



P-ISSN: 2349-8528

E-ISSN: 2321-4902

IJCS 2019; 7(2): 1613-1616

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Received: 09-01-2019

Accepted: 12-02-2019

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Information needs of farm women towards animal husbandry practices

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Abstract

Animal Husbandry sector provides large self-employment opportunities. According to that one family member is engaged in looking after the livestock. Women play important role in different animal husbandry practices. Nowadays, information is a basic necessity of everyday life. It was observed that farm women have some misunderstanding or confusion and face some difficulties in keeping their animals. So that, it is important to know the information needs of farm women for animal husbandry practices. Therefore, the study was conducted in Rajkot district of Saurashtra region. From four talukas of Rajkot district, three villages were selected from each talukas. Thus, total 120 respondents were selected from 12 villages for the study.

The result of the study revealed that with respect to overall preference of information needs of farm women on improved animal husbandry practices, health practices (17.767 WMS) was the most preferred by rural women (first rank) followed by farm credit (13.958 WMS), marketing practices (12.358 WMS), breeding practices (5.267 WMS), management practices (3.242 WMS), feeding practices (2.175 WMS), profit utilization (2.150 WMS), housing facilities (1.733 WMS), fodder production (1.583 WMS), daily practices (1.100 WMS) and milk products making (0.667 WMS) got second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh rank, respectively. In case of level of information needs, majority (73.34 percent) of farm women had medium level of information needs about animal husbandry practices followed by 15.83 percent and 10.83 percent of them had low and high level of information needs, respectively. For augmenting information need of farm women, demonstrations are to be conducted at the village level to educate farmers and farm women about these.

Keywords: Farm women, information needs, animal husbandry practices

Introduction

Nowadays, information is a basic necessity of everyday life. For anything and everything information is required. Information can be obtained or retrieved from a variety of sources. Farmers constitute a particular group of users whose information needs is very specific. The present age has been rightly called as an Information Age. Information is an important resource for individual growth and survival. The progress of modern societies as well as individuals depends a great deal upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. Information is needed to be able to take a right decision and also reduce uncertainty.

Animal husbandry refers to raising or keeping of livestock (domestic animals) for farm purposes. Women are considered to be pioneers in all sorts of development, as they play an important role in shaping the character of young generation whom we call as the future of the nation. Women play significant and crucial role in livestock development. Most of the works related to livestock management are looked after by rural women. Information need is the lack of appropriate information on which to base choices that could lead to benefits or services that may improve people's well-being (Tester, 1992) [1].

The information need of farm women i.e. farm credit was considered as the most important area requiring information to the farm women respondents. They also studied like breeding, disease control, marketing, feeding and management were need to know the effectiveness of the contribution of farm women and their information need for different aspects in animal husbandry practices. (Devaki and Senthilkumar, 2013) [2]. Therefore, it is required to know the information needs of farm women about animal husbandry practices.

Objective

To find out the information needs of farm women towards animal husbandry practices.

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Methodology

The present study was conducted in Rajkot district of Saurashtra region of Gujarat state. Four talukas viz, Dhoraji, Upleta, Jetpur and Gondal from Rajkot district were selected purposively because maximum farmers and farm women having of animal husbandry occupation. Three villages were selected purposively from each selected taluka. Thus, total 12 villages from four talukas were selected for the study. Ten respondents from each selected village were selected by using random sampling technique with a condition that the respondents are rearing cattle and buffalo at least five year or more. Thus, total 120 respondents were selected as sample.

The term information need is often understood as an individual or group's desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. In the present study an attempt was made to calculate information need, which can scientifically measure the extent of information need of farm women towards animal husbandry practices of Rajkot district.

For measuring the information needs of farm women, ratio scale called Information Need Quotient (INQ) was used. The information needs schedule consisted of 99 sub items of 11 main items was prepared and then the items were arranged against three point rating scale. At the time of personal interview, the respondents were asked to rate each item in any one of the three response categories i.e. "most needed", "somewhat needed" and "not needed". The rating given to the items were quantified by assigning the score of 2, 1 and 0 for "most needed", "somewhat needed" and "not needed", respectively. The overall information need was calculated by multiplying the frequencies of occurrence with the respective score of the category and adding them up. These added score were then divided by the number of respondents (n) to obtain the mean score. Based on the mean score, the information needs were ranked in order of importance.

The levels of information needs of an individual respondent were also calculated by ratio scale called Information Need Quotient (INQ), which was especially developed for the study. This scale accommodates variation in number of items checked and ranges between "0" and "198" and thus fits with our frame of reference.

It was computed by the following formula:

$$INQ = \frac{\sum OS_{ij}}{\sum MS_{ij}} \times 100$$

Where,

$\sum OS_{ij}$ = Sum of observed score of jth individual for ith items

$\sum MS_{ij}$ = Maximum score attributable to the items rated by jth individual

INQ = Information Need Quotient

On the basis of INQ value, the respondents were categorized into three groups on the basis of mean and S.D. in terms of low, medium and high.

Result and Discussion

Information Needs of Farm Women about Improved Animal Husbandry Practices

Information needs refers to those needs which are concerned with knowing new information by farm women for various practices related to animal husbandry. It is the needs they require to fill the gap existing in their knowledge and understanding related to it. With a view to this, attempt has

been made for assessment of information needs of farm women for new improved practices regarding to animal husbandry. It was determined through task analysis by each item wise information needs analysis and overall information needs of farm women pertaining to dairy management.

The term information need is often understood as an individual or group's desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. The information needs of farm women about different practices showed in table 1 and fig. 1, which apparent about the most preferred information needs by farm women.

It can be inferred from the data in table 1 that among eleven practices, health practices was on first rank with 17.767 weighted mean score. It can be concluded that vaccination, deworming and infectious diseases were more important to get information about it. It might be due to that if health care is not taken at proper time, drastically decrease in the milk production observed and finally it effect on income.

Whereas, farm credit got 13.958 weighted mean score with second rank. It can be found that loan facilities, loan interest rate and rules and procedure were important information needs for farm women. The reason behind might be due to that procedure of loan is tedious and cumbersome. So, it required to know about it.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their practice wise information needs of farm women on improved animal husbandry practices (n=120)

| Sr. No. | Animal husbandry Practices | Total score | Weighted Mean Score | Rank |
|---------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Feeding Practices | 261 | 2.175 | VI |
| 2 | Breeding practices | 632 | 5.267 | IV |
| 3 | Management practices | 389 | 3.242 | V |
| 4 | Fodder production | 190 | 1.583 | IX |
| 5 | Health practices | 2132 | 17.767 | I |
| 6 | Daily practices | 132 | 1.100 | X |
| 7 | Marketing practices | 1483 | 12.358 | III |
| 8 | Housing facilities | 208 | 1.733 | VIII |
| 9 | Profit utilization | 258 | 2.150 | VII |
| 10 | Milk product making | 80 | 0.667 | XI |
| 11 | Farm credit | 238 | 13.958 | II |

The marketing practices got third rank with 12.385 weighted mean score on banking and insurance and marketing of livestock and its product among different practices. This might be due to that animal are suffered from some diseases and natural hazard (snacks). So, it required animal insurance for maintaining income and also buying other same animal.

It was observed that breeding practices got fourth rank with 5.267 weighted mean score. It was found that the selection of breed and breeding programme were most important needs of information. This might be due to that the original breed gives more milk production as it easily set with local environmental conditions.

It was revealed from the data presented in table 1 that management practices had 3.242 weighted mean score with fifth rank. It can be concluded that maintenance of dairy management records and dehorning are important needs of information. The probable reason behind this might be that the each and every animal management record useful to know the production of individual animal. It is useful to next parturition or genetic potentiality in next generation and also record is helpful to selling of animal.

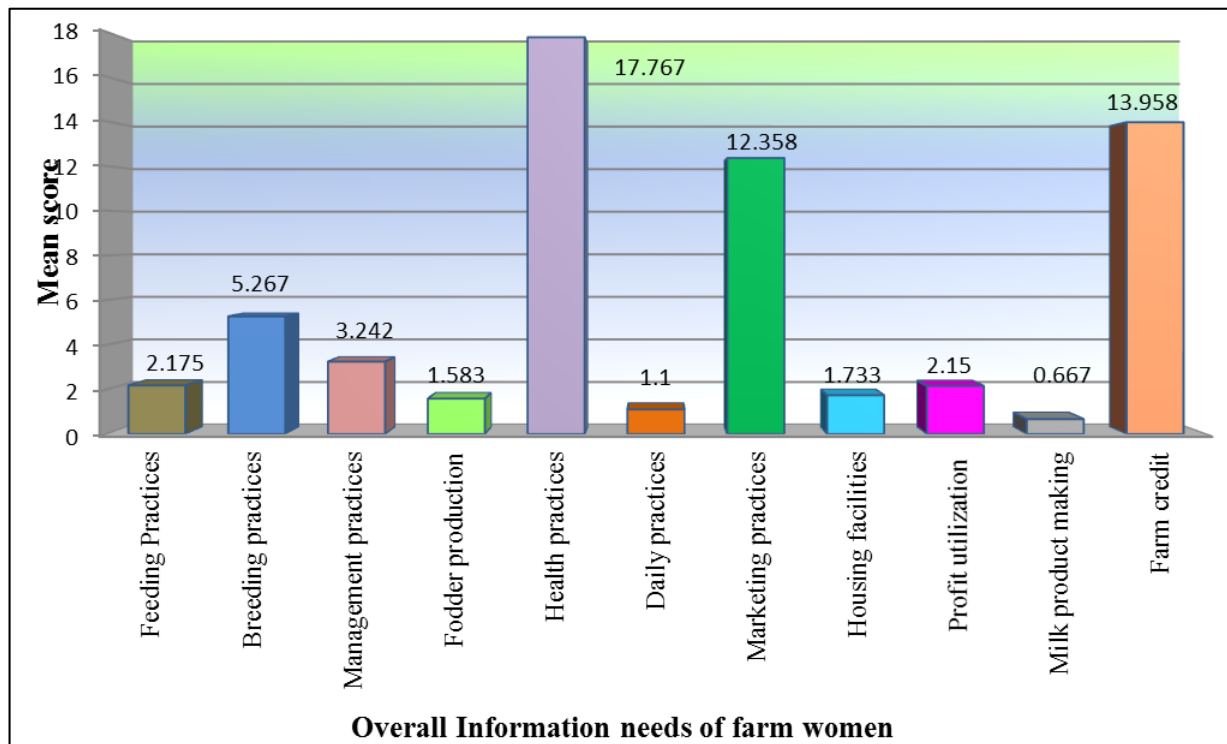


Fig 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their practice wise information needs about improved animal husbandry practices

Among different animal husbandry practices, feeding practices were on sixth rank with 2.175 weighted mean score. It can be observed that majority of the farm women got information on use of mineral mixture/ common salt and balanced feeding. The probable reason behind this, farm women were aware about concentration of feed to feed their animals as a result, they got higher milk production. At present in market, concentrations of feed and mineral mixture are easily available. So, it preferred to feed their animal.

With respect to profit utilization, the data presented in table 1 revealed that among all practices, profit utilization was on seventh rank along with 2.150 weighted mean score. It can be concluded that farm women utilize their profit in jewellery and educate to their children. The probable reason might be that farm women are generally luxury-loving towards jewellery. Also, farm women take care of their children’s future.

In case of housing practices, it was on eighth rank with 1.733 weighted score. It can be found that farm women are required most needed information on arrangement of scientific housing and farm facilities for proper stay of animal in shed. The reason behind this, that scientific arrangement of shed help to animal freely stay, proper arrangement of manager, proper space for rest as well as air circulation. So, it result in to give higher milk production according to breed.

For fodder production, this one got 1.583 weighted mean score with ninth rank. It can be observed that selection of fodder crops varieties were most needed information for farm women among different sub practices of fodder production. The probable reason might be due to that some varieties of fodder crops are like to animal and also contain mineral concentration is more, resulting help to increase the milk production.

In case of daily practices, it came at tenth rank with 1.100 weighted mean score. It can be noticed that most important information needs about daily practices were average time spent and soaking feed by farm women. The probable reason might be due to that in generally most of work like children

rearing, animal care, milking, feeding *etc.* are done by farm women. So, more time spent by farm women on animal care, fodder collection, feeding *etc.*

For milk product making, it was owned eleventh rank with 0.667 weighted mean score. It can be concluded that farm women got important information on milk product and any other dairy product. The probable reason behind that knowing about new milk product may provide them more supplementary income along with ghee, butter milk and curd. It can be concluded that health, farm credit, marketing practices and breeding were important information needs for farm women about animal husbandry practices. The probable reason might be that farm women were more conscious and aware about these practices. Without these, supplementary income for her family is impossible.

Level of Information Needs

The data given in table 2 and fig.2 illustrated that majority (73.34 percent) of farm women had medium level of information needs followed by 15.83 percent and 10.83 percent of them had low and high level of information needs, respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their level of information needs towards animal husbandry practices (n = 120)

| Sr. No. | Level of information need | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|----------------------------------|------------|---------|
| 1 | Low level of information need | 19 | 15.83 |
| 2 | Medium level of information need | 88 | 73.34 |
| 3 | High level of information need | 13 | 10.83 |
| Total | | 120 | 100.00 |
| Mean= 62 | | S.D.= 8.83 | |

Important sources of information that expand the access of information through various media might have made them more inclined towards animal husbandry practices. Moreover, increased demand for milk and its product day by day encourage them to get new and useful information related to improved animal husbandry practices. For enhancing

information need of farm women, demonstrations are to be conducted at the village level to educate farmers and farm women about these. There is a need for conducting more

number of needs based and well-tailored training programmes suited to farm women which would in turn help them to have more extension agency contacts.

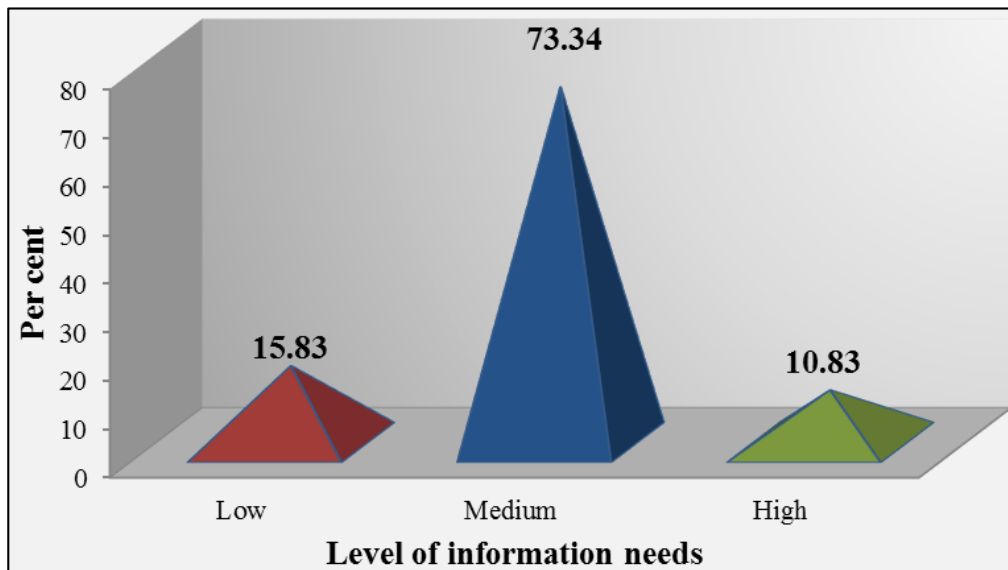


Fig 2: Distribution of respondents according to their level of information needs towards animal husbandry practices

Conclusion

It can be concluded that with respect to overall preference of information needs of farm women on improved animal husbandry practices, health practices (17.767 WMS) was the most preferred by rural women (first rank) followed by farm credit (13.958 WMS), marketing practices (12.358 WMS), breeding practices (5.267 WMS), management practices (3.242 WMS), feeding practices (2.175 WMS), profit utilization (2.150 WMS), housing facilities (1.733 WMS), fodder production (1.583 WMS), daily practices (1.100 WMS) and milk products making (0.667 WMS) got second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh rank, respectively.

In case of level of information needs, majority (73.34 percent) of farm women had medium level of information needs. For augmenting information need of farm women, demonstrations are to be conducted at the village level to educate farmers and farm women about these.

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