

Training needs of rural women involved in weed management and related activities

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Rural women play a pivotal role in agricultural productivity and other related activities besides their normal domestic works. Thus, rural women always play an important dual role in the society (Gidda and Rashid 2006). Though their work is often 'physically visible' but conceptually 'invisible' and remained marginalized. In order to make training programmes more effective and purposeful, it should be based on felt needs, which vary from region to region (Kaur and Khurana 2006). Considering these facts a study was conducted with the objective to ascertain the components of training needs related to weed management and other agricultural activities.

The study was conducted during 2006-07 at Panagar block of Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. The sample of study comprised 30% of poor families from each stratum of land holding, namely marginal (land holding up to 1 ha), small (land holding from 1-2 ha) and medium level (holding 2- 4 ha). A total of 163 women in the age group of 21-45 years, who were involved in agriculture and related activities were selected randomly.

In order to ascertain training needs of rural women in major areas of weed management and other agricultural activities, specific list of activities was prepared with the help of block agriculture officials and SMS. A three point continuum, namely 'most needed', 'needed' and 'not needed' with score of 3, 2 and 1, respectively was used. After calculating the total scores and mean scores of each item of the index, the rank values were assigned. Then preference of training in a particular area was categorized based on range of mean score, 2.33-3.00 for 'high level',

1.66-2.33 for 'low level', and 1.00-1.66 for 'no need' of training required. Training needs of rural women in the different areas of agricultural activities are presented (Table 1). Results revealed that the farm women perceived high level (2.92) of training needs in the handling of labour saving improved weeding tools, followed by chemical weed control (2.91), weed management in nursery (2.89) and pest and disease Management (2.85) which ranked 2nd, 3rd and 4th, respectively.

It was also found that seed treatment, weed identification technique and storage techniques required less training since their mean scores fall within 1.95 to 2.20. The mean score of 1.36 for harvesting tools suggest that this was not perceived as training need.

Training need in labour saving equipments ranked first, which may be attributed to the fact that all such equipments are predominantly used by farmers, while farm women have to perform these activities manually which are labour intensive and monotonous (Hallim and Ali 2005). Hence, high level of training need was expressed for labour saving equipment. It is concluded from the above results that the rural women are in need of training in the majority of areas in weed management including other agricultural activities. Hence, there is a wide scope for the planners to organize and impart training to enhance their potential to achieve the challenges of the society and technology improvement. Therefore, provision of appropriate training in the area of improved weed management practices to rural women enables them to gain the updated knowledge and enhance the skills.

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Table 1. Training needs of rural women involved in weed management and other agricultural activities (N=163)

Areas of activities	Mean score	Rank
Improved weeding tools	2.92	I
Chemical weed control technology	2.91	II
Weed management in nursery	2.89	III
Pest and disease management	2.85	IV
Soil solarization technique	2.84	V
Fertilizer application	2.79	VI
Spraying techniques	2.70	VII
Transplanting	2.69	VIII
Seed treatment	2.18	IX
Weed identification technique	2.04	X
Storage techniques	1.95	XI
Harvesting tools	1.36	XII