

Personal Attributes Affecting Training Needs Perception of Buffalo Farmers

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ABSTRACT

Farmers of Haryana state have witnessed increasing reliance on the animal husbandry owing to a variety of reasons. This has resulted in phenomenal growth in the sector over the past few years. However the productivity of buffaloes is still poor. It is suggested that to bring about desirable increase in the productivity of milch animals, there is an emerging need to train farmers for better management of their animals. However, before initiating large scale training programmes it becomes crucial to ascertain the training needs of farmers scientifically. The present study is an attempt to ascertain the training needs perception of buffalo owners and to understand its association with their personal attributes. The study was conducted in Haryana state and data was collected through structured schedule after appropriate sampling. It is concluded that mass media exposure, opinion leadership and extension contact were having significant impact on the knowledge level of farmers and thereby reduced training needs perception. Similarly formal education reduced the training needs of the farmers. Further, training needs perception did not vary across age groups and caste.

Keywords: Training needs; Buffalo husbandry; Personal attributes;

Of late, there has been growing significance of mixed livestock production systems in Haryana. With the progressive decline in the average land holding and growing uncertainties of agricultural production, the dairy animal (especially buffalo) husbandry has become the mainstay of the poor and small farmers in Haryana. Subsequently, the state has witnessed a steady growth in the number of milch animals over the years. This has resulted in high per-capita availability of milk in the state (almost 640 gms). Although there has been phenomenal growth in milk production in Haryana but the average productivity of buffaloes is still on the lower side. Therefore, the capacity building of dairy farmers to apply newer ideas and techniques of production becomes crucial. Augmentation of the dairy animal productivity can be brought about by improving the knowledge and skill of farmers on a continuing basis through regular training programmes. However, before designing such training programmes on large scale, it becomes imperative that the training needs of farmers are

appropriately ascertained. With this backdrop in mind, the present study was conducted to ascertain the overall training needs of the farmers regarding recommended buffalo husbandry practices. The article presents a part of the study i.e. personal attributes affecting the training need perception of buffalo farmers.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in four selected districts viz. Kaithal, Sonapat, Faridabad and Jind of Haryana state. One block from each selected district and two villages from each selected block were chosen randomly. The farmer rearing at least one milch buffalo was considered as the respondent for the study. The total sample size for this study was 240 farmers. The data were collected through well structured pre-tested interview schedule during 2004-05.

To identify the training needs of buffalo owners structured interview schedule was developed incorporating all the major buffalo husbandry technological components. These were placed into the

four heads namely, breeding, feeding, management, and health care. The buffalo owners were asked to give their preference on a three point continuum on the areas in which they required training as ‘Most needed’, ‘‘Needed’’ and Least needed’’ with the score value of 3, 2 and 1, respectively.

The schedule had built in provision for recording of information about personal attributes of respondents. These included age, education, caste, land holding, extension contact, mass media exposure, risk orientation, economic motivation, opinion leadership and attitude towards buffalo husbandry.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents classified on the basis of their land holding.

S. No.	Variables	Category	Landless (n=95)		Upto 2ha (n=105)		More than 2ha (n=40)	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Age	Young	15	15.79	17	16.19	4	10.00
		Middle	55	57.89	62	59.04	19	47.50
		Old	25	26.32	26	24.77	17	42.50
2	Education	Illiterate	42	44.21	21	20.00	9	22.50
		Low	18	18.95	16	15.24	3	7.50
		Medium	31	32.63	61	58.09	24	60.00
3	Caste	Higher	4	4.21	7	6.67	4	10.00
		Lower	66	69.48	4	3.80	0	0.00
		Middle	26	27.37	35	33.35	8	20.00
4	Land holding	Higher	3	3.15	66	62.85	32	80.00
		Landless	95	100	-	-	-	-
		Upto 2 ha	-	-	105	100	-	-
5	Extension contact	More than 2 ha	-	-	-	-	40	100
		Low	79	83.15	73	69.53	19	47.50
		Medium	14	14.73	25	23.80	13	32.50
6	Mass media exposure	High	2	2.12	7	6.67	8	20.00
		Low	58	61.05	51	48.57	17	42.50
		Medium	25	26.32	44	41.90	20	50.00
7	Attitude towards recommended buffalo husbandry practices	High	12	12.63	10	9.53	3	7.50
		Unfavourable	21	22.11	45	42.85	13	32.50
		Neutral	40	42.11	50	47.62	21	52.50
8	Opinion leadership	Favourable	34	35.78	10	9.53	6	15.00
		Poor	17	17.89	22	20.95	18	45.00
		Moderate	12	12.64	14	13.33	7	17.50
9	Risk orientation	High	66	69.47	69	65.72	15	37.50
		Low	39	41.06	8	7.62	11	27.50
		Medium	45	47.36	57	54.29	16	40.00
10	Herd size	High	11	11.58	40	38.09	13	32.50
		Small	79	83.15	53	50.47	5	12.50
		Medium	16	16.85	41	39.05	21	52.50
11	Economic motivation	Large	0	0.00	11	10.48	14	35.00
		Low	19	20.00	9	8.57	6	12.50
		Medium	65	68.43	34	32.38	9	22.50
12	Socio-economic status	High	11	11.57	62	59.05	25	62.50
		Low	34	35.79	30	28.57	5	12.50
		Medium	58	61.05	51	48.57	24	60.00
		High	3	3.16	24	22.86	11	27.50

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the respondents: Profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. It is evident from the table that majority of the farmers were middle aged, having medium level of education, poor extension contact and low mass media exposure. Majority of farmers were having low to medium herd size. Medium to high level of economic motivation was also observed with medium level of risk orientation.

Relationship between personal attributes and training needs of dairy farmers regarding recommended buffalo husbandry practices: To determine relationship between personal attributes and their training needs regarding recommended buffalo husbandry practices, zero order correlation coefficients were worked out (Table 2). It may be noted that education, socio-economic status, extension contact, mass media exposure, attitude towards recommended buffalo husbandry practices, opinion leadership, risk orientation and economic motivation were important variables significantly affecting the training needs regarding breeding practices. The degree of association is low but negative. Age, caste and herd size appeared to have no association with the training needs perception scores for breeding practices. Similar findings have earlier been reported by *Lakshmikantha Rao et al. (1986)* and *Deepak (2004)*.

Similarly, in case of recommended feeding practices, education, socio economic status, extension contact, mass media exposure, attitude towards recommended buffalo husbandry practices, opinion leadership and risk orientation were found to have negative and statistically significant relationship with training needs score. Expectedly, the picture is more or less similar in case of training needs perception about recommended management practices. Almost all the variables were significantly negatively associated with the training need scores of the respondents. However, caste and herd size did not appear to exert significant influence as indicated by the degree of association. These findings are in line with the findings of *Gacche et al. (1992)* and *Deepak (2004)*.

Similarly, almost all the variables except age and caste studied appeared crucial in significantly affecting the training needs perception about health care practices. *Patil et al (2009)* had earlier reported in a study in Nagpur district that majority of farmers perceived training needs in healthcare and disease prevention as 'most important'. Similarly, *Sharma et al (2009)* had earlier reported that training about healthcare practices was 'most desired' compared to others areas like breeding, management, etc. It can be hypothesized here that the complexity of the information about recommended healthcare practices renders the area

Table 2. Relationship between personal attributes and training needs perception of respondents

S. No.	Variables	Training needs				
		Breeding practices 'r'	Feeding practices 'r'	Management practices 'r'	Healthcare practices 'r'	Overall practices 'r'
1.	Age	0.058	0.102	0.143*	0.105	0.121
2.	Education	-0.332**	-0.344**	-0.392**	-0.351**	-0.417**
3.	Caste	-0.104	-0.141*	-0.098	-0.059	-0.122
4.	Socio-Economic status	-0.270**	-0.243**	-0.279**	-0.318**	-0.321**
5.	Herd size	0.056	-0.103	-0.120	-0.168**	-0.128*
6.	Extension contact	-0.288**	-0.347**	-0.369**	-0.402**	-0.410**
7.	Mass media exposure	-0.426**	-0.404**	-0.466**	-0.459**	-0.512**
8.	Attitude towards R.B.H.P.	-0.274**	-0.300*	-0.229**	-0.289**	-0.317**
9.	Opinion leadership	-0.316**	-0.350**	-0.348**	-0.374**	-0.405***
10.	Risk orientation	-0.215**	-0.289**	-0.229**	-0.215**	-0.281**
11.	Economic motivation	-0.296**	-0.336**	-0.349**	-0.315**	-0.382**

* Significant at 5% level of probability

** Significant at 1% level of probability

rather difficult to a majority of farmers. At the same time farmers appear to have an urge to have more of understanding about these issue. These two factors together could be possibly put forth to understand the observed association. However, further studies to ascertain the cause can only uncover the underlying truth.

Pooled analysis of all the results reveal that education, socio-economic status, extension contact, mass media exposure, attitude towards recommended buffalo husbandry practices, opinion leadership, risk orientation and economic motivation were having significant negative moderate relationship with overall training needs perception. Herd size was feebly but negatively associated with overall training needs. Caste and education were statistically insignificantly associated.

On the basis of above findings, it is suggested that field functionaries of concerned departments should take into consideration the fact that there are variations across different categories especially while implementing the training programmes for buffalo owners. This will help in designing programmes which are more suited to the farmer groups. This will certainly enhance the efficacy and efficiency of such programmes. Similar observations have earlier been made by *Singh and Godara (2002)*, *Deepak (2004)* and *Rajkumar (2005)*.

Contribution of personal attributes towards training needs perception: To trace out predictive abilities of all eleven independent variables on training needs of buffalo owners about recommended buffalo husbandry practices, multiple regression was worked out and regression equation was fitted accordingly (Table 3).

In case of training need perception about breeding practices, it was observed that only mass media exposure had significantly contributed to the overall variation observed (47.5 per cent). Similar results were earlier reported by *Deepak (2004)*. On the other hand, in case of feeding practices no individual variable appeared to have major influence as indicated by 't' values. However, the observed R² value was 0.459 indicating 45.9 percent of variation was on account of variables studied. Whereas in case of management practices- caste, mass media exposure and economic motivation had contributed significantly to the observed 53.3 percent variation.

Similarly in case of health care practices - caste, socio-economic status, mass media exposure and economic motivation had significant value of 't' for 'b'. The R² value also indicated that all the eleven independent variables accounted for 54.6 percent variation towards training needs about health care practices. The calculated F value (8.78) was statistically significant. Similar findings had earlier been reported by *Deepak (2004)*.

Table 3: Regression coefficients between personal attributes and training needs perception of respondents

S. No.	Variables	Training needs									
		Breeding practices		Feeding practices		Management practices		Healthcare practices		Overall practices	
		'b'	't'	'b'	't'	'b'	't'	'b'	't'	'b'	't'
1.	Age	-0.021	1.081	-0.011	0.457	0.008	0.354	0.004	0.282	-0.019	0.293
2.	Education	-0.123	0.761	-0.213	1.071	-0.188	0.974	-0.005	0.037	-0.528	0.957
3.	Caste	0.474	1.569	0.064	0.174	0.727	2.021*	0.791	3.339**	2.057	1.998*
4.	Socio-Economic status	-0.068	1.531	0.003	0.053	-0.044	0.829	-0.079	2.253*	-0.188	1.239
5.	Herd size	0.429	1.295	-0.036	0.088	-0.091	0.232	-0.100	0.385	0.202	0.180
6.	Extension contact	0.027	0.275	-0.158	1.296	-0.119	1.006	-0.129	1.654	-0.380	1.118
7.	Mass media exposure	-0.333	3.018**	-0.182	1.352	-0.389	2.962**	-0.210	2.422*	-1.114	2.965**
8.	Attitude towards R.B.H.P.	-0.047	0.476	-0.069	0.569	0.169	1.433	0.018	0.227	0.070	0.209
9.	Opinion leadership	-0.024	0.622	-0.053	1.137	-0.053	1.168	-0.044	1.468	-0.172	1.338
10.	Risk orientation	0.051	0.631	-0.019	0.192	0.123	1.293	0.070	1.111	0.225	0.824
11.	Economic motivation	-0.131	1.573	-0.167	1.637	-0.297	2.988**	-0.139	2.127*	-0.734	2.585**
	R ² =Value	0.475		0.459		0.533		0.546		0.574	
	F=Value	6.03**		5.83**		8.22**		8.78**		10.17**	

In totality it appears that only three variables namely caste, mass media exposure and economic motivation had significantly contributed towards 57.4 percent of variation along with highly significant F value (10.17). It can be suggested that field functionaries should consider mass media exposure and economic motivation as potential variables affecting training needs of farmers while designing and implementing animal husbandry related training programmes.

CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that training needs of the farmers vary with the changing personal attributes of the farmers. Negative moderate association with mass

media exposure, opinion leadership and extension contact indicates that all these are having significant impact on the knowledge level of farmers and thereby reduced the training needs perception. Similarly formal education also seems to have reduced the training needs of the farmers. Further, training needs perception did not vary across age groups and caste. In other words, farmers of all caste and age group have uniform requirements for training in different areas of buffalo husbandry. This fact should be taken into consideration while formulating training programmes for livestock farmers. This will help in better organization and efficiency of training programmes.

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