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Awareness level of rural farm women about organic farming in district Raebareli (U.P.)

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Abstract

An increase in the percentage of women in the agricultural labor force relative to men, either because more women are working and/or because fewer men are working in agriculture. This trend has been called the feminization of agriculture. This feminization of agriculture is caused by increased "casualization" of work, unprofitable crop production and distress migration of men "for higher casual work in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors", leaving behind women to take up low paid casual work in agriculture. Women are the major stakeholders in organic agriculture, precisely because they are the worst victims of chemical farming. Over decades, the socio-economic and health status of women in farming communities has been adversely affected by green revolution/ industrial farming technologies and policies leading them into debt, disease and destitution. So there is great need to make aware rural women regarding various aspects of organic farming through extension activities. Keeping all these things in mind KVK Raebareli has organized training programs for farm women to enhance their knowledge level regarding to organic farming. Pre and post knowledge level of farm women regarding various aspects of organic farming have been assessed through questionnaires. The sample consisted of randomly selected 120 women respondents. Analysis was carried out by using means, frequencies and percentages. Findings of the study revealed that KVK training's have significant impact on knowledge level of farm women regarding various aspects of organic farming however some aspects of organic farming especially health benefits of organic foods needs more demonstration and training for making them efficient and friendly towards organic farming.

Keywords: Rural farm women, organic farming, KVK, trainings

Introduction

The extensive use of external inputs *viz.* chemical fertilizers and pesticides has led to ecosystem damage and improper use of natural resources. These factors have forced the farmers, scientists and the policy makers to look at the sustainable farming techniques through organic farming. Organic farming is considered to be one way of alternative farming, whose approaches are found to be sustainable and safe. The term 'Organic Agriculture' refers to a process that uses methods respectful of the environment from the production stages through handling and processing. Organic production is not merely concerned with a product, but also with the whole system used to produce and deliver the product to the ultimate consumer.

As per the documented evidence, organic manure in India started long back in 1900 by Sir Albert Howard, British Agronomist in a local village in North India. The major states involved in organic farming in India are Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttaranchal, Sikkim, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. Sikkim and Pondicherry have declared their states as 100 per cent organic states (Chandrashekar, 2010) ^[1]. Only 30 per cent of India's total cultivable area is covered with fertilizers where irrigation facilities are available and in the remaining 70 per cent of arable land, which is mainly rain-fed, negligible amount of fertilizers is being used. Farmers in these areas often use organic manure as a source of nutrients that are readily available either in their own farm or in their locality. With the sizable acreage under naturally organic/default organic cultivation, India has tremendous potential to grow crops organically and emerge as a major supplier of organic products in the world's organic market.

The principle of organic cultivation is attracting farmers' world over due to its various advantages over modern agricultural practices (Khana, 2007) ^[3]. Sustaining crop production, productivity without damaging the resources and environment are big challenge and this problem can be overcome by several ways but the first and foremost way is organic farming (Sodjinou *et al.*, 2015) ^[8].

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Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities and the extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro-production systems. The mode of female participation in agricultural production varies with the land owning status of farm households. Their roles range from managers to landless labourers. In all farm production, women's average contribution is estimated at 55 percent to 66 percent of the total labour with percentages much higher in certain regions. In the Indian Himalayas a pair of bullocks works 1064 hours, a man 1212 hours, and women 3485 hours in a year on one hectare farm (Navdanya, 2006) [4]. An increase in the percentage of women in the agricultural labor force relative to men, either because more women are working and/or because fewer men are working in agriculture. According to the FAO, while the proportion of the labor force working in agriculture declined over the 1990s, the proportion of women working in agriculture increased, particularly in developing countries. In some regions such as Africa and Asia, almost half of the labour force is women. This trend has been called the feminization of agriculture. This feminization of agriculture is caused by increased "casualization" of work, unprofitable crop production and distress migration of men "for higher casual work in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors", leaving behind women to take up low paid casual work in agriculture.

The adoption of organic farming significantly increases labour requirements compared to conventional farming. Women often shoulder the increased labour to a greater degree than men (Rebecca and Jutamart, 2002) [5]. Organic farming needs manpower, if the manpower is studied gender wise, the amazing fact is that the women's contribution is greater or equal to men. The women in the household know better what is needed to provide a balanced diet for the family. Therefore, they try to include plants rich in nutrition along with the regular crops. Besides food security, women are also concerned about the cash needs of the family. This makes them more responsible towards activities like backyard poultry, dairy, bee keeping, horticulture etc. which serves as cash income as well as a source of nutritious food. This makes the family economically "stronger and happier" (Reddy, 2008). So there is great need to make aware rural women regarding various aspects of organic farming through extension activities. Keeping all these things in mind KVK Raebareli has organized training programs for farm women to enhance their knowledge level regarding to organic farming. Pre and post knowledge level of farm women regarding various aspects of organic farming have been assessed through questionnaires.

Objective of the study

Pre and post knowledge level of farm women regarding various aspects of organic farming.

Materials and Methods

Total sample of 120 farm women who were the part of K.V.K. training on organic farming have been selected purposely for the study. Out of selected 120 farm women, thirty farm women were belonged to village Jagatpur, thirty farm women were belonged to village Kucharia, Thirty farm women were belonged to village Atarthariya, thirty farm women were belonged to village Ichouli of district Raebareli. Data was collected by personal interview method. Analysis was carried out by using means, frequencies & percentages.

Results and Discussion

A. Awareness of farm women regarding Organic farming

Table (1) shows impact of K.V.K. trainings on awareness level of farm women regarding organic farming. Table (1) Shows comparative data in form of percentage of farm women found aware not aware regarding different aspects of farming before and after KVK trainings.

(1) Awareness level of farm women regarding organic farming before KVK training

Before KVK training, According to table (1) cent percent farm women were found unaware about meaning of organic farming, advantages of organic farming, application of organic farming, use of farm yard manure as organic inputs, use of green manure as organic inputs, Cluster bean and Dhaincha are green manuring crop. Except that 95.83 percent farm women were found not aware about cow dung is good source of organic farming, 91.67 per cent farm women were found not aware about use of vermin- compost as organic input along with 62.50 percent farm women were found unaware about vermi.-compost is produced by earth worm. Table (1) also explains that 91.67 percent farm women were also found unaware about bio -fertilizer and bio-pesticide are used as organic input.

(2) Awareness level of farm women regarding organic farming after KVK training

Table (1) Shows that After KVK training cent percent farm women were found aware about meaning of organic farming and cow dung is a good source of organic farming followed by 95.83 percent farm women became aware about vermin-compost is organic input, 91.67 per cent farm women became aware of advantages of organic farming, 83.33 percent farm women has become aware of vermi- compost is produced by earth worms, 75 per cent farm women has become aware of application of organic manure and green manure is organic input, 73.33 percent farm women has become aware of farm yard manure is organic input and cluster bean and Dhaincha are green manuring cro. Except that, minimum 62.50 percent farm women were found aware about bio-fertilizer and bio pesticide are organic inputs.

B. Awareness of farm women regarding organic food.

Table (2) Depicts the awareness level of farm women regarding organic food before KVK training and after KVK trainings

(1) Awareness level of farm women regarding organic foods before KVK training.

According table (2) it is clear that before KVK training cent percent farm women were found unaware about better taste of organic food compare to non -organic food, inspection of organic farm and food companies at least once in a year, better recovery rate from illness with consumption of organic food, pesticide residue present in mother milk and organic food are beneficial for wild life as well as earth environment. Table (2) also shows only 8.33 percent farm women were found aware regarding food containing more vitamin and minerals as compared to in organic food. Only 4.17 per cent farm women were found aware regarding pesticide residue present in organic food and causing cancer. Except that only 8.33 percent farm women were found aware about organic foods considered as healthy food.

(2) Awareness level of farm women regarding organic foods after KVK training

Table (2) also depicts impact of KVK training on awareness level of farm women regarding organic foods. Table (2) also describes that cent per cent farm women were still found unaware regarding the regular inspection of organic farm and food companies at least once a year. Data presented in Table (2) Shows that majority of the farm women (95.84%) were still found unaware regarding the facts like pesticide residue present mother milk and organic foods are providing good support system to wild life and earth environment followed by 93.34 percent farm women who were also found unaware regarding organic food considered as a healthy food. 91.67

per cent farm women were found unaware about pesticide causes cancer and artificial fertilizer increases the water content of fruits and vegetables along with 83.34 per cent farm women were found unaware regarding organic food are produced by using only natural foods as well as organic food contribute healthy physical and mental growth. Except that 95.00 per cent farm women were found unaware regarding organic foods contain more of vitamins and minerals, pesticide residue are not present in organic foods as well as organic foods taste better than non –organic foods. Similar findings were reported by Reddy, 2010; Rayanagoudar, 2009; Rayanagoudar *et al.*, 2012 [2, 7, 6].

Table 1: Awareness level of Farm women about organic farming (N = 120)

Statements	Awareness level of Farm women before KVK 's training		Awareness level of Farm women after KVK's Training	
	Aware	Not Aware	Aware	Not Aware
Meaning of organic farming	-	120(100)	120 (100)	-
Advantages of organic farming	-	120(100)	110 (91.67)	10(8.33)
Application of organic manure	-	120(100)	90 (75.00)	30 (25.00)
Farm Yard Manure is organic input	-	120(100)	88(73.33)	32 (26.67)
Cow dung is good source of organic farming	15(12.5)	115(95.83)	120 (100)	-
Vermi-Compost is organic input	10(8.33)	110 (91.66)	115 (95.83)	5 (4.17)
Vermi compost is produced by earthworms	45(37.50)	75(62.50)	100 (83.33)	20 (16.67)
Green manure is organic input	-	120 (100)	90 (75.00)	30 (25.00)
Cluster bean (guar) and Dhaincha are green manuring crop	-	120 (100)	88 (73.33)	32 (26.67)
Bio fertilizer is organic input	10(8.33)	110 (91.66)	75 (62.5)	45 (37.50)
Bio pesticide is organic input	10 (8.33)	110 (91.66)	75 (62.5)	45 (37.50)

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage

Table 2: Awareness level of Farm women about organic food (N = 120)

Statements	Awareness level of Farm women before KVK 's training		Awareness level of Farm women after KVK's Training	
	Aware	Not Aware	Aware	Not Aware
Organic food contains more of vitamins and minerals	10 (8.33)	110(91.67)	30 (25.00)	90 (95.00)
Organic foods are produced by using only natural material	5 (4.17)	115(95.83)	20 (16.67)	100 (83.34)
Artificial fertilizers increases the water content of fruits and vegetables	-	120(100)	10 (8.33)	110 (91.67)
Pesticide residue are not found in organic food	5 (4.17)	115(95.83)	32 (26.67)	88(73.33)
Pesticide in non-organic food causes cancer	5(4.17)	115(95.83)	10 (8.33)	110 (91.67)
Organic foods taste better than non- organic food	10(8.33)	110 (91.67)	25 (20.83)	95 (79.17)
All organic farms and food companies are inspected at least once a year	-	120 (100)	10 (8.33)	110(91.67)
Organic foods helps healthy growth	-	120 (100)	10 (8.33)	110(91.67)
Recovery from illness is -better when organic foods are used	-	120 (100)	30 (25.00)	90 (75.00)
Organic farming avoids the problem of pollution	-	120 (100)	30 (25.00)	90 (75.00)
Organic foods are considered as healthy foods	-	120 (100)	30 (25.00)	90 (75.00)
Pesticide residues are also found in the breast milk of the mother	-	120 (100)	5 (4.16)	115 (95.84)
Organic foods are good for wild life and the environment	-	120 (100)	5 (4.16)	115 (95.84)

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage

Conclusion

From overall discussion of table (1) and (2) indicates that significant impact of KVK Trainings has been observed on awareness level of farm women about organic farming however no significant impact of KVK trainings on awareness level of farm women about organic food were observed. It may be due to the fact that in KVK's training has been given only on organic farming concept. Hence, it should be noted that agricultural scientists and extension workers have propagated organic farming with the intention of protecting the soil health and environment while totally ignoring the health benefits of organic foods and the effect of pesticides on human health.

So there is great need for intensive efforts to impart knowledge to farm women importance and benefits of organic foods and ill –effects of in-organic foods which will be more conducive to organic farming and will motivate more and lead farm women towards organic farming which is essential for sustainable growth. This can be done by organizing campaigns in all the villages for educating the rural folk not only about farming and soil health but also the its positive effects on human health, animal health and the environment as compared to inorganic foods. It also suggests that intensive efforts should be made to educate rural mass with special emphasis given to farm women as they are producers as well as preparers of food.

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