

Problems related to farm operations in poultry farming as perceived by farm women

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Abstract

A study was conducted in Thrissur taluk of Thrissur district to understand the problems perceived by the farm women in poultry farming. A random sample of 120 farm women were selected from the two randomly selected blocks of Thrissur taluk. Inadequate knowledge of low cost scientific cage construction, low hatchability of eggs in summer, problems of predators, losses due to bacterial and viral diseases and financial difficulties were the problems perceived as most serious by the farm women.

Keywords: Problems, Farm Operations, Poultry Farming, Farm Women.

Introduction

Women in India play a crucial role in farming system through their performance at various stages of livestock and poultry production and management. Most of the rural households in Kerala have been traditionally rearing poultry under extensive production system and it is predominantly managed by women. It supplements the family income and also provide a cheap source of high quality protein. Although most of the activities related to poultry farming is carried out by women the problems and difficulties faced by them in farming are not given due consideration while designing training programs.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Thrissur taluk of Thrissur district of Kerala State. Out of the 43 milk co-operative societies in two randomly selected blocks of Thrissur taluk, namely Cherpu and Ollukkara 12 milk co-operative societies were randomly selected. Further, a total of 120 members were drawn from the 12 milk co-operative societies by stratified random sampling procedure using proportional allocation. The women actively involved in diary and poultry farming in the household of 120 selected members constituted respondents of the study. Data were collected by personal interviews using a pre-tested structured schedule. Ranking of problems was done based on mean score calculated as :

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{\text{Sum of Scores for each problem}}{\text{Total number of respondents}}$$

Results and Discussions

Table 1 revealed that in poultry farming problems in feeding and management ranked first followed by those in healthcare, breeding, housing and marking and finance.

From Table 2 it could be seen that under the problems in feeding and management, problems of predators was perceived as the most serious one. In the Backyard poultry farming predator problem is unavoidable unless and until the system is at least partially modernized introducing scientific housing and providing protection in terms of proper enclosures especially for chicks. In the absence of such physical protection, predator problem would abound resulting in loss of chicks and birds. This result is in agreement with that of Singh *et al* (2000).

Another serious problem reported by the farm women was the occurrence of viral and bacterial diseases in birds. The heavy losses due to these diseases might be the reason for their perception. This finding is in line with those of Sujaths and Nanjayan (1999) who reported that bacterial diseases were a major problem in poultry farming. Amudha and Veerabhadrarajah (2000) and Singh *et al.* (2000) also reported losses due to diseases as a major problem encountered by women in commercial poultry farming and backyard poultry farming respectively.

Low hatchability of eggs in summer was perceived as the most serious problem under breeding. To a greater extent the hatchability of eggs can be improved if and when hatching eggs are

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Table-1. Problems perceived by farm women pertaining to major farm operations in poultry farming.

S.No	Major farm operations	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Feeding and management	2.50	I
2.	Health care	2.26	II
3.	Breeding	1.93	III
4.	Housing	1.69	IV
5.	Marketing and finance	1.36	V

scientifically selected as well as preserved. The farm women need to be trained in the ways and means of practicing such low-cost, most often, even no-cost technologies. The self reliant group like Kudumbasree could be imparted the appropriate training.

As for housing, inadequate knowledge of low cost scientific cage construction was perceived as the most serious problem. This points out the need of imparting training in the construction of low cost shed. Amudha and Veerabhadrachari (2000) also opined that lack of knowledge of improved practices was one of the problems encountered by women in commercial poultry farming.

Financial difficulty was the most serious problem under marketing and finance. This finding is in accordance with those of Balaji (1990) who reported lack of financial help as an important economic problem faced by the farm women in poultry keeping and Amudha and Veerabhadrachari (2000) who reported inadequate capital as a problem encountered by women in commercial poultry farming. Lack of awareness about government sources of financial help might have made it difficult for the farm women to solve their financial problems. However, marketing of eggs was not considered to be a serious problem because of the domestic consumption of eggs and the high local

demand for eggs.

Implications

- 1) Low cost scientific housing to provide protection from predators should be made available along with necessary technical inputs such as vaccines and medicines.
- 2) Vaccination camps should be conducted frequently to prevent the outbreak of diseases.
- 3) Extension organizations and local institutions should take adequate steps to impart information regarding credit facilities to procure the necessary inputs. Farm women should also be made aware of insurance facilities available.

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Table 2. Problems perceived by farm women pertaining to minor farm operations in poultry farming

S.No	Farm operations	Mean Score	Rank
I	Feeding and management		
	1. Problems of predators	2.80	I
	2. Lack of technical guidance	2.47	II
II	Health care		
	1. Losses due to bacterial and viral diseases	2.22	III
	2. Inadequate knowledge of vaccination schedule	2.84	I
	3. Problems of ectoparasites	2.70	II
III	Breeding		
	1. Non-availability of veterinary services nearby	2.25	III
IV	Housing		
	2. Inability to select eggs for hatching	1.23	IV
V	Marketing and finance		
	1. Low hatchability of eggs in summer	2.07	I
VI	Housing		
	2. Inability to select eggs for hatching	1.79	II
VII	Marketing and finance		
	1. Inadequate knowledge of low cost scientific cage construction	1.99	I
	2. Lack of facilities like funds, land, construction materials etc.	1.38	II
	3. Financial difficulties	1.93	I
	4. High interest rate of loans	1.64	II
VIII	Marketing and finance		
	3. Problems of spoilage	1.18	III
	4. Inadequate marketing facilities	1.03	IV
IX	Marketing and finance		
	5. Price fluctuation	1.03	IV