

STUDY ON EXISTING STORAGE PRACTICES ADAPTED BY FARM WOMEN

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In India, rural women have a crucial involvement in diverse farming activities both within and outside the household. As most of these women are illiterate and deprived of any exposure to mass media and outside world, their knowledge is confined to traditional practices only. So, it is necessary to make women folk aware about the improved or scientific storage practices to minimize storage loss. The present study was undertaken to know the existing storage practices adopted by farm women and their awareness regarding safe storage practices.

The study was carried out in Jorhat district of Assam. A purposive and simple random sampling design was followed. Thirty household were selected on the basis of selected storage structures viz., *bharal* (store house), *duli* (bean) and gunny bag and cultivable land. Data were collected with the help of interview schedule.

Existing storage practices

Majority of the respondent (93.7%) stored paddy without straw and negligible percentage stored both with and without straw. It can be concluded that highest number of respondents stored paddy after threshing to make unshelled paddy available during rainy season without disruption. *Bharal* is one of the most commonly used stored structure used by 100% respondents, followed by gunny bag (66.7%) -Table 1. The study revealed that 50% respondents stored paddy for 9 to 12 months (Table 2) and 100% respondents admitted that the quantitative and qualitative loss of paddy occurred during storage due to rodents, insect and bird (Table 3).

Awareness regarding safe storage practices

It was found that 100% respondents were fully aware about drying and cleaning operations and 63.3% respondents were fully aware about use of dunnage. Majority of the respondents (93.3%) were not aware about the use of rodenticide and fumigation, whereas 56.7% respondents were not aware about the use of improved traditional as well as modern storage structures.

It can be concluded from the above study that there is a need to create awareness among farm women about improved storage structures and scientific storage practices by organizing effective educational activities such as group discussion, demonstration meeting etc.

Table 1. Type of storage structure structures used

N=30

Type of storage structure	Frequency	Percentage
Bharal	30	100
Duli	12	40
Gunny bag	20	66.7
Bharal, Duli and Gunny bag	7	23.3

Table 2. Storage period of paddy practiced

N=30

Storage period (months)	Frequency	Percentage
3-6	5	16.7
6-9	6	20.0
9-12	15	50.0
12 & above	4	13.3

Table 3. Perceived reasons of quantitative and qualitative loss by the respondents

N=30

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Rodent	30	100
Insect	30	100
Bird	30	100
Mould and Fungus	9	30
Humidity	5	16.6