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Effectiveness of skill development training on knowledge gain among rural youth in District Kupwara

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the global population has intensified the global demand for a highly skilled workforce, making effective skill development systems essential for improving employability, productivity and economic growth. Skill development plays a crucial role in reducing poverty and inequality by enhancing the capabilities of individuals to meet labour market demands. The present study was conducted in District Kupwara of the Kashmir Valley to assess knowledge gain among beneficiaries trained in three enterprises beekeeping, mushroom production and vermi-composting. A total of 108 respondents were selected, comprising 65 unit holders (30 beekeepers, 20 mushroom growers and 15 vermi-compost producers) and 43 non-unit holders (15 beekeeping trainees, 14 mushroom trainees and 15 vermi-composting trainees). In beekeeping, a majority (56.67%) of unit holders exhibited medium knowledge gain, followed by 36.66% with high gain and 6.67% with low gain, with a mean score of 37.42 (SD = 13.64). In contrast, non-unit holders showed predominantly low knowledge gain (60.00%), followed by medium (33.34%) and high (6.66%) levels. Among mushroom producers, 50.00% of unit holders reported medium knowledge gain, 35.00% high gain and 15.00% low gain, with a mean of 23.45 (SD = 6.62). Non-unit holders again showed lower improvement, with 64.28% registering low gain, 28.58% medium gain and 7.14% high gain. For vermi-composting, 46.67% of unit holders achieved high knowledge gain, 40.00% medium gain and 13.33% low gain, with a mean of 29.57 (SD = 5.15). Conversely, 64.28% of non-unit holders recorded low knowledge gain, followed by medium (28.58%) and high (7.14%) levels, with a mean score of 18.13 (SD = 4.01). The results clearly indicate that unit holders benefited more from training compared to non-unit holders across all enterprises.

Keywords: Beekeeping, mushroom production, vermi-composting, skill development, knowledge gain

Introduction

The world population continues to grow, from an estimated 7.7 billion people worldwide, the population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.9 billion in 2100. Continued rapid growth presents challenges for sustainable development, as the world population grows, so does the demand for jobs. As a result, the global skill shortage will automatically grow, too. To meet current needs and anticipate future demand, all countries need to improve skill development. J&K has more than 54% of population below 25 years of age. However it's formally skilled workforce is approximately 2% which is dismally low as compared to other states of India. Over the years, various initiatives have been taken to promote skill development in agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir. One of the major programme was NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission) launched during 2011 in Jammu and Kashmir. To provide trainings in field of agriculture (areas like agro-processing, seed production etc) NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission) has established partnership with different organizations including ASCI (Agriculture Skill

Council of India) (Anonymous, 2022 a). Another initiative for skill development in Jammu and Kashmir is JKRLM (Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission) started during 2018. This programme promotes entrepreneurship among rural youth by providing them with training and financial support to rural youth for setting up income generating units in agriculture sector.

KVKs (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) in Jammu and Kashmir have been instrumental in providing training to rural youth in agriculture and allied sectors under STRY (Skill Training of Rural Youth) for promoting entrepreneurship and income generation among rural youth. They provide trainings in areas like mushroom production, bee-keeping, vermicomposting, poultry farming, nursery management, farm machinery etc for setting up income generating units. KVKs (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) are playing major role in skill development in agriculture for rural youth. Kashmir division has 15 KVKs (Krishi Vigyan Kendra), out of which 14 are under the administrative control of SKUAST-Kashmir while KVK Baramulla is under the ambit of Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture (CITH),

Srinagar.

KVK (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) Kupwara in this regard is playing a significant role in promoting skill development in agriculture for rural youth. The Kendra has conducted numerous Skill Development Training Programs related to different enterprises such as Mushroom production, Scientific Bee-keeping, Vermicomposting, Tractor/ Farm Machinery and Training and Pruning of fruit nursery for helping rural youth to set up income generating units in agriculture and allied sectors.

Materials and Methods

The research design followed in the present study was ex-post facto design. The present study was conducted in District Kupwara of the Kashmir Valley to assess knowledge gain among beneficiaries trained in three enterprises beekeeping, mushroom production and vermicomposting. A total of 108 respondents were selected, comprising 65 unit holders (30 beekeepers, 20 mushroom growers and 15 vermi-compost producers) and 43 non-unit holders (15 beekeeping trainees, 14 mushroom trainees and 15 vermi-composting trainees).

KVK-Kupwara was selected purposively for conducting the study. It has conducted 60 Skill Development training

programmes during 2017-2021. Three enterprises were selected for the study on the basis of maximum number of trainings imparted in these enterprises and maximum number of beneficiaries covered under them. Apiculture industry in Kupwara is flourishing due to the ever increasing demand of honey in Domestic, National and International market. At present the District possesses 6000 colonies with 400 large and small bee keepers affiliated to this industry with an annual turnover of Rs.400 crore in the district. More youth are coming towards this sector. Mushroom Cultivation was introduced in the District for the first time in year 2018-19 beginning with orientation programmes for few interested farmers that included first hand interaction with successful Mushroom Growers from Punjab and Haryana. The annual production of mushroom has touched 2000 Quintals for the district. In vermicomposting 18 trainings have been imparted in vermicomposting by KVK Kupwara to the rural youth of district Kupwara, 342 beneficiaries were covered under those trainings and 30 beneficiaries out of 342 have established their own vermicompost units after attended the trainings.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of beneficiaries according to their gain in knowledge

Enterprise	Category	Criterion	Unit holders	Non-unit holders
			Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)
Bee- keeping	Low	Up to 27	2 (6.67)	9(60.00)
	Medium	28-44	17 (56.67)	5(33.34)
	High	Above 44	11 (36.66)	1 (6.66)
	Sub total		30 (100)	15 (100)
	Mean		37.42	23.86
	Standard Deviation		13.64	10.57
Mushroom Production	Low	Up to 13	3 (15.00)	9 (64.28)
	Medium	14-23	10 (50.00)	4 (28.58)
	High	Above 23	7 (35.00)	1 (7.14)
	Sub total		20 (100)	14 (100)
	Mean		23.45	11.14
	Standard Deviation		6.62	6.01
Vermi Composting	Low	Up to 18	2 (13.33)	9 (64.28)
	Medium	19-27	6(40.00)	4 (28.58)
	High	Above 27	7 (46.67)	1 (7.14)
	Sub total		15 (100)	14 (100)
	Mean		29.57	18.13
	Standard Deviation		5.15	4.10
	Grand total		65 (100)	43 (100)

The data in Table 1 reveals that in case of beekeeping, the majority (56.67%) of the unit holder had medium gain in knowledge followed by 36.66 per cent with high level of gain in knowledge and 6.67 per cent of the unit holders had low gain in knowledge after attending the trainings with mean 37.42 and standard deviation 13.64. Whereas majority (60.00%) of non- unit holders had low gain in knowledge, followed by 33.34 per cent with medium level of gain in knowledge and 6.66 per cent had high level of gain in knowledge after attending the trainings with mean 23.86 and standard deviation 10.57.

The majority (50.00%) of the unit holders from mushroom production had medium gain in knowledge followed by 35.00 per cent with high level of gain in knowledge and 15.00 per cent of the unit holders had low gain in

knowledge after attending the trainings with mean 23.45 and standard deviation 6.62. Whereas majority (64.28%) of non-unit holders had low gain in knowledge, followed by 28.58 per cent with medium level of gain in knowledge and 7.14 per cent had high level of gain in knowledge with mean 11.14 and standard deviation 6.01.

In case of vermicomposting, majority (46.67%) of the unit holders had high gain in knowledge followed by 40.00 per cent with medium level of gain in knowledge and 13.33 per cent of the unit holders had low gain in knowledge after attending the trainings with mean 29.57 and standard deviation 5.15. Whereas majority (64.28%) of non- unit holders had low gain in knowledge, followed by 28.58 per cent with medium level of gain in knowledge and 7.14 per cent had high level of gain in knowledge with mean 18.13

and standard deviation 4.01.

Conclusion

The study clearly establishes that the Skill Development Training programmes conducted by KVK Kupwara significantly enhanced the knowledge levels of rural youth across the selected enterprises. In all three sectors beekeeping, mushroom production, and vermicomposting unit holders consistently exhibited higher knowledge gain than non-unit holders, indicating that those who translated training into practical enterprise establishment benefited the most. Beekeeping and vermicomposting showed particularly strong improvement among unit holders, while non-unit holders across all enterprises reflected predominantly low knowledge gain. These findings highlight the effectiveness of hands-on training and the importance of continued technical support, follow-up, and enterprise-based mentoring to ensure that rural youth not only acquire skills but successfully apply them for income generation. Strengthening such structured skill development initiatives can further contribute to enhancing rural employability, entrepreneurship, and sustainable livelihood opportunities in District Kupwara.

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