

INDIGENOUS GRAIN STORAGE PRACTICES ADOPTED BY FARM WOMEN

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About 70 per cent of total foodgrain production is retained and stored by farmers for households consumption, use as seed, feed for cattle and payment of wages to labourers etc. in our country. Yet, the quality of stored grains is not so good, and hence, preserving the harvested crops without loss or damage has always been a problem of national importance.

In our country, indigenous practices of grain storage have always been and are still followed because it is supposed that these practices are useful in control of pests of stored grains and also preserving the quality of grains stored in the households. Rural farm women actively participate in storing the foodgrains in their houses. Keeping this in view, the present study was undertaken with the following objectives: -

1. To identify the types of grain storage structures used by farm women.
2. To identify various indigenous grain storage practices in use in rural households.

METHODOLOGY

The study is completely field research by following participant observations. The place of study was purposively selected Ballabgarh and Faridabad blocks of District of Faridabad of Haryana state. Eight villages were selected randomly for the purpose of investigation. Farm women having the age more than 40 years and engaged in using the indigenous practices for storage of foodgrains had been identified. For the study, 25 farm women from each village were selected randomly, hence, formed the sample size as 200. The participant observation was collected with the help of interview schedule. The respondents

were personally interviewed. Later, the data were tabulated and analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The different types of storage structures were used by farm women for storage of foodgrains particularly for cereals and pulses. The data presented Table-1 showed that an overwhelming majority of farm women used gunny bags (100%) and plastic bags (94%) for storing of foodgrains. The use of storage drums (60.5%) and metal bins (51%) was found to be common for storage of foodgrains. About one-fourth of the respondents used the traditional grain storage methods like earthen kothis (23%) and earthen pitchers (18.5%). Only 9 per cent of the farm women stored foodgrains in heaps.

Table 1. Types of Grain Storage Structures used by Farm Women N = 200

Sl. No.	Type of grain storage structures	Respondents	
		No.	Percentage
1.	Gunny bags	200	100.0
2.	Plastic bags	188	94.0
3.	Metal bins	102	51.0
4.	Earthen rothis	46	23.0
5.	Storage drums	121	60.5
6.	Earthen pitchers	37	18.5
7.	Bulk heap	18	9.0

The above findings indicated that the use of gunny bags, plastic bags, metal bins and storage drums was common for storing the cereals and pulses in rural households. Even today, nearly one-fourth of the rural farm women were found to be making use of traditional grain storage structures like earthen kothis and earthen pitchers.

Sonelal and Srivastava (1986) and Bhople and Darbha (1999) had also reported that metallic bins

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were mostly used for storage of small quantities of wheat.

Table 2. Indigenous grain storage practices in use

N = 200

Sl. No.	Name of practice	Respondents	
		No.	Percentage
1.	Dry neem (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>) leaves for wheat grains	187	93.5
2.	Match sticks in metal bins for wheat grains	59	29.5
3.	Mustard oil for pulses	51	25.5
4.	Turmeric rhizomes for pulses	44	22.0
5.	Common salt in rice	101	50.5
6.	Mixing of sand in gram	178	89.0

The data about the indigenous practices of grain storage used in rural households is presented in Table 2. It indicates that majority of farm women (93.5%) used dry neem leaves for checking the damage in stored food grains by insects i.e. lesser grain borer (*Rhizopertha dominica*), khapra (*Trogoderma granarium*) and rice weevil (*Sitophilus oryzae*) while 89 per cent of the farm women mixed the sand with gram to avoid the loss due to dhora (*Callosobruchus chinensis*) in storage. About half (50.5%) of the farm women used common salt in stored rice for the control of Angoumois grain moth (*Sitotroga cerealella*) while 29.5 percent of the farm women used match sticks in stored wheat in metal bins for checking the damage due to insects like sursari, khapra and rice weevil. About one fourth (25.5%) of the farm women applied mustard oil for storage of pulses for the control of dhora. The use

of termeric rhizomes for the control of dhora pest in stored pulses was found to have been made by 22 per cent of the farm women.

CONCLUSION

The findings of present study indicated that use of gunny bags, plastic bags, metal bins and storage drums was common for storing the cereals and pulses in rural households. Even today, one-fourth of the farm women were found to be making use of traditional grain storage structures like earthen kothis and earthen pitches. It shows that use of scientific storage structures is not yet very much popular among farm women for storing the food grains in rural areas. Further, it was seen that use of dry neem leaves in wheat storage and mixing of sand in gram were found to be common indigenous practices among farm women. Use of common salt in rice, use of mustard oil in pulses, use of termeric rhizomes in pulses and use of match sticks in metal bins for storage of wheat were also some of the less commonly prevalent grain storage practices in the rural areas. The important reasons behind use of traditional grain storage practices might be – their usages since olden days by the forefathers, no need for specialized knowledge and safety in use. Thus, there is a need to create awareness about improved storage structures and scientific grain storage practices among rural families through organisation of trainings, campaigns and demonstrations by various extension agencies working in the operational area.

REFERENCES

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