Functional clothing for farm workers

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Abstract: Millions of people in our country are dependent on Agriculture for their survival. During various operations of crop cultivation, they usually come across a number of problems that otherwise could be reduced by wearing proper clothes according to the field activities. Here an effort has been made to design and construct functional clothing for the farm workers to solve their problems up to some extent. To achieve the principle objectives of the study, it was conducted in 2 phases. During exploratory phase, base line data was prepared through field study. For this phase, 100 respondents were interviewed to gather information about the problems related to clothing faced by them while performing various farm activities. In second phase, functional clothes were designed and constructed for both male and female farm workers. Depending on the existing dress pattern during field activity & clothing related problems faced by them, one to five designs were sketched for each garments by incorporating required functional features. The sketched designs were evaluated by the judges and one to two designs were selected for construction. For assessment of garments, ten respondents (five males and five females) were selected for trial of garments. The findings highlighted that clothing related problems encountered by male and female farm workers were cut/scratch/itching on uncovered area of body, soiling of clothes, hindrance in activity due to clothes, sticking of dust/particles in hair, inhalation of allergens/particles, problem in breathing with saffa or duppata on nose, pulling off saffa/dupatta, falling of dust and particles in eyes leading to itching or irritation. Cut /scratch or itching on uncovered area of body could be prevented by properly covering the exposed parts of the body by using long gloves, high neck, face-cum-head cover, proper footwear. Using cuff or elastic at wrist and pauncha could prevent soiling and hindrance. Face cover of mulmul at nose level and net at eye level fastened with velcro attached to head cover prevented other problems. To prevent the dermal exposure of skin to pesticide/insecticide during spray two techniques were used for male farm workers. In one case the selected design was layered with paper pasting and cotton lining where as in second case it was starched using rice starch. A cover for spray tank, pair of rubber gloves and rubber boots were provided in addition to functional clothing during pesticide/insecticide application. Assessment of pesticide residue analysis by GLC indicated that layered garment retained negligible amount of pesticide thus decreasing risk of dermal exposure to a great extent. Similarly, cover for spray tank, rubber gloves and rubber boots were assessed highly useful for reducing pesticide exposure.

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When selecting clothing to wear to work, wear nothing that dangles, is untucked or tattered. These can get caught and possibly draw you into the machine. Keep jewelry to a minimum. Metal is an excellent conductor of electricity, so do not wear any jewelry (including a wedding band) when working with electricity or heavy machinery. These also protect against impacts and are mostly used by electrical workers. Class C helmets are for special services and offer no voltage protection. They are lightweight, comfortable and protect against impacts. Toes and feet can be injured during farm work. Poorly fitting or improper footwear can cause slips, trips or falls. Safety shoes should be worn every day. When purchasing footwear for work, know the jobs it will be worn for. Calhoun approached several clothing companies, urging them to develop a women’s workwear line, but to no avail. Eventually, she began dreaming of her own company. “I was 25 and super naive,” she recalls, laughing. Calhoun says her product stands out, in part because the very same women who rely on Red Ants Pants on farms and trail crews have a hand in their design. The pants are designed with a focus on functionality and fit, and Calhoun says they naturally end up being flattering for women’s bodies. A pair of Red Ants Pants retails for $139, a price point that some farmers might not be able to meet. But the cost reflects a product made entirely in the U.S. and designed for heavy use.