

CORRELATES OF KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF FARMERS IN SONITPUR DISTRICT OF ASSAM

J. SARMA¹ ; S. PAYENG² ; J. SAHARIA³ ; M. N. ROY AND L. BORA
Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Assam Agricultural University,
Sonitpur, Napam, Tezpur- 784028

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted on 100 broiler farmers of Sonitpur district of Assam in order to find out their socio-economic status, level of knowledge in scientific broiler farming and relationship of knowledge level with their socio-economic status. It was revealed that majority of the respondents were young having passed high school, with marginal land holding, small flock size, short length of experience in broiler farming and low level of participation in training and low level of extension contact and low mass media exposure. Majority had low level of knowledge in scientific broiler farming and two variables viz. Education and experience were found to have significant relation with knowledge level.

Key words : Broiler farming, knowledge, socio-economic status.

Poultry farming plays an important role in improving livelihood, food security and poverty

¹Corresponding author & Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, E-mail : jadavsarma@yahoo.in

²KVK, Sonitpur, Assam

³ Professor, Department of Livestock Production & Management.

alleviation in rural and semi-urban communities in India and other developing countries of the world. It needs low investment and gives early return and hence is playing a significant role in the socio-economic development of farmers in the North-East India. It has emerged as the most profitable activity for self employment among rural youth in Assam. It has been estimated by poultry traders

that about 50,000 farmers have been adopting broiler farming with flock sizes of few hundreds to few thousands spread in Assam. Due to this poultry industry in the state has attained an annual growth rate of 15% at present. Many factors have contributed to this and knowledge of the farmers is certainly one such factor. Because acquiring knowledge and its management for augmenting productivity is obviously vital to the growth of Broiler industry. Therefore, the study was undertaken to assess the knowledge level of farmers in scientific feeding management and disease control.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Sonitpur district of Assam. There are seven development blocks in the district and five of them were selected at random. From each of the five selected blocks twenty broiler farmers were selected to make a total of 100 for the study. A farmer with at least 50 broilers was considered a broiler farmer for the study. All the farmers rearing 50 or more broiler birds in the five selected blocks constituted the universe of the study. A schedule was developed to collect data from the respondents. The first part of the schedule contained socio-economic variables of the farmers while the second part was used to collect data on the knowledge level of farmers on scientific feeding, management and disease control. The data thus collected were processed, tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis like Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Co-efficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 revealed that exactly half of the respondents were young in age in comparison to 26% being elder and 24% middle aged. Therefore, broiler farming in the district was dominated by unemployed youth below 36 years of age. Almost similar finding was reported by earlier workers⁵. Majority of the farmers were found to have passed High School (52%) in contrast to 26% having passed Higher Secondary, 6% graduated

themselves and the rest were below Middle school. But the findings⁵ revealed majority having Higher Secondary passed. In respect of land holding pattern of the respondents majority had marginal land holding while 20% and 34% were medium and small farmers and only 6% were landless labourers. But higher average land holding was reported^{2,5}. On the other hand majority farmers were found to large land holding³. In the area under study majority farmers were keeping small flock size (below 70 birds) which implies that most of them were keeping small number of birds only on trial basis and were likely to go for large scale production having achieved successful and encouraging results by themselves and building confidence in broiler enterprise. Majority of farmers had short length of experience (below 5 years). Similar finding was reported earlier⁵. However, contradictory finding was also reported with majority farmers having long experience¹. Exactly half of the respondents were found to have undergone low level of training (below 3 numbers) in scientific broiler farming. Similar findings were reported^{3&5}. Despite the existence of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra in the district over a decade such finding goes only to reveal a dismal picture in regards to farmers training. So far as extension contact and mass media exposure are concerned almost half of them had low extension contact and majority had low mass media exposure. Therefore performance of extension machinery in the district seems to be far from satisfactory since almost half remains unexposed to it. Similar is the case with mass media exposure despite the ICT revolution in the recent years since media access was found to be low. However no literature is available in this report.

Table 2 revealed that a large majority of the respondents (64%) had low knowledge level in scientific feeding, management and disease control in comparison to 24% having medium level of knowledge and 12% high knowledge level. This finding was contradicted by several where high level of knowledge of farmers in their respective

Knowledge level of farmers

studies was reported^{3&4}. Education of the respondents and their experience in the in broiler farming were found to have significant positive (5%) relation with their knowledge level for scientific broiler farming. Similar findings were reported by earlier workers^{1&4}. This findings indicate, that with

higher education the knowledge level of farmers tended to increase because they can easily grasp the subject. It is easily understandable that with longer experience in broiler farming, it may contribute in enhancing knowledge level.

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of the farmers

Traits	Category	Number	Percentage
Age	Young (Below 36 years)	50	50
	Middle (Between 36-43 years)	24	24
	Elder (Above 43 years)	26	26
Education	Illiterate	0	0
	Read up to primary	4	4
	Read M.E	12	12
	H.S.L.C	52	52
	H.S	26	26
Land holding	Graduate	6	6
	Landless (Below 1.5)	6	6
	Marginal (1.5 – 4.5)	40	40
	Small (4.5 – 7.5)	20	20
	Medium (7.5 – 15)	34	34
Flock size	Large (Above 15)	0	0
	Small (Below 70 birds)	56	56
	Medium (Between 70-90 birds)	24	24
Experience in broiler farming	Large (Above 90 birds)	20	20
	Short (Below 5)	62	62
	Medium (6-8)	20	20
Training	Long (Above 8)	18	18
	Low (Below 3)	54	54
	Medium (3-4)	22	22
Extension contact	High (Above 4)	24	24
	Low (Below 2)	50	50
	Medium (2-3)	24	24
Mass media exposure	High (Above 3)	26	26
	Low (Below 2)	60	60
	Medium (2-3)	14	14
	High (Above 3)	26	26

Table 3. Relational analysis of knowledge level of farmers with socio-economic variables

Variable	r
Age	0.042
Distance	0.061
Education	0.221
Land holding	0.027
Number of birds	0.071
Experience	0.230
Training	0.124
Extension contact	0.099
Mass media exposure	0.130

Table 2. Knowledge level of the farmers on scientific broiler farming

Category	Number	Percentage
Low (Below 13)	64	64
Medium (13-14)	24	24
High (Above 14)	12	12

CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that broiler industry in rural part of Sonitpur district is still in nascent stage depicting a scenario of mostly knowledge and resource poor, middle educated unemployed youth venturing for it on

small scale on trial basis whose such venture need to be assisted with all possible technological, financial, managerial and marketing related support from concerned quarters only to reinforce their faith in broiler industry as a profit generating enterprise and help build confidence in it.

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