

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING THE ATTITUDE OF FARM WOMEN TOWARDS BACKYARD POULTRY FARMING IN ERODE DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU

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Abstract: A study was carried out in Erode district of Tamilnadu to identify the factors accountable for the attitude of farm women towards backyard poultry farming. An attitude scale comprising of nine statements on backyard poultry farming was developed and applied to 60 women farmers of Erode district. The results revealed that a majority of the respondents were middle aged (65.70 %), had educated up to high school level (49.25%) and had high level of information seeking behaviour (58.40%). Almost an equal number of respondents belonged to both middle and high-income groups, had both agriculture and other occupations and lived in both nuclear and joint families. The distribution diagram with regards to their attitude showed that, majority belonged to the 'favourable' category (65.00 %) followed by 'highly favourable' (16.71%). Also it was found that, a meagre proportion (6.57%) of them belonged to 'unfavourable' category owing to the social constrains. When the relationship between the six independent variables and attitude of the respondents was studied, 'family-type' ($t = 2.5832$) and 'annual income' ($t = 4.3779$) had a positive and significant relationship with attitude. Based on the findings, implications were drawn for the extension agencies involved in promotion of backyard poultry farming.

Keywords: Backyard poultry farming, attitude, factors, Family type.

Introduction

Globally, poultry plays an important role providing supply of animal protein as meat and egg (Sonaiya et al., 2012). Poultry development in the country has taken a quantum leap in the last three decades. Though major share of the poultry products come from commercially reared improved breed birds, indigenous source of poultry eggs and meat are always appreciated for their taste and texture, in both rural and organised developed markets. Market studies show prices per kg live weight for these birds can be 50 –100 % higher than that of industrially produced birds. (Conroy *et al*)

According to Ogunlade *et al.* poultry raising is a very familiar activity among rural women in many countries. Women have been considered to be the predominant owners of rural poultry. Most women in the rural areas rear the indigenous types of domestic fowl in extensive system

of poultry production. Backyard poultry production serves as a small scale business for generating income controlled by women. The enterprise provides regular income using little inputs and the production can be solely managed by women in the household. Although rural poultry production cannot contribute any large income, it represents a very familiar skill to most of the poor women and it can help them in moving into a positive spiral of events that may lead them for elevation of their socio-economic status.

Though rural backyard poultry is the most potent source for subsidiary incomes for landless poor farmers, it has always been neglected. This is in spite of the fact that their products carry a much higher price than that from commercial poultry.

The relatively slow growth of this promising enterprise, therefore, would lead the scientific forum to believe that the farmers have an unfavourable attitude towards this enterprise. Nevertheless, before arriving at such a conclusion, it would be appropriate to assess the attitude of farmers, since unfavourable attitude of farmers has been the major cause for non-adoption of several livestock technologies (Kaura 1967).

Attitude has been described as an evaluative disposition towards some object or subject which has consequences for how a person will act toward the attitude object (Van den Ban and Hawkins 1986).

Taking these points in to consideration, the need for learning about the attitude of farm women towards backyard poultry farming was felt. Hence, the present study was taken up with the following objectives.

- To study the socio – personal profile of backyard poultry women farmers in Erode District of Tamil Nadu.
- To ascertain their attitude towards backyard poultry farming and the factors associated with it.

Methodology

In the present study, attitude was operationalized as the mental disposition of respondents about backyard poultry farming with different levels and degrees of favourableness or unfavourableness. An Equal Appearing Interval scale (Thurstone and Chave 1929) consisted of randomly arranged nine statements (Table 1) to measure the attitude of farmers which was developed by Prathap 2004 was adopted with little modification to measure the attitude of farm women towards backyard poultry farming. The scale was administered to 60 randomly selected women farmers of Erode district.

Table 1. Attitude scale

S. No.	Statement	Nature of the statement
1	Poultry rearing at the backyard is a nuisance	Unfavourable
2	Housing costs for poultry is too high	Unfavourable
3	Backyard Poultry have a poor growth rate	Unfavourable
4	There is less market potential for rabbits	Unfavourable
5	Desi birds are less vulnerable for many diseases	Favourable
6	Backyard poultry rearing requires less labour	Favourable
7	Backyard poultry rearing provides good quality protein for the family members	Favourable
8	Backyard poultry rearing provides gainful self employment	Favourable
9	Backyard poultry will fetch high market price	Favourable

Data were collected with the help of a pretested interview schedule by personally interviewing the respondents. The respondents were asked to indicate their state of mind on a 3-point continuum viz., 'Agree', 'Undecided' and 'disagree' against each item in the scale. The scores thus obtained will be the individual's attitude score. Further, based on discussion with extension and poultry science experts and review of literature the independent variables viz., age, education, occupation, annual income, family type and innovativeness and the dependent variable viz., attitude were selected. The respondents rated each item in the scale, thus conveying their attitudes toward the object under study, i.e., backyard poultry farming. Finally, these ratings were summed up to get a score for the individual. Statistical techniques employed in this study included simple percentage, correlation coefficient and regression analysis.

Results and Discussion

Socio personal profile of the respondents

The socio personal details of the respondents were collected and they were distributed based on those details presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on their profile			
S.No	Demographic factor	Frequency	Percentage
1.	<i>Age</i>		
	Young	13	21.67
	Middle	39	65.00
	Old	8	13.33

2.	<i>Education</i>		
	Illiterate	3	5.00
	Primary	16	26.67
	Middle	6	10.00
	High	29	48.33
	Higher secondary	6	10.00
3.	<i>Occupation</i>		
	Agriculture and allied	34	56.67
	Others	26	43.33
4.	<i>Annual Income</i>		
	Low	25	41.67
	Medium	26	43.33
	High	9	15.00
5.	<i>Type of family</i>		
	Joint family	48	80.00
	Nuclear family	12	20.00
6.	<i>Information seeking behaviour</i>		
	Low	5	8.27
	Medium	20	33.33
	High	35	58.40

It could be inferred from the above table that majority of the farm women involved in back yard poultry farming were young and had studied up to high school. The results also reveal that a majority of the respondents had agriculture and allied fields as their main occupation and they belongs to low to medium level of annual income. This might be the basis for most of them had taken an interest in poultry rearing as an additional income generating activity. Coming to the type of family, it could be observed that joint family system was predominant owing to the well structured social setup in the rural areas of agricultural community. This may be a reason for the existence of high information seeking behaviour of the respondents since they are living with all age group family members.

Attitude of farmers

The respondents were classified based on their attitude scores and the results are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on their attitude scores

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Highly Unfavourable (Very Low)	0	0.00
Unfavourable (Low)	4	6.66
Neutral	7	11.64
Favourable (High)	39	65.00
Highly favourable (Very high)	10	16.70

The results revealed that majority of the respondents possessed favourable attitude towards backyard poultry rearing. The results shows that the farmers have a positive attitude towards poultry farming at their backyard which may be because the respondents were convinced of the benefits of it as it requires less or no space and with minimum inputs. An analysis of the table shows that there are substantial portion (18.30 %) of respondents belongs to either neutral or having unfavourable attitude towards backyard poultry rearing. The reason for this may also be assumed that the farmers are still not fully convinced of all aspects of back yard poultry rearing owing to the social constrains and that they do have apprehensions on its advantages

Factors influencing the attitude of farmers towards rabbit farming

To find out the relationship between the socio personal characteristics of the respondents and their attitude, it was felt obligatory to explore the factors responsible for their relationship and simple correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were engaged for this purpose. The results concerning to this are shown in table 4.

Table 4. Relationship between the independent variables and attitude

S.No.	Independent variables	"r"values	"t"values
1	Age	0.0041	-0.4416
2	Education	0.0785	0.7549
3	Occupation	- 0.0715	0.7359
4	Family type	0.4463*	2.5832*
5	Annual Income	0.5248*	4.3779*
6	Information seeking behaviour	-0.1343	-0.0770
R^2 Value: 0.638; $F = 4.452$ * * Significant at 1 per cent			

The results reveal that the six variables taken together could explain for around 63 per cent (R^2 value being 0.638) of variation in the dependent variable, attitude. Among the six variables, 'Occupation' and 'Family type' had a positive and significant relationship with attitude. All other variables viz., age, education, annual income and information seeking behaviour did not show any relationship with the variable under study. The results were in concordance with a similar study by Ganpat and Bholasingh in 1999, who have found that education was positively associated with attitude towards farming, while age was not significantly associated. The results would indicate that farmers who have joint families with more members tend to have a favourable attitude towards poultry farming. Since backyard poultry farming needs less care and management, experts feel that it can be managed by family labour alone and this might have resulted in this significant relationship. Those farmers with joint families might have been convinced that poultry can be managed with family labour alone. Similarly, Kulkarni (1973) and Ghosh *et al* (2005) had reported that family type was significantly associated with the adoption of livestock production technologies.

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the farmers had a high level of favourableness towards backyard poultry farming and that the attitude of the farmers differed based on their 'family-type'. Based on the findings of the study the following implications were drawn.

- Since the farmers were young and literate, information on backyard poultry farming technologies could be disseminated through print media and the farmers can be taken on field trips and exposure visit to build up confidence in this venture.
- Since people living in joint families had a positive attitude towards backyard poultry rearing, it can be assumed that they had less labour constraints in maintaining their units. Hence, farmers living in joint families could be identified and advised to take up this at small scale initially, as they can be convinced that they could manage with family labour.
- Since the farmers are highly innovative, they can be taught about market strategies to obtain more income from their farm produce.

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