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## EXTENT OF KNOWLEDGE OF FARM WOMEN ON ORGANIC FARMING

CHAITANYA KUMARI M.S, CHANDRAKALAVATHAMMA P

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**Abstract:** Organic farming works in harmony with nature rather than against it. This involves using techniques to achieve good crop yields without harming the natural environment or the people who live and work in it. A study was conducted in Chevella mandal of Ranga Reddy district to study the knowledge transformation of farm women through organic farming training programme. The study revealed that majority of the women are schedule caste group. Only few of them had frequent contacts with extension agents and fifty percent of them had television. About 86.67 per cent of the respondents had low level of knowledge on organic farming before training. Further the findings of this study highlights that there is a significant gain in knowledge of all the aspect of organic farming included in the training programme.

**Keywords:** *Knowledge transformation; Organic farming; rural women; training.*

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**Introduction:** Organic farming system in India is not new and is being followed from ancient time. It is a method of farming system which primarily aimed at cultivating the land and raising crops in such a way, as to keep the soil alive and in good health by use of organic wastes of crop, animal and aquatic wastes and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes like bio fertilizers to release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco friendly pollution free environment.

In India, many of the villages still practice organic farming methods. Today, more and more people are opting for organic food products and organic clothes made from organic cotton and wool. The reasons for preferring organic products are due to its qualities like taste, fresh for longer period, use of herbal pesticides, environment-friendly are safe.

Like any profession, organic farming also has its own pros and cons. If awareness programs are conducted, more and more conventional farmers are likely to opt for organic farming. When there is a bulk production of organic products, the prices of these goods will come down and make it affordable for the common man. Many extension agencies are continuously making efforts to create awareness among the farmers about organic farming. Govt. Institute, Non Govt. Organization and Private agencies are playing major role for promoting the organic farming and conducting Training Programme, Exhibition, Kisan Mela and other programme for dissemination of information about organic farming with low cost and environmentally safe condition.

The women are backbone of agricultural workforce. In extension activities the women is now the centre point and activities are being planned keeping her in view, because her enlightenment will change the face of rural India. Keeping this in view, a study was conducted to study the knowledge transformation of rural women through training on organic farming.

**Methodology:** The present study was conducted in

the Chevella mandal of Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh state. Three adopted villages of All India Coordinated Research Project on Home Science were selected purposively. Twenty five women from each training programme were selected. Therefore, the total sample for the study was 75. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule. A knowledge test was developed to ascertain the knowledge of the women on organic farming. The gain in knowledge was operationalised as the difference between the knowledge regarding various aspects of organic farming practices possessed by the respondents before and after the exposure of trainings. To measure the knowledge a respondent was given a score of one for correct answer and zero for wrong answer. Thus, the summation of all scores treated as the knowledge of the respondent at pre-exposure stage. Similarly post I & post II training knowledge scores were calculated separately immediately after training and one month after training respectively. Suitable statistical tools & techniques were used for analysis of data.

### Results And Discussion

**Personal profile of the rural women:** The respondents related to the present investigations belonged to various age groups from 20 years to 50 years. Most of them had completed primary education (45.67%). Sixty per cent of trainees are agricultural labourers and belonged to schedule caste group (46.67%) followed by backward casts (38.67%). Only 16 per cent of farm women had frequent contacts with extension agents. With regard to media possession fifty percent families have only television followed by radio and TV (20.00%)

**Table 1. Personal profile of the**

Personal profile	Category	F
Age	Below 30	8 (10.67)
	30-40	40 (53.33)
	Above 40	27 (26.00)
Caste	SC	35 (46.67)
	BC	29 (38.67)
	OC	11(14.67)
Education	Illiterate	23(30.67)
	Primary	34(45.33)
	High	18(24.00)
Extension	Never	36(48.00)
	Sometimes	27(36.00)
	Always	12 (16.00)
Occupation	Housewives	9(12.00)
	Labour	45 (60.00)
	Farming	21(28.00)

**Extent of knowledge about organic farming:** To assess the effect of training the knowledge of the respondents was measured with the help of standardized test at the three period of intervals that is pre training, immediately after training (post I) and 30 days after the training (post II). Each correct answer was given score of one. On the basis of score respondents were classified as having high (11-15), medium (6-10) and low (0 - 5) level of knowledge as presented in below tables.

**Table 2.Pre-training knowledge scores**

Knowledge Level	N	%
Low ( 0-5)	65	86.67
Medium (6-10)	10	13.33
High (11-15)	0	0.00
Mean : 2.44 SD:2.0218		

Table 2 reveals that the majority (86.67%) of the respondents had low level of knowledge on organic farming followed by medium (13.33%) while none of the respondent gets high level of knowledge score before training intervention.

**Table 3. Post training knowledge scores**

Knowledge Level	N	%
Low	1	1.33
Medium	31	41.33
High	43	57.33
Mean : 9.36 SD: 2.7294		

It is evident from Table 3 that after exposure to training more than half of the respondents (57.33%) had high level of knowledge score, followed by (41.33%) medium level of knowledge score, while only 1.33 per cent of the respondents obtain lower level of knowledge score related to organic farming.

**Table 4 knowledge score after one month of training**

Knowledge Level	N	%
Low	5	6.66
Medium	47	62.66
High	23	30.66
Mean : 8.4 SD:2.30745		

It is also clear from the Table 4 that 62.66 per cent of respondents had medium level of knowledge followed by high level that is 30.66 per cent while 6.66 per cent of the respondents obtain low level of knowledge related to organic farming after one month of training. The table also highlights that mean knowledge score of respondent i.e. 2.44 before training increased to 9.36 after exposure of training. Range of knowledge score shows increase from (0 to 10) to (4 to 13) after the exposure of training. After one month of training the mean score of knowledge of respondent were 8.4. The mean score decline slightly after one month of training.

**Extent of gain in knowledge :** The gain in knowledge was determined by subtracting the percentage of scores of pre training and knowledge score obtained immediately after training. Based on the differential knowledge gain percentage respondents were classified as high (66.6% and above), medium (33.3 to 66.6%) and low (0 to 33.3%).

**Table 5. Knowledge gained by respondents after training (n=75).**

Knowledge Level	N	%
Low (0%-33.33%)	20	26.66
Medium(33.33%-66.66%)	35	46.66
High (66.6% and above)	20	26.66
Mean : 46.13 SD: 19.99		

It has been seen from the Table 5 that 26.66 percent of women fell under two extreme levels of knowledge gain low & high score percentages, while 46.66 per cent of respondents gained medium percent of knowledge.

**Table 6. Comparative mean scores of pre-training and post training knowledge of respondents.(N-75)**

Training areas	Pre-training (mean)	Post training (mean)	Difference	't'-value
Crop rotation & Intercropping	0.25	1.39	1.13	1.4998
Vermi compost	0.67	2.01	1.35	3.15824
Application of manure	0.65	1.99	1.33	1.32926
Use of neem oil	0.67	2.15	1.48	4.69188
Use of cow urine	0.20	1.83	1.63	8.24526

In order to ascertain the impact of training programme on gain in knowledge paired 't' test was employed. The pre and post mean knowledge scores of the trainees of the training was calculated and paired 't' value are presented in Table 6.

Statistically significant differences were found among pre and post training mean score of all the areas of training programme. The significant difference between pre training and post training mean score i.e. before and after the training programme confirms the fact that the respondents were able to gain sufficient knowledge at post training programme. The results of this study are in tune with the findings of Badodiya S.K (2011)

**Conclusion:** The significant increase in the knowledge of the farm women may be due to the intensive educational training efforts made by the trainers and also due to the realization of importance of these practices by the participants in raising the health and economic status as the subject matter and content of the training was very much closer to what the women do in their daily routine. Besides, the training package was made interesting and stimulating that it completely captured the attention and interest of trainees and motivated them to adopt practices to the maximum extent possible.

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Assistant Professor, Dept. of HECM, College of Home Science,  
ANGRAU, Hyderabad [chaitanya.benarji@gmail.com](mailto:chaitanya.benarji@gmail.com)  
Research Associate, AICRP Home Science, ANGRAU, Hyderabad.