

A study on farm women awareness for climate variability and its effect on water resources in Punjab

Abstract

The study was conducted with the aim to study the extent and level of farm women awareness about climate variability and its effect on water resources. The study was conducted in three agro-climatic zones of Punjab, India. One district from each zone was selected purposively for the investigation. A sample of 120 randomly selected farm women was interviewed. The data was analyzed using appropriate statistical tools like frequency, percentages, and mean weighted scores. Majority of the farm women (>60%) were fully aware that pollution, deforestation, paddy straw burning and cultivation of paddy were the reasons for climate change. Most of them (>70%) were fully aware that increase in temperature and variation in rainfall were due to change in climate. Majority of them (80%) were fully aware that change in climate is leading to stress on water resources in Punjab and sixty per cent respondents perceived that more area under paddy cultivation was the major factor responsible for depleting groundwater. Most of the farm women (98%) were fully aware that water is wasted while performing various household tasks like washing of clothes, utensils, cleaning the floor, bathing animals with water pipes etc. The study further concluded that majority of the farm women (59%) had medium level of awareness regarding reasons of climate change whereas most of them (80%) had low level of awareness regarding factors accountable for depletion of water. Ninety seven per cent respondents had high level of awareness regarding wastage of water while performing household tasks. The study recommended that there is a need to evolve compatible water saving technologies, its effective extension and enacting proper legislation to prevent exploitation of water at household level.

Key Words: climate change, awareness, farm women, household activities

Introduction

The Punjab state represents 1.5 per cent geographical area of India with its latitudinal extent from 29°33' to 32°34' N and longitudinal extent from 73°53' to 76°56' E. The climate of Punjab is mainly sub-tropical, semi-arid and monsoon type. The annual average maximum and minimum temperature ranges between 29° to 32°C and 15° to 20°C, respectively. The mean annual rainfall in the State and different locations ranges from 400 to 1300 mm (Kaur *et al*,2016). Punjab has been the top food producer in India for a very long time. In order to maximize grain productivity, vast areas have been put under intensified rice and wheat cropping system. Paddy occupies 28.51 lakh hectares in *Kharif* and wheat occupies 35.12 lakh hectare in *Rabi* season. The net irrigated area of the State is 41.15 lakh hectare (81.71%), out of which

37 29.82 lakh hectares (72.5%) is irrigated by tubewells and remaining area of 11.33 lakh hectare
38 (27.5%) is irrigated by canals (Anonymous 2014). The number of electric tubewells had
39 increased 13 times from 1970-71 to 2013-14 i.e 0.91 lakh in 1970-71 to 12.35 lakh in 2014-15
40 (Anonymous 2015).

41 There is no denying the fact that there has been a significant increase in agricultural
42 production and productivity in Punjab. However, intensive agricultural practices have also led to
43 the depletion of natural resources (Sidhu, 2002; PSFC report, 2013). Up to 1995, the average fall
44 of water table in Punjab was about 23 cm per year (Khepar *et al* 2001) which during the next 6
45 years (1997-2003) increased to 53 cm per year (Hira *et al* 2004) and 51.5 cm per year during
46 1998-2006 (Kaur *et al* 2011).

47 The dropping water levels are largely attributed to unsustainable consumption of
48 groundwater for irrigation and other uses along with increased runoff and/or evapo-transpiration,
49 which is exacerbated by climate change. These climatic changes present an additional burden on
50 the world's economy, especially on agricultural and natural resource systems which are already
51 coping with the growing food demand driven by population growth and higher purchasing power
52 (Charles *et al* 2012). Every year, farmers set paddy stubble ablaze to prepare ground for next
53 crop, thereby damage soil quality and cause pollution (Anonymous, 2016). Further increased use
54 of generators, industrialization, mechanization and so on are also accountable for climate change.

55 Not only agriculture but household activities performed by farm women during bathing,
56 cleaning the floor, washing clothes and utensils, cooking are also responsible for ground water
57 depletion. Injudicious use of water at household level creates an additional burden to ground
58 water table. Keeping this in view, the present study was conducted with the objective to assess
59 the extent and level of awareness among farm women on climate variability and its effect on
60 water resources.

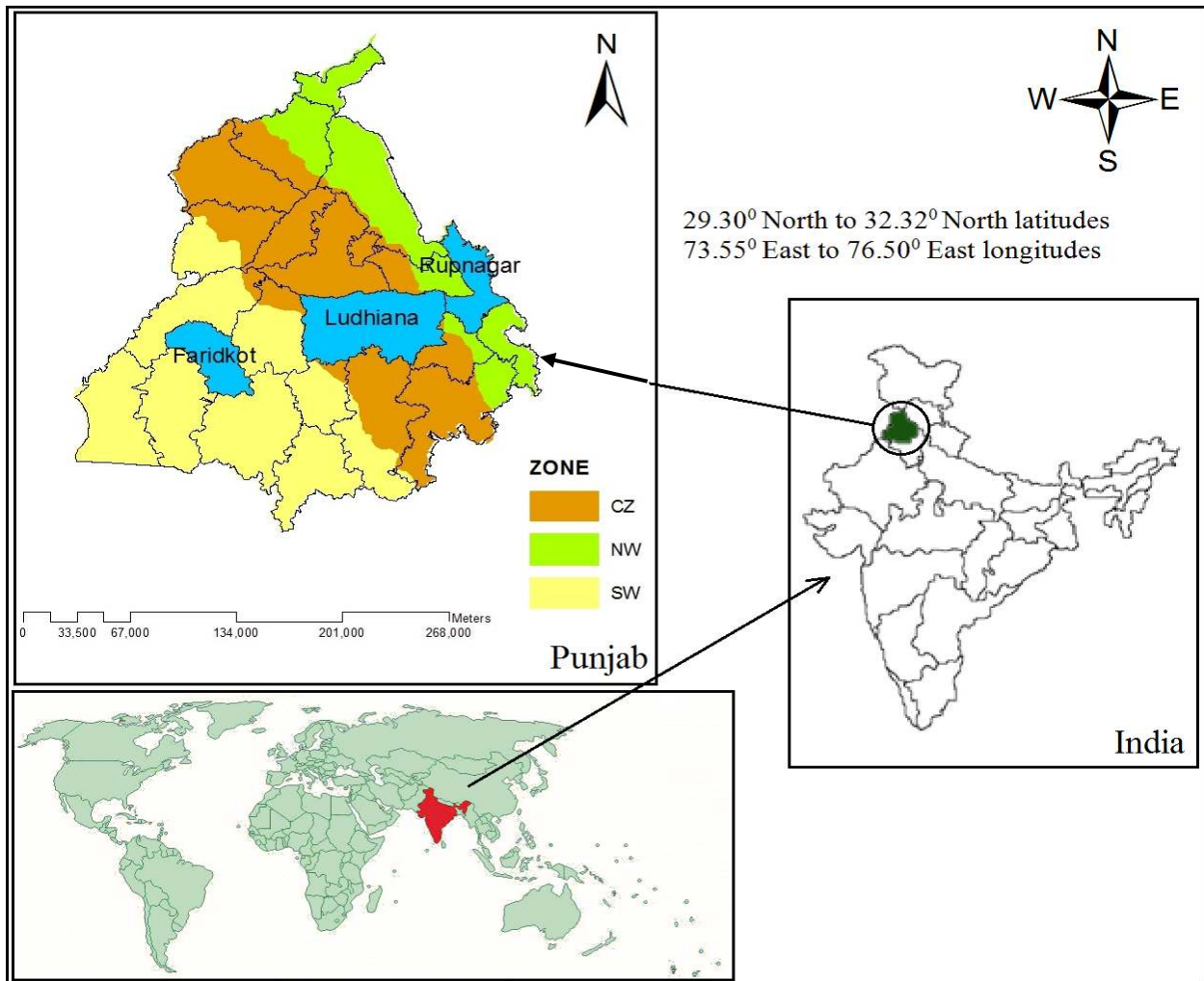
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62 MATERIAL AND METHODS

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64 The three agro climatic zones of Punjab i.e. North-east zone, Central zone and South-
65 west zone (based on water resources) were purposively selected (fig1). One district from each of
66 the zone was selected on the basis of rate of ground water depletion viz. districts -Ropar,
67 Ludhiana and Faridkot. One village each from selected district was selected randomly namely
68 Sandhua, Talwandi Khurd and Ransingh Wala. All the three villages were following paddy-

69 wheat rotation and had 50 cm/year rate of ground water depletion. All the three zones had
70 distinct water problems. The north east zone having high rainfall but deep water table. The
71 central zone having more and increased number of tubewells, having higher rate of ground water
72 depletion. The south west zone having the problem of water logging and alkalinity of soil. A
73 sample of 40 farm women was randomly selected from each village, comprising a sample of 120
74 farm women for the study. The data was collected with the help of interview schedule and
75 analyzed using the statistical tools like frequency, percentages and weighted mean score. Extent
76 of awareness was measured on three points continuum i.e. fully aware, somewhat aware and not
77 at all aware with the scoring of 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Level of awareness was further calculated
78 as high, medium and low.



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Fig.1 Location of selected villages in different agro-climatic zones of Punjab, India.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic characteristics

88 The scrutiny of data in Table 1 revealed that about half of the respondents (47%) were
89 young belonging to age group of 18-38 years while 44 per cent belonged to the age group of 39-
90 59 years. Nine per cent of the respondents were old (60-80 years).

91 Majority of the respondents (90%) were literate out of which nearly one fourth
92 respondents had educational qualification up to primary (25%) and up to matriculation (29%). A
93 large majority of the respondents (97%) belonged to general category while 2.5 per cent
94 belonged to other backward class (OBC).

95 Data further revealed that majority of the respondents (84%) belonged to joint family
96 whereas only 16 per cent of the respondents belonged to nuclear family. The results were in
97 agreement with the findings of Latha and Chandrakumar (2012), Kalra *et al* (2012), Baite (2014)
98 and Kaur (2014) which shows that joint family system is still widely prevalent in rural areas.

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100 With regards to family size, most of the respondents (62%) had a family size of 2-6
101 members (average 6 members) while 35 per cent had a family size of 7-11 members (average 10
102 members). The data concluded that although 84 percent families were joint yet majority of them
103 had comparatively smaller family size.

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Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

n=120

Characteristic	f (%)
Age(years)	
18-38	56 (47)
39-59	53 (44)
60-80	11 (9)
Education	
Illiterate	12 (10)
Primary	30 (25)
Middle	10 (8)
Matriculation	34 (29)
Secondary	17 (14)
Graduates	17 (14)

Caste	
General	116 (97)
Backward Caste	1 (1)
OBC	3 (2)
Family type	
Nuclear	19 (16)
Joint	101 (84)
Family size (No. of members)	
2-6	74 (62)
7-11	42 (35)
12-16	4(3)

*Figures in parentheses indicates percentages

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106 Extent of awareness about reasons of climate change

107 A perusal of data in Table 2 showed that majority of respondents (87%) were 'fully
 108 aware' that pollution was major reason responsible for climate change while 64 per cent
 109 respondents were 'fully aware' that deforestation was responsible for climate change followed by
 110 burning of paddy straw (62%) and paddy cultivation (54%) as other reasons of climate change.
 111 Vani and Kumar (2016) conducted study in Rangareddy district of Telangana, India. They
 112 reported that 32 per cent of the respondents perceived climate change as being caused by
 113 deforestation and bush burning.

114 **Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to the extent of awareness about reasons of**
 115 **climate change** n=120

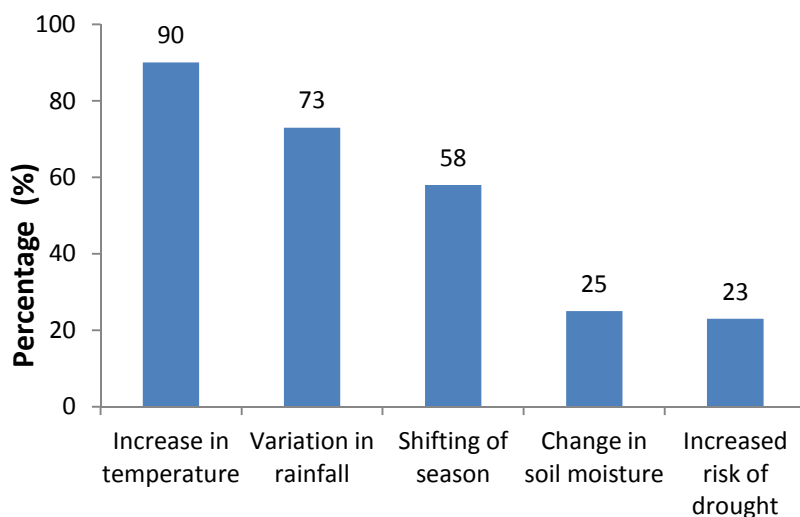
Reasons	Fully aware (%)	Somewhat aware (%)	Not at all aware (%)
Paddy cultivation	54	1	45
Burning of paddy straw	62	4	33
Increased use of generators	12	1	87
Pollution	87	3	10
Industrialization	19	2	78
Mechanization	43	3	53
More use of pesticides	21	3	76
Deforestation	64	3	32

116 *Figures in parentheses indicates percentages

117 Majority of the respondents (>75%) were 'not at all' aware that increased use of
 118 generators ,industrialization and more use of pesticides also played major role in climate change.

119 **Awareness about effects of climate change**

120 **Figure 2** indicated the awareness of farm women regarding various effects of climate
121 change. **Most of the respondents (90%) were fully aware that increase in temperature was one of**
122 **the effects of climate change followed by seventy three percent respondents who perceived**
123 **variation in rainfall and fifty eight percent respondents perceived shifting of season as other**
124 **effects of climate change. Nearly one-fourth respondents (25% and 28%) were also aware that**
125 **change in soil moisture and increased risk of drought were other effects of climate change.** The
126 findings were supported by Mandleni and Anim (2011), Oduniyi (2013) and Vani and Kumar
127 (2016) who reported that majority of the farmers perceived increase in temperature and rainfall
128 was due to climate change. The findings were in tune with the study conducted by Vani and
129 Kumar (2016) who also reported that very low percentage of farmers perceived raise of soil
130 temperature and fast evaporation of soil moisture as other effects of climate change. **It can be**
131 **concluded that farm women were aware about major effects of climate change.**



132

133 **Fig.2: Awareness of farm women about effects of climate change**

134 **Extent of awareness about effect of climate change on water resources**

135 The data in Table 4 indicated that majority of the respondents (80%) were 'fully aware'
136 that water table depletion was the result **of climate change** followed by variation in rainfall
137 **(67%)** and increase in number of tubewells **(47%)**. Report of Central Groundwater Board (2014)

138 also reported that number of over exploited blocks have rapidly increased in last few decades in
 139 Punjab. The table 4 concluded that farm women were aware about various effects of climate on
 140 water resources.

141 **Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to the extent of awareness about effect of**
 142 **climate change on water resources** n=120

Effects	Fully aware (%)	Somewhat aware (%)	Not at all aware (%)
Water table depletion	80	5	15
Variation in rainfall	67	7	27
Increase in number of tubewells	47	7	46

143 *Figures in parentheses indicates percentages

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145 **Extent of awareness about factors responsible for depletion of water**

146 A scrutiny of the data in Table 5 revealed that majority of the respondents (63%) were
 147 'fully aware' that more area under paddy cultivation was major factor responsible for depletion of
 148 water. However, only one-third respondents were 'fully aware' that increase in number of
 149 tubewells (37%) and declining trend of rainfall (37%) were also accountable for depletion of
 150 water. It is evident from the fact that total water availability in Punjab falls short of the available
 151 water supply by 1.28 Mha-m and the deficit is being met by over exploitation of groundwater
 152 resources (Aggarwal et al, 2016).

153 **Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to the extent of awareness about factors**
 154 **responsible for depletion of water** n=120

Factors	Fully aware (%)	Somewhat aware (%)	Not at all aware (%)
More area under paddy cultivation	63	-	37
Over irrigation of crop	12	1	87
Wrong practices of irrigation	6	-	94
Early transplanting of paddy	16	2	82
Stick to rice-wheat rotation only	7	1	95
Increase in number of tubewells	37	3	59

Declining trend of rainfall	37	2	62
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*Figures in parentheses indicates percentages

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156 Perusal of data further revealed that most of the respondents (>80%) were not at all
157 aware about other factors responsible for depletion of water such as wrong practices of irrigation,
158 sticking to rice-wheat rotation , over irrigation of crop and early transplanting of paddy. This is a
159 matter of concern. The results of Tables 4 and 5 concluded that although majority of the farm
160 women were fully aware about water table depletion as one of the effects of climate change but
161 most of them were not at all aware about various factors responsible for it. Here the role of
162 extension agents is very important in creating awareness about various factors contributing to
163 water table depletion. Singh and Grover (2013) reported that extension can help farmers prepare
164 for greater climate variability and uncertainty, create contingency measures to deal with
165 exponentially increasing risk and alleviate the consequences of climate change by providing
166 advice on how to deal with droughts, floods and so forth. Extension can also help with mitigation
167 of climate change.

168 Extent of awareness about wastage of water while performing household tasks

169 Table 6 depicts the awareness of farm women about wastage of water while performing
170 household tasks. Almost all the respondents (98%) were 'fully aware' that water is wasted during
171 performing various household tasks like washing of clothes and utensils, cleaning the floor, bathing
172 animals with water pipes etc. The data suggests that there is a need to train farm women in using
173 different water saving technologies while performing household activities. the researches have proved
174 that training can help in changing the behavior of people. Studies of Gupta and Singh (2012), Kaur
175 (2014) observed that there was an increase in knowledge, change in attitude and development of
176 skill of farm women after participating in the training programme.

177
178 **Table 6: Distribution of farm women according to the extent of awareness about wastage of**
179 **water while performing household tasks** n=120

Tasks	Fully aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware
Washing of clothes directly under running tap	98	2	-
Washing of utensils directly under running tap	98	2	-
Washing of vegetables directly under running tap	97	3	-
Over flowing of water tanks	94	5	1

Cleaning the floor with water	98	2	-
Bathing under shower	90	7	2
Running the water tap continuously while brushing, shaving etc.	95	5	0
Washing household and agricultural machinery with water pipes	97	2	-
Cleaning/washing animal shed with water pipes	92	6	2
Bathing animals with water pipes	98	2	-
Leakage of water taps and pipes	97	-	3
Children play under running water	95	4	2

*Figures in parentheses indicates percentages

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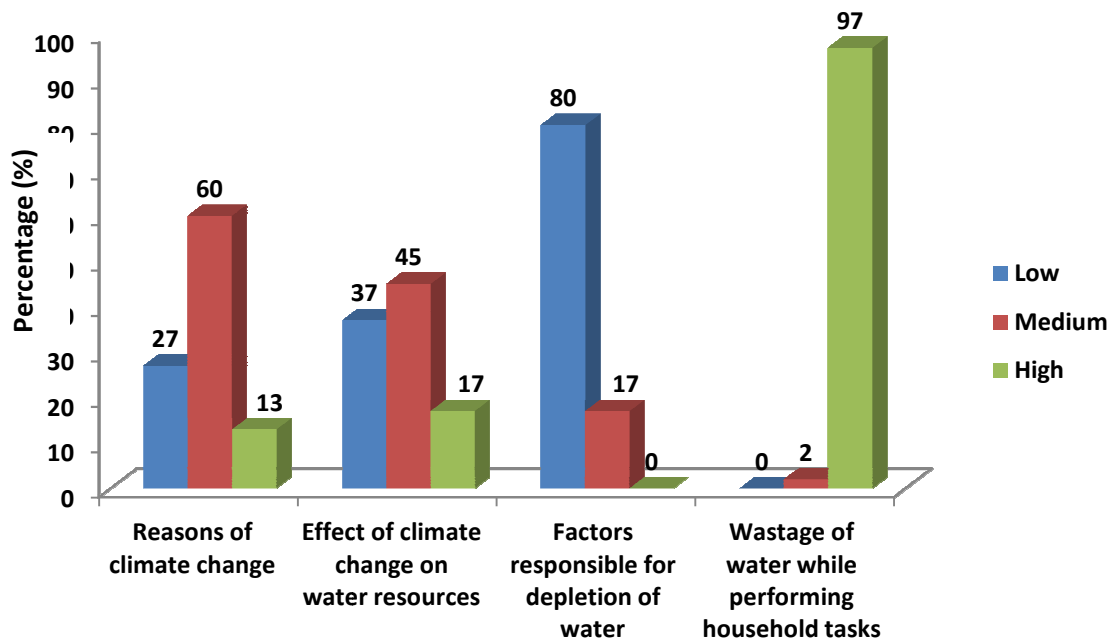
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182 Level of awareness regarding climate change

183 The level of awareness regarding climate change was analyzed on four parameters viz.
 184 reasons of climate change, effect of climate change on water resources, factors responsible for
 185 depletion of water and wastage of water while performing household tasks. The data showed that
 186 majority of the farm women (59%) had medium level of awareness regarding reasons of climate
 187 change followed by forty five per cent respondents who had medium level of awareness
 188 regarding effect of climate change on water resources. Most of the respondents (80%) had low
 189 level of awareness regarding factors responsible for depletion of water. It was interesting to note
 190 that awareness level was high (97%) with respect to wastage of water in performing household
 191 tasks (fig.3). This showed that people were aware that lot of water was wasted during washing
 192 clothes, bathing etc. still no action is taken to manage the wastage of water for future generation.
 193 It shows the need of developing and promoting easy to use water saving technologies as people
 194 use easy way to complete their task/work inspite of awareness regarding its after effects.

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198 **Fig.3: Distribution of farm women according to level of awareness regarding climate change**

199 **Suggestions to save water resources from depletion**

200 Suggestions to save water resources from depletion were recorded through open ended
 201 questions which are discussed in Table 8. The data revealed that about half of the respondents
 202 (48%) suggested that wastage of water at home should be avoided while 37 per cent suggested
 203 that bucket should be used for washing clothes and utensils rather under running taps. Nearly one
 204 third of the respondents (33%) suggested avoiding running taps when not in use and closing the
 205 tap after use. Approximately one fourth of the respondents (29%) suggested that bathing under
 206 shower should be avoided rather use bucket and mug.

207 **Table 8: Solutions suggested by farm women to save water at household level**

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n=120

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Avoid wastage at home	58	48
Use bucket for washing clothes and utensils	45	37
Avoid running taps and close the tap after use	40	33
Avoid bathing under shower and use bucket and mug for bathing	29	24
Use bucket and mop for cleaning the floor	22	18
Remaining water should be used to water the plants	9	7

Crop diversification should be adopted	8	7
Bath animals at two days interval	7	6
Keep check at children and teach them not to waste water	7	6
Use alarm bell to fill the tank	6	5
Bath animals in ponds or use bucket and mug while bathing animals	5	4
Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily	5	4
Save rain water (rain water harvesting)	5	4
Avoid washing of car with pipes	4	3
Wash vegetables in utensils	3	2
Wash clothes by hand	3	2
Use remaining water of filter for other purposes	2	2
Ban on paddy cultivation	2	2
Remaining water should be used to clean the floor and animal shed	2	2
Wash utensils at end	1	1

209 *Multiple response

210 **Conclusion**

211 The study concluded that farm women were fully aware about the reasons of climate change like
212 pollution, deforestation, paddy straw burning etc. but majority of them had medium level of
213 awareness. Majority of them were fully aware about effects of climate change **on** water resources
214 but most of them had low level of awareness about factors responsible for depleting water table.
215 The findings suggested that there is a need to **create** awareness regarding reasons and effects of
216 climate change through media and extension functionaries. Findings further suggested that farm
217 women had high level of awareness regarding wastage of water during performing household
218 tasks which raised need of evolving compatible water saving technologies and educating farm
219 women in using these techniques. Role of extension functionaries/ home scientists **should**
220 increase to train farm women in reducing the effects of climate change by adopting appropriate
221 technologies.

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