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Level of Awareness and Knowledge of Farm Women about COVID-19 in Golaghat District of Assam

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ABSTRACT

The knowledge, attitudes and practices of people hold towards any contagious disease like COVID-19 play an integral role in determining a society's readiness to accept behavioural change measures related to prevention of disease. Therefore, an effort was made to study the awareness toward COVID-19 among the farm women of Golaghat district of Assam. For the purpose, 110 numbers of farm women were selected from 5 different blocks of Golaghat district of Assam. A well designed questionnaire was developed as per the guidelines provided by World Health Organization on measures to be followed on time to time and distributed among the participants. The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 35 to 45 yrs old (34.55%) and 72 of total respondents were of OBC categories. Majority of respondent's education level was recorded to be in high school level (53.64%). The results of the present study revealed that there was high level of awareness especially among the farmwomen regarding nature, symptoms and preventive measures to be taken for preventing the spread of disease. Majority of respondents (80.90%) were aware that COVID-19 is a viral disease and 79.10 per cent of the respondents opined that the main mode of transmission of the virus is via respiratory droplets. All the respondents were of the view that farmers should take their own food and water from home to their agricultural field, along with that soap and water should also to be brought (84.54%). Besides that 74.54 per cent respondents were in the view that wearing mask and social distancing is important during agricultural operations.

Key Words: COVID-19, Corona virus, Farm women, WHO.

INTRODUCTION

The corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) emerged in Wuhan, China at the end of the year 2019. Since then, it has spread to entire world and the WHO (World Health Organization) declared it as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020 (Sohrabi et al, 2020). In India, the first case of COVID-19 was detected on 30th January 2020 which was originated from China. The number of cases steadily increased and currently has the largest incidences among the Asian countries and also occupied the third position in the world. To control the incidence of disease the Prime Minister of India announced nationwide lock down for 21 days from 24th March midnight which was further extended till 3rd of May 2020. From 1st June 2020 the Govt. started unlocking with various levels of relaxations. Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy and source of livelihood, considering this, the Govt. has allowed the agricultural activities with the direction to follow the COVID protocol. Following the advisories issued by the Govt. of India as well as State Govt. the farmers of Assam has continued the agricultural activities during the lockdown period. The women folk of Assam also involved in most of the agricultural operations like other parts of the country. The knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of farm women toward COVID-19 play an integral role in determining a

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society's readiness to accept behavioural change measures to prevent the disease. The objective of the study was to assess the level of awareness and knowledge of the farm women about COVID 19 outbreak and the measures to be followed in order to prevent the virus.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

To study the awareness of COVID -19 among farm women, 110 numbers of farm women were selected from 5 different blocks of Golaghat district of Assam. A well designed questionnaire was developed as per the guidelines provided by World Health Organization on measures to be followed on time to time and distributed among the participants. The questionnaire consisted of three main themes namely socio-economic background, including age, caste, educational qualification and household income; knowledge about COVID-19 and practices relevant to COVID-19. These items include the participant knowledge about clinical characteristics, modes of transmission and preventive measures in respect of COVID-19. Participants were given Yes, No, or do not Know response options to these items. A correct response to an item was assigned 2 point, while an incorrect was assigned 0 and not sure response was assigned 1 point. The maximum possible total score ranged from 0-40, with a higher score indicating better knowledge about COVID-19.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio economic status (Table 1) revealed that the age of the respondents was from 20 to 60 yrs old and was distributed in 4 categories as follows: 20 to 25 yrs (11.82%), 25 to 35 yr (29.09%), 35 to 45 yr (34.55%) and 45 to 60 yr (24.55%). Among the respondents 65.45 per cent i.e. 72 nos. were of OBC categories, while 23.64 per cent were of general category and 10.91 per cent belonged to the category of ST/SC. Majority of respondents had the education high school level (53.64%) followed by middle level (15.36%) and HS level (13.64%). It was recorded that 43.64 per cent of the respondent's income was Rs. 2-3 lakh/annum, 26.36 per cent respondent's income was Rs. 1-2 lakh/annum, 23.64 per cent respondent's income was less than Rs. 1 lakh/annum and only 6.36 per cent respondent's income was more than Rs. 4 lakh/annum.

The data (Table 2) revealed that an overwhelming majority of participants (80.90%) were aware that COVID-19 is a viral disease 9.09 per cent of them believed that it is not a viral disease and for 10 per cent of them it is not known. Cent percent of them were aware that it is first detected in the country China. Around 79.10 per cent people responded that COVID-19 is contagious but around 13.63 per cent people responded that COVID-19 is not contagious and 7.27 per cent people had no idea about it. None of them able to explained full form of COVID-19. The main mode of transmission of the virus is via respiratory droplets which were answered correctly by 79.10 per cent of the respondents. Almost similar result has been opined by Modi *et al* (2020). The disease COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets and personal contact with the infected person (Wang *et al,* 2020). Majority of respondent (82.73%) recorded that respiratory droplets spreads through sneezing and coughing and through touching the contaminated surfaces (60.91%). cold, cough and fever are considered as main symptoms of COVID-19 by 95.45 per cent of respondents and 25.45 per cent respondents believes that COVID-19 patient unable to recognize smell.

It was important to observe that 90.91 per cent responded that COVID-19 positive mother can not breastfeed her infants. Most of the respondents (79.91%) believed that they could prevent from COVID–19 infection by adopting collective practices including wearing masks, frequent hand washing with soap and maintaining social distancing of at least one meter (78.18%) however, 40.91 per cent showed inclination to single practice wearing mask and hand washing with soap (25.45%). Social distancing and maintaining hygiene with alcohol-based sanitizers is the best way to prevent the spread of this virus (Yang *et al,* 2019). Sixty nine percent of respondents were aware of that immune

Table 1. Socio economic profile of respondents. N=110

Sr. No.	Particulars	No	Percentage
1.	Age (yr)		
a)	20-25	13	11.82
b)	25-35	32	29.09
c)	35-45	38	34.55
d)	45-60	27	24.55
2.	Caste		
a)	General	26	23.64
b)	OBC	72	65.45
c)	ST/SC	12	10.91
3.	Education		0.00
a)	Illiterate	-	
b)	Primary	10	9.09
c)	Middle	18	16.36
d)	High School	59	53.64
e)	Higher Secondary	15	13.64
f)	Graduate	8	7.27
5.	Annual Income		
a)	Less than 1 lakh	26	23.64
b)	1-2 lakh	29	26.36
c)	2-3 lakh	48	43.64
d)	4 lakh and above	7	6.36

system can be boosted by vitamin and mineral and 43.63 per cent of them were aware of that Vitamin C can prevent infection of Corona Virus. Most of the participants were also taking precautions such as avoiding crowds, market place and religious places (87.27%). All the respondents were in the view that farmers should take their own food and water from home to their operational field, along with that soap and water should also be brought (84.54%). Besides that 74.54 per cent respondents were in the view that wearing mask and social distancing is important during agricultural operations.

CONCLUSION

Awareness of people at grass root level is going to be crucial in preventing the spread of very contagious disease like COVID–19 as which otherwise lacks effective treatment, vast public awareness campaigns are key to fight against it. The results of the present study revealed that there was high level of awareness especially among the farmwomen might be because of awareness programmes carried out by Govt. of India, State Govt. as well as different organization including Krishi Vigyan Kendras through electronic and social media.

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Table 2 Knowledge level of farm women of Golaghat district of Assam towards COVID-19

Sr. No.	Item	Yes	Per cent	No	Per cent	Do not Know	Per cent
1	Corona Virus is a Viral disease	89	80.90	10	9.09	11	10
2	COVID -19 first case was detected in China	110	100	0	0	0	0
3	COVID-19 is a contagious disease	87	79.10	15	13.63	8	7.27
4	Do you know the full form of COVID -19	0	0	110	100	0	0
5	Main mode of transmission of the virus is via respiratory droplets	87	79.10	12	10.90	11	10
6	Respiratory droplets spreads through sneezing and coughing	91	82.73	5	4.54	14	12.73
7	COVID -19 can also be transmitted by touching the contaminated surfaces	67	60.91	30	27.27	13	11.82
8	Cold, cough and fever are symptoms of COVID -19	105	95.45	2	1.82	3	2.73
9	COVID-19 patient unable to recognize smell	28	25.45	6	5.45	76	69.10
10	Can a COVID positive mother breastfed her infant	2	1.82	100	90.91	8	7.27
11	COVID–19 infection can be prevented wearing masks	45	40.91	65	59.09	0	0
12	Frequent hand washing with soap can also prevent infection of COVID -19	28	25.45	70	63.63	12	10.91
13	Maintaining social distancing of at least one meter is also important factor to prevent COVID 19	86	78.18	4	3.63	20	18.18
14	COVID–19 infection can be prevented by adopting collective practices including wearing masks, frequent hand washing with soap, and maintaining social distancing of at least one meter	87	79.91	5	4.54	18	16.36
15	Immune system can be boosted by vitamin and mineral	76	69.10	15	13.36	19	17.27
16	Vitamin C can prevent infection of Corona Virus	48	43.63	33	30.00	29	26.36
17	Avoiding crowds, market place and religious places are important to prevent the spread of COVID-19	96	87.27	2	1.82	12	10.91
18	Wearing mask and social distancing is important during transplanting and other agricultural operations	82	74.54	14	12.73	14	12.73
19	It is important that farmers should take their own food and water from home.	110	100	0	0	0	0
20	Soap and water must be carried by the farmer for frequent hand washing	93	84.54	5	4.54	12	10.91

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