



Information Needs as Perceived by Tribal Dairy Farmers of Chotanagpur Region in Dairy Farming Practices

KEYWORDS

Information needs, Tribal dairy farmers and Dairy farming practices

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ABSTRACT *The present study was carried out to assess the information needs as perceived by tribal dairy farmers in Lohardaga district of Chotanagpur region, Jharkhand. The study was conducted in four villages from two blocks of Lohardaga district by personally interviewing 120 tribal respondents. Here, majority of the respondents perceived knowledge of improved breeds ($X=2.35$) as major information need in breeding practices followed by feeding of milch animals ($X=2.27$), care of milch animals ($X=2.38$) and vaccination against contagious diseases ($X=2.42$) in feeding, management and health care practices respectively.*

Introduction

India is a country containing 645 tribal communities which are known for their traditional wisdom. They mostly reside in secluded and underdeveloped areas (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). According to 2001 census, the population of tribals in the country is 84.32 million which accounts to 8.19% of the total population of the country. The tribal population of Jharkhand state is 7.08 million constituting 26.30% of the total population of the state. Among all states and union territories, Jharkhand ranks 6th in tribal population (Anonymous, 2001). In an agro based developing country natural resources provide basic livelihood support to rural people. Similarly in Jharkhand also, rural families are dependent on land, water, livestock and forests for generating employment and for their livelihood. Among the livestock, cattle and buffaloes play a significant role, because of their contribution to human nutrition. Jharkhand has a population of 76.59 lac cattle and 13.43 lac buffalo (Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics, 2006). Despite having huge bovine population the per capita availability of milk in Jharkhand is 140 gm against the national average of 265 gm. Also milch animal in this state gives an average of 1.59 litres a day against the national average of 3 litres (Shukla, 2008). Tribal dairy farmers are mostly uneducated and unaware of improved dairy farming practices which is leading to meagre production of their animal.

Research Methodology

The present study was carried out in the Lohardaga district of Chotanagpur region, Jharkhand, as the district has 59% tribal population. Out of the five blocks of Lohardaga district: two blocks viz. Lohardaga and Senha were purposively selected as these blocks have comparatively larger population of tribal dairy farmers. From each block, two villages were randomly selected where dairying is predominantly practiced. Thirty respondents from each village were selected randomly which have at least one milch animal. Thus, a total of 120 tribal respondents were selected for the study. Information need is defined as the knowledge required by the tribal dairy farmers in dairy farming practices. A systematic study to measure the information need requires selection of some important recommended dairy farming practices. Accordingly a list of recommended practices in relation to breeding, feeding, management and health care of animals was prepared as per Kokate (1984), which was modified slightly. The information needs were collected on three point continuum i.e. most needed, needed and not at all needed and score values of 3, 2 and 1 were awarded respectively. Mean score was calculated in each of the dairy farming practices by dividing total score of the information need to the total number of respondents. On the basis of mean scores, ranks were assigned to each item.

Results and Discussion

Information need as perceived by tribal dairy farmers in breeding practices

Perusal of breeding practices (Table-1) revealed that in breeding practices, the major information need was 'knowledge of improved breeds' as indicated by mean score ($X=2.35$). This might be due to the thought that animal of improved breed will provide them more income by giving more milk. It was followed by information needs like 'artificial insemination' ($X=2.04$), 'pregnancy diagnosis' ($X=1.79$), and 'time of insemination' ($X=1.77$). The least important information need was knowledge of 'heat detection' ($X=1.32$). This might have been due to knowledge regarding heat symptoms and knowledge gap in the rest of the areas as expressed.

Information need as perceived by tribal dairy farmers in feeding practices

Information needs as perceived by the tribal respondents in feeding practices are presented in Table-2. The findings revealed that in feeding practices, major information need was 'feeding of milch animals' as indicated by mean score ($X=2.27$). This showed that the respondents were aware that feeding of milch animals will increase their milk yield but not knowing what to feed in which proportion. It was followed by information needs like 'knowledge about balance feeding' ($X=2.26$), 'feeding of pregnant animals' ($X=1.84$), 'feeding of new born calf' ($X=1.55$), 'feeding of heifers' ($X=1.51$). The least important information need was 'importance of clean water for drinking' ($X=1.50$) as they thought that it was available to their animals. This might have been due to their lack of knowledge of scientific feeding of animals.

Information need as perceived by tribal dairy farmers in management

Among management practices (Table-3), major information need was 'care of milch animals' as indicated by mean score ($X=2.38$). Since, care of milch animal is the most important factor for getting good milk yield and to maximize the profit. It was followed by information needs like 'clean milk production' ($X=2.25$), 'deworming' ($X=2.03$), 'cleaning of cattle shed' ($X=1.62$), 'care at calving' ($X=1.56$) and 'castration' ($X=1.31$). The least important information need was 'dehorning' ($X=1.30$) as they were not feeling it important. It can be inferred from the results that the tribal dairy farmers require knowledge in all the above areas of management. Clean milk production is the way by which the dairy farmers can maximize their profit.

Information need as perceived by tribal dairy farmers in health care practices

Health care practices (Table-4) revealed that, major informa-

tion need was 'vaccination against contagious diseases' as indicated by mean score ($X=2.42$), since vaccination minimises the risk of diseases and controls the spread of contagious diseases. It was followed by information needs like 'knowledge and diagnosis of common diseases' ($X=2.36$), 'treatment against diseases' ($X=2.30$), 'precaution against diseases' ($X=1.96$) and 'treatment of common ailments' ($X=1.70$). This might have been due to the fact the tribal dairy farmers were not able to diagnose the common diseases and lacking the knowledge of early treatment. The respondents were not aware of precautionary measures against the diseases.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that tribal dairy farmers are deficient in knowledge regarding improved dairy farming practices in all the areas like breeding, feeding, management and health care. There is an urgent need to organise training programmes to create awareness among tribal dairy farmers regarding scientific dairy farming practices and there by adoption of advanced dairy farming practices for the upliftment of tribal dairy farmers.

Table 1. Information needs in breeding

Sl. No	Information needs	Total score	Mean score (X)	Rank
a.	Breeding			
1.	Knowledge about improved breeds	283	2.35	I
2.	Artificial insemination	246	2.04	II
3.	Pregnancy diagnosis	215	1.79	III
4.	Time of insemination	213	1.77	IV
5.	Heat detection	159	1.32	V

Table 2. Information needs in feeding

Sl. No	Information needs	Total score	Mean score (X)	Rank
b.	Feeding			
1.	Feeding of milch animals	273	2.27	I
2.	Knowledge about balance feeding	272	2.26	II
3.	Feeding of pregnant animals	221	1.84	III
4.	Feeding of new born calf	187	1.55	IV
5.	Feeding of heifers	182	1.51	V
6.	Importance of clean water for drinking	180	1.50	VI

Table 3. Information needs in management

Sl. No	Information needs	Total score	Mean score (X)	Rank
c.	Management			
1.	Care of milch animals	286	2.38	I
2.	Clean milk production	270	2.25	II
3.	Deworming	244	2.03	III
4.	Cleaning of cattle shed	195	1.62	IV
5.	Care at calving	188	1.56	V
6.	Castration	158	1.31	VI
7.	Dehorning	157	1.30	VII

Table 4. Information needs in health care

Sl. No	Information needs	Total score	Mean score (X)	Rank
d.	Health care			
1.	Vaccination against contagious diseases	291	2.42	I
2.	Knowledge and diagnosis of common diseases	284	2.36	II
3.	Treatment against diseases	276	2.30	III
4.	Precaution against diseases	236	1.96	IV
5.	Treatment of common ailments	204	1.70	V

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