cleaning of farm premises (weighted mean score 2.79) followed by care and isolation of sick animals (weighted mean score 2.63), castration of piglets/kids (weighted mean score 2.58), and care of newly born kids/piglets/calf (weighted mean score 2.54) respectively. Similar reports were found by Deka *et al.* 2022 [1].

Training needs on marketing practices

In the present time, all government transactions are through banks and the lack of awareness and knowledge of livestock farmers on credit linkage schemes will certainly deny to reap the benefits of the present government schemes. Hence knowledge about credit facilities was indicated as the most important need (MWS=3) followed by insurance of livestock (MWS=2.83), marketing of livestock products/value addition (MWS=2.79). Value addition of livestock products would fetch them more income hence the farmers stated for training need in this sub area. Marketing of livestock (MWS=2.67) was Rank Fourth training need in marketing. Similar findings were reported by Jacob *et al.* 2013 [7].

Table 3: Overall training needs of the respondents about different animal husbandry practices. (N=120)

Sl. No	Thematic areas	Overall Mean Weighted Score	Rank
1	Breeding practices	2.58	IV
2	Feeding practices	2.67	II
3	Healthcare practices	2.46	V
4	Management practices	2.83	I
5	Marketing practices	2.66	III

Overall training needs in different animal husbandry practices

The data presented in Table 3 reveals that among the five areas of animal husbandry practices, management was perceived as the most important area and was ranked first by the respondents for the purpose of training (mean weighted score 2.83). The second rank was assigned to the area of feeding practices with a mean weighted score of 2.67 followed by marketing practices (mean weighted score 2.66), breeding practices (mean weighted score 2.58) and health care practices (mean weighted score 2.46) respectively. Similar findings were reported by Gour *et al.* 2015 [6].

Conclusion

Awareness and Knowledge regarding various animal husbandry practices are essential before implementation of modern technology. Tribal farm women are more likely to

accept and adopt scientific animal husbandry practices when they have sufficient knowledge about it. To be effective, the training programmes should be designed based on actual training needs and socio economic profile of potential trainees. The training conducted by different organization should be need based vocational training programmes so that the rural farm women are benefited. Therefore, providing access to relevant knowledge and information about improved scientific animal husbandry practices among livestock owners will empower them to enhance their overall income and employment in the rural areas.

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