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PROCUREMENT OF INPUTS FOR POULTRY FARMING- AN ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION BY FARMERS

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Abstract: A study was conducted at the Namakkal district in Tamil Nadu to understand the extent of participation of poultry farmers and their families with regards to input purchase activities. A sample of 42 poultry farmers, 30 extension personnel and 30 technology developers were surveyed using an interview schedule and data were analysed using appropriate statistical tools. The results revealed that the major level of participation was from the family head followed by his wife and children. The inventories that meet the requirement of poultry farmers were perceived in range between 19 and 100 for most of the activities, whereas extension personnel's and technology developers
Keywords: Input purchase, farmers, farm women, extent of participation.

INTRODUCTION

Poultry is one of the fastest growing segments of the agricultural sector in India today. It has undergone a paradigm shift in structure and operation. A significant feature of India's poultry industry has been its transformation from a mere backyard activity into a major commercial activity in just about four decades (FAO, 2003) could be contributed to factors that include an ability to purchase inputs such as improved breeds, ability to purchase quality day old chicks, quality feed, vaccines, drugs and equipment and easily availability, etc., (Sharma *et al*., 2010). With this in view a study was conducted to identify the participation of poultry farmers and their families in accomplishing the input purchase activities. Along with this, the technology inventory for each of the input activities also recorded and their percentage that meets the requirement of farmers were also studied.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at the Namakkal Block of Namakkal District in Tamil Nadu. Based on the number of poultry farmers in each Panchayat, the Panchayats were grouped into three categories and 42 poultry farmers were chosen using the principle of stratified

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sampling. The extension personnel's were the extension officers of State Animal Husbandry Departments, NGOs and input supply agencies and the technology developers that included 30 scientists of Veterinary College and Research institute, Namakkal. The poultry farmers were asked to indicate the degree to which they are actually involved in each poultry farm activity on a three - point continuum, which were regularly, occasionally and never and were scored as 2, 1 and 0 respectively. This formed the index to the extent of participation in each of the activities for a particular poultry farmer. The technology inventories were gathered from review of literature and in consultation with scientist and extension personnel. They both were asked to indicate whether the technology available would meet the requirement of particular activity and were assigned score '1' for "YES" and 'zero' for "NO". The data were collected from the respective poultry farmers, extension personnel's and poultry farmers with a well structured and pre- tested interview schedule prepared for the respective respondents and analysed accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participation of head was found to be most in all the activities of input purchase. This was followed by children, brother and his wife. Mother and labour had no role in the input purchase activity. The participation of wife was not even $1/10^{th}$ the participation of head. This is in accordance with the findings of Okoh, 2010. Unlike commercial poultry farming, the role of women in extensive sheep and goat rearing is more, as it involves comparatively lesser number of animals (low stocking density) as well minimal managemental technologies.

Even though, the head of the family engages in most of the major farming activities, the role of children in the commercial poultry units is quite significant. The services of children of age group below 20 years, are utilized in few of the financial transactions (such as handing over DD, etc.), indenting for purchase of chicks and purchase of emergency medicines and for replacement of farm utensils (fused bulb, repaired waterer, etc.). This kind of involvement makes more social mobility now-a-days. Thus involving the younger generation in the farming activities and their timely services to cater the demands is a healthy trend that it will help them to become a future entrepreneur.

Table 1. Extent of participation of poultry farmers and their families in input purchase activities of poultry farming

n = 42

S. No	Activity	Head	Wife	Others				Total	H- Value
				C	B	M	L		
1.	Decision regarding type of poultry strain	71	2	10	4	-	-	14	
2	Purchase of chicks	71	2	10	4	-	-		
3	Purchase of brooder for deep litter house	77	1	10	3	-	-	13	14
4	Purchase of feeders and waterers	77	1	9	3	-	-	12	18.29"
5	Purchase of electric bulbs	77	1	9	3	-	-	12	
6	Purchase of medicines	77	2	4	2	-	-	6	
7	Purchase of litter materials	77	2	4	2	-	-	6	

** Significant at 1% level (Table value at 1% level: 9.1) C: Children, B: Brother, M: Mother, L: Labour

Most of the activities were equipment purchase, strain selection and purchase of chicks and purchase of litter material as given in Table.1. The H - value also indicated that there is a significant difference with regard to input purchase activities. Similar findings were reported by Helen (1990).

From Table.2 it was understood the technology inventories for input purchase the percent of inventory meeting the farmers' requirement ranged from 80 to 100 except for two activities namely purchase of chicks and purchase of brooder. The reasons could be that the farmers were not aware regarding the selection of chicks for purchase like body weight, appearance etc., or they were forced to purchase whatever was available at the time of purchase. The trend in chick demand has been created by the poultry hatcheries forced the farmers to buy the available chicks in order to stick on to the business. For brooder, it could be that the brooder was not available due to increased demand or other reasons.

Table 2: Technology inventory of poultry farming regarding input purchase

S. No	Activity	Technology	Meets the requirements as perceived by					
			Farmers n = 42		Extension Personnel n = 30		Technology Developers n = 30	
			No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Decision regarding type of poultry strain	Choosing poultry strain based on published reports, enquiry with experienced farmers and extension official	38	90.5	23	76.67	27	89.90
2	Purchase of chicks	Purchase of chicks by observing specific attributes like 35 gm body weight, closed abdomen, discarding weaklings, vent pasting and avoiding chicks having diseased symptoms	8	19	29	96.67	26	86.67
3	Purchase of brooder for deep litter house	Purchase of readymade brooders for deep litters	12	28.6	24	79.92	30	100
4	Purchase of feeders and waterers	Purchase of readymade feeders and waterers	41	97.6	23	76.67	30	100
5	Purchase of electric bulbs	Purchase of standard electric bulbs	34	80.9	23	76.67	29	96.67
6	Purchase of medicines	Purchase of standard medicines	39	92.8	26	86.67	27	89.99
7	Purchase of litter materials	Purchase of well dried litter materials	42	100	25	83.33	23	76.67

CONCLUSION

Most of the activities were performed by head followed by the children, brother and wife. The participation of women was almost nil indicates that their knowledge in purchase of inputs was less. The participatory role of women was less which may be attributed to the fact that they were over-qualified for performing such labour oriented activities. The poor acceptance of technology inventory in chick selection suggests that their knowledge needs to be enriched so as to aid them purchasing the good chicks for the farms. With regards to technology dissemination, the younger group (children) can be targeted for providing "on farm training programme in poultry feeding" to bring about desirable change in poultry farming. Extension agencies and workers will need to exercise a more proactive and participatory role focusing more attention on women.

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