

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF HEAD LOAD MANAGER TO AN ALTERNATIVE MEANS TO CARRY LOADS BY RURAL WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Head loading method of manually carrying fodder and fuel, crops, vegetables, water, sand and other building material etc., is one of the several issues of gender and material handling in developing countries like India especially in rural life. The significant implications of this method are musculoskeletal pains and fatigue. Families at the subsistence level do not have an alternative method or means of carrying these loads and therefore it is a common sight in all aspects of working in rural areas. A scope for integrating participatory intervention approach to fabricate, evaluate and modify the Head Load Manager for rural women was identified based on the concept of Head harness introduced by kumar et al. (2004). Accordingly a head load manager was fabricated with features easy to wear; straps provided to fix the frame in place and were evaluated. The users' semantics and visual expression on its design, physiological load, Rating on perceived exertion, and satisfaction were the parameters in this study. The study was conducted at the farm yards, market yards and construction sites and 30 users equally represented by women and men were consisted of the sample. The salient subjective responses indicated the need for head load manager revision for reducing its weight and improving stability. Therefore, in the second phase, the head load manager -2 was fabricated and evaluated. The head load manager-2 showed a reduction in physiological load, improvement in postures while carrying loads, reduction in musculo skeletal problems.

KEYWORDS: Manual Load Handling Method , Head Load Manager , Rural Women Carrying Loads

Original Article

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