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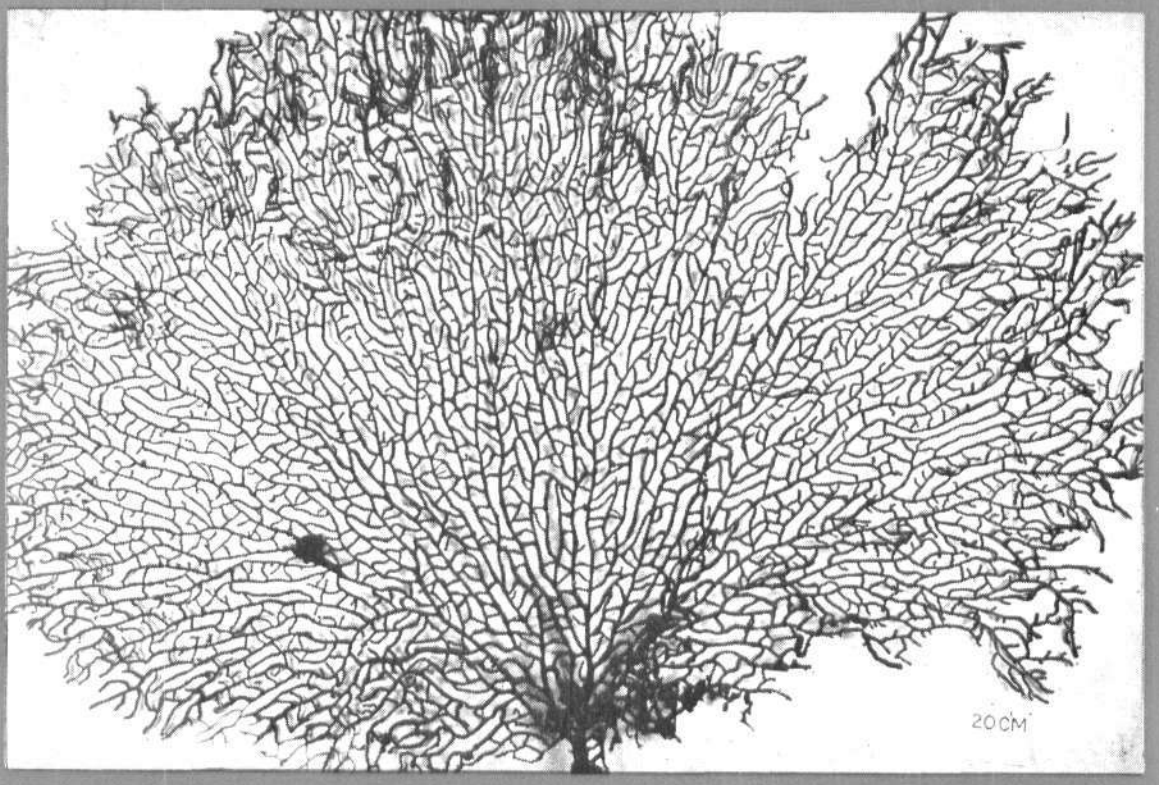

No. 74
AUGUST, 1987

Technical and Extension Series

CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

COCHIN, INDIA

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

HOW KVK - TRAINED WOMEN UTILISE THE NEW KNOWLEDGE?*

Introduction

Training of farm women in vocational skills forms an important component of the programmes of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). The KVK at Vypeenkara in Cochin, Kerala State, attached to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute has been conducting courses in fish/prawn culture for farm men and women. The main objective of the programmes has been promoting integrated development of the area through imparting vocational skills with special emphasis on scientific prawn farming. Since its inception the KVK has trained a number of farm women in prawn culture, kitchen gardening, food processing, poultry farming, livestock management, nutrition and social forestry.

A study with the aim of evaluating the utility of the training in prawn farming for women was conducted in 1985-'86. Though evaluation is a built-in component

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of the programmes of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, its effort has been mainly assessing the overall impact of different programmes. In this study the socio-economic background, motivation pattern and the constraints involved in the utilization of knowledge were examined.

Material and methods

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra had trained 1,542 women in prawn culture till March, 1985, under its 5-day and 10-day training programmes. Ninetythree per cent of the trained women belonged to Vypeenkara, where the KVK is located and the rest were from other nearby areas. Out of the above population a sample of 300 women, covering different areas, was selected following random sampling procedure. Information on age, education and occupation of the trained women, occupational status of their families, extent of holding, ownership of fishing implements and livestock, motivation pattern, extent of utilization of knowledge and the constraints involved in the same were collected using a specially developed interview schedule.

Results and discussion

Age, education and occupation of trained women

Age and education of the respondents are presented in Table 1. Sixtyfive per cent of the trained women belonged to the age group of 18–25 with education between 8th standard and matriculation. Seven per cent had passed matriculation. One had attended predegree course. About 8% of the women had occupations fetching regular income; of them 50% worked as agricultural labourers, 33% were engaged in tailoring and 17% had salaried jobs. The women also earned income seasonally through prawn peeling.

Table 1. *Age and educational status of trained women* (%)

Education	Age				Total
	18	18–25	26–35	36	
Neoliterate	—	1.0	0.3	—	1.3
1–4 Std.	—	1.6	1.0	0.3	2.9
5–7 Std.	1.3	9.6	4.3	1.0	16.3
8–10 Std.	6.3	64.6	0.6	0.3	72.0
Matriculation and above	4.6	2.0	0.1	—	6.9
Pre-degree and above	0.6	—	—	—	0.6

Occupation of the respondents' families

The major occupations of the respondents' families are presented in Table 2. Forty per cent of the families had fishing, 13% had prawn filtration and 15% had other fishery related activities. Thirteen per cent had some salaried jobs and the rest had agriculture as their main source of income.

Table 2. *Details of major occupation of respondents' families*

Occupation	% families
Fishing	40
Prawn filtration	13
Other fishery-related activities	15
Small business and such petty occupations	16
Salaried jobs	13
Agriculture	3

Ownership of holdings, fishing implements and livestock

Sixteen per cent of the respondents' families owned fishing crafts/gears of which 53% was small canoe crewed by two. About ten per cent possessed own and self managed prawn fields. About 20% owned milch animals like cow, buffalo and goat and 28% had hens or ducks (Table 3).

Table 3. *Details of possession of holdings, fishing implements and livestock of respondents' families*

Nature of possession		% families
1.	*Prawn filtration field (perennial field)*	
	Owned and self managed	2.6
	Owned and leased out	1.6
	Leased in	1.3
2.	*Pokkali field*	
	Owned and self managed	7.0
	Owned and leased out	3.0
	Leased in	2.0
	Total	17.5
3.	*Agricultural and other holdings*	2.0
4.	*Fishing implements (craft/gear)*	16.0
5.	*Livestock*	
	Milch animals	20.3
	Duck and hen	28.0

Motivation pattern

Motivation pattern as given in Table 4 was observed among the trained women. Economic motivation in terms of getting a job ranked first as women thought that taking up a course in prawn culture would help them in getting a job sometime or the other. Affiliation, that is, to be in conformity with the friends was the second important motivator for attending the training programme followed by self achievement and prestige. The nearness of KVK to the village was also an important reason for women to attend the training (Table 4).

Table 4. *Motivation pattern of the respondents*

Motivators	No. of women (N = 300)	Rank order
Economic	217	I
Affiliation	86	II
Nearness of KVK to the village	63	III
Self achievement	61	IV
Prestige	15	V
Dominance	—	

Gains of the training programme

The major achievement of the programmes of KVK, especially the training in fish/prawn farming is that it has served as an excellent source of information and propaganda for the scientific prawn farming technology. The trained women had favourable attitude towards Krishi Vigyan Kendra and the prawn farming technology. The programmes of KVK have helped trained women recognise the importance of such a growth centre in the context of area development. Women have gained the ability to identify the larvae of prawns which will enable them in the collection and supplementary/selective stocking which is the first and the most important step in the new technology.

Constraints involved in practicing the technology

The constraints involved in the utilization of the knowledge are presented in Table 5. The rank order of the constraints was finance, lack of suitable holdings, short duration of the training course and other reasons. These findings agree with the results obtained by the KVK in 1985 (*Occupational details of trained farmers as revealed by the follow up survey*-1980 and 1984) which indicated that 49% had finance/lack of suitable holding as constraint.

The improved technology for prawn farming can be considered to be in the early stages of adoption in this area which may lead to wider adoption once there is a regular and assured seed supply from the hatcheries. Unlike in agriculture, women are not generally involved in culture operations excepting for the post harvest peeling and catching the left out fish in the harvested ponds by hand picking. Hence the opportunity for them to work in the farm is limited at present. However, social structure did not bar women from engaging in culture operations.

Table 5. *Constraints involved in the utilization of knowledge*

Constraints	No. of women (N = 300)	Rank Order
Financial	262	I
Possess no suitable holdings	247	II
Short duration of the training course	222	III
Risk involved in practicing the technology	183	IV
Being a woman	—	

Regarding practicing the technology in the families' holdings, the following problems were encountered. Only 5% of the respondents' families possessed holdings suitable for prawn culture and traditional prawn farming was being followed in those fields. Those holdings were the joint property of more than one family and did not have documents legalising the possession. Hence the modification of the existing system or lay-out either involved decision making by all who were likely to have the right over the property or brought about lack in initiative in taking up improvement measures. This also led to difficulties in availing institutional credit.

The majority of the trained women belonged to the age group of 18-25 years and at this age are not likely to be involved in decision making. The interest of the women in this age group, as revealed by the study, was getting an employment. The important motivator for women to take up the training, as mentioned earlier, was that this would help them in getting a job in some fisheries organization.

The ability to identify prawn at a very young age has helped women in collection of larvae from the wild for supplementary stocking. But collection of seed from the wild is not recommended of late in view of the conservation of resources.

There was a general feeling among the trained women that the training period was too short for them to gain confidence to venture into the new practice of which they did not have much previous experience. The duration of the course may be sufficient in the case of men as they are directly involved in culture operations. The trained women also opined that it would be more worthwhile to identify and train those women who have the basic infrastructure for taking up the technology.

Suggestions

In the light of the above findings it is suggested that the trainees may be identified based on their needs. To facilitate this, the Kendra may organise women's clubs in the villages and get them enrolled with the Kendra so that the clubs may be asked to sponsor trainees based on the infrastructure available with each member. Such a proposition would also help in taking up the technology on co-operative basis by a group of women and help in availing the facilities offered by other input agencies in easier way. Since the Kendra is offering courses in various aspects of integrated farming the clubs may be able to utilise the benefits more efficiently. Ensuring people's participation through community organisation is one of the pre-requisites for development and approaching women through their own identified groups will help to channalize the Kendra's activities more successfully.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to Dr. E. G. Silas, Former Director, CMFRI, for suggesting the problem. Grateful thanks are also accorded to Dr. P. S. B. R. James, Director, CMFRI, for the encouragements in completing the work. Sincere thanks are due to Shri T. Jacob, for his guidance and advice in the execution of the work and preparation of this paper. The help rendered by Dr. M. M. Thomas, Office-in-charge of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and his associates by providing basic information about the trainees and the training programmes and extending other facilities is also gratefully acknowledged.