

IMPACT OF FARMERS FRIENDS (KRISHK MITRAS) TRAINING ON DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Farmers friends are working as the village level extension worker under ATMA in each and every district of the Rajasthan. They face various problems related to the different aspects of agriculture; hence Government of Rajasthan decided to train the farmers friends through Krishi Vigyan Kendra of the district. The study was conducted on 343 farmers friends of the Jalore district of Rajasthan. The findings of this study highlighted that there is a significant gain in the knowledge about different aspect of agriculture included in the training programme. The correlation between knowledge of agricultural aspect and Socio-personnel characteristics of trainees also showed that caste, education, occupation, mass media exposure, contact with extension agent and annual income were positively where as age, Type of family and Size of holding were negatively correlated.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) was introduced in 1999 as an autonomous organization under the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) by providing flexible working environment with objective of integrating research, extension and all other stake holders at the district level to support the farmer's needs and interest through an integrated approach of strategic plan. ATMA is a society of key stake holders involved in agricultural activities for sustainable agricultural development in the district. Involvement of farmers can be achieved at the village level through Farmer's Interest Groups (FIGs), at block level as a member of farmer's advisory committee (FAC) and at district level as the member of ATMA governing board. The concept of ATMA envisages paradigm shift from "top down" to "bottom up" in the planning and implementation of agriculture development programmes.

It is impossible for existing extension functionaries, to reach with each and every farmer because he has large area i.e. up to ten villages or more villages. There is a need of a person who can act as opinion leader in a village. Hence, the concept of a farmers' friend from the same village is coined under ATMA scheme and locally known as "Krishk

Metras". The Farmer Friend (FF) will serve as a vital link between extension system and farmers at village level (one for every two villages). The FF will be available in the village to advise on agriculture and allied activities. The FF will mobilize farmers' groups and facilitate dissemination of information to such groups, individual farmers and farm women directly through one to one interaction individually or in groups and also by accessing information / services on behalf of farmers as per need through Common Service Centres (CSC) / Kisan Call Centres (KCC). The farmers friends are not to paid any cash-compensation. Rs. 4000 per farmers friend per year will be provided to meet out contingency expenditure, FF may be provided cash incentives and / or honorarium. The responsibility to train these farmers friends on various aspect of agriculture was given to the Krishi Vigyan Kendra of the respective district.

One of the main tasks of Krishi Vigyan Kendra is to provide and improve the level of knowledge of trainees about the improved farm practices, because knowledge is cognitive component of individual's mind and plays an important role in covert as well as overt behaviour. Individuals with a greater knowledge of technical nature of improved practices would lead to higher adoption possibly because knowledge is not inert. Once knowledge is acquired and retained,

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it undergoes and produces changes in the thinking process and mental alchemy. This study was therefore, conducted to assess the gain in level of knowledge of farmers friends through training programme.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken in all the seven blocks of the Jalore district. A farmers Friend was selected from two revenue villages through the gram sabha of gram panchayat. Selected Farmers Friends were sent to the Krishi Vigyan Kendra's for getting training on different aspects of agriculture. In this process, 343 FF were trained on various aspects of agriculture in nine training programme at KVK for the period of five days. A knowledge test was developed to ascertain the knowledge of FF on various aspects of agriculture. The gain in knowledge was operationalized as difference between the knowledge regarding various aspects of agriculture as livelihood before and after the exposure of trainings. To measure the knowledge a respondent was given a score of one for correct answer and zero for wrong answer. Thus the summation of all scores treated as the knowledge of the respondents at pre-exposure stage. Similarly post-training knowledge score was calculated separately.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of knowledge about agricultural aspects

To assess the effects of Farmers Friends training the knowledge of the respondents was measured with the help of standardized, test at three period of interval that is pre training, immediately after training. A score of one was given for each correct answer and zero to wrong answer. On the basis of score the respondents were classified as having high (above 66.6 %), medium (33.3 to 66.6%) and low (below 33.3 %) level of knowledge as presented in table 1

Table 1: Pre-training knowledge score of respondent

S.No.	Knowledge level	Number	Percentage
1	Low level (below to 33.3 %)	196	57.14
2	Medium level (33.3 to 66.6%)	140	40.81
3	High level (above 66.6 %)	07	02.05
	MeanRange	32.18	11.43

Above table reveals that the majority (57.14%) of the respondents had low level of knowledge about different aspects of agriculture for lively hood followed by medium (40.81 per cent) while 2.05 per cent of the respondents obtained high level of knowledge score in different aspects of agriculture for lively hood, before participating in training by Krishak Mitras.

Table 2: Post-training knowledge score of respondent

S.No.	Knowledge level	Number	Percentage
1	Low level (below to 33.3 %)	35	10.20
2	Medium level (33.3 to 66.6%)	245	71.42
3	High level (above 66.6 %)	63	18.38
	Mean	61.96	
	Range	30-72	

It is clear from table 2 that after training on different aspects of agriculture for lively hood, majority of the respondents (71.42 %) had medium level of knowledge score, followed by (18.38%) high level of knowledge score, while 10.20 percent of the respondents obtained lower level of knowledge score about different aspects of agriculture for lively hood.

Extent of gain in knowledge

The gain in knowledge was determined by subtracting the pre-training knowledge score from knowledge score obtained immediately after training. Based on the differential score respondents were classified as high (above 66.6 %), medium (33.3 to 66.6%) and low (below 33.3 %).

Table 3: Knowledge gained by respondents after training (n=343)

S.No.	Knowledge level	Number	Percentage
1	Low level (0 to 33.3 %)	49	14.28
2	Medium level (33.3 to 66.6%)	238	69.40
3	High level (66.6 % and above)	56	16.32
	Mean	55.42	
	Range	19-68	

It is seen from table 3 that retention in knowledge was low by 14.28 percent of the respondents, medium in 69.40 percent while 16.32 percent of respondent retained high level of knowledge.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to knowledge in various aspect of agriculture for livelihood

S.No.	Name of technology	Class	Pre training Knowledge	Post- Training knowledge
1	General duties of krishik Metras	Low (0-2)	205	25
		Medium (3-4)	138	228
		High (5-6)	00	90
2	Collection of soil and water samples	Low (0-1)	198	15
		Medium (2-3)	135	256
		High (4)	10	72
3	Cultivation of seed spices & cash crops	Low (0-3)	165	18
		Medium (4-6)	178	278
		High (7-9)	00	47
4	Cultivation of kharif crops	Low (0-3)	123	00
		Medium (4-6)	205	278
		High (7-9)	15	65
5	Cultivation of Rabi crops	Low (0-3)	115	22
		Medium (4-6)	198	243
		High (7-9)	30	78
6	Cultivation of arid fruits	Low (0-3)	265	45
		Medium (4-6)	78	238
		High (7-9)	00	60
7	Cultivation of vegetables	Low (0-3)	218	32
		Medium (4-6)	98	265
		High (7-9)	27	46
8	Plant protection measure	Low (0-1)	276	73
		Medium (2-3)	67	265
		High (4-5)	00	05
9	Live stock management	Low (0-1)	123	18
		Medium (2-3)	208	278
		High (4-5)	12	47
10	Post harvest management	Low (0-1)	267	78
		Medium (2-3)	76	256
		High (4-5)	00	09
11	Schemes of Agriculture & Horticulture departments	Low (0-3)	187	25
		Medium (4-6)	156	205
		High (7-9)	00	13
12	Group approach-FIG/SHG	Low (0-1)	209	78
		Medium (2-3)	134	155
		High (4-5)	00	10

Table 5: Comparative mean scores of pre-training and post training knowledge of respondents

S.No.	various aspect of agriculture Farmers friends training	Pre-training (Mean)	Post-training (Mean)	Difference	t-value
1	General duties of krishik Metras	1.82	4.05	2.73	35.79**
2	Collection of soil and water samples	0.94	2.50	1.56	30.81**
3	Cultivation of seed spices & cash crops	3.66	6.15	2.49	24.99**
4	Cultivation of kharif crops	3.33	6.14	2.81	31.50**
5	Cultivation of Rabi crops	3.42	5.72	2.30	33.59**
6	Cultivation of arid fruits	2.26	5.27	3.01	32.73**
7	Cultivation of vegetables	3.40	5.74	2.34	29.78**
8	Plant protection measure	1.04	2.54	1.50	33.86**
9	Live stock management	1.89	2.98	1.09	32.48**
10	Post harvest management	2.21	3.10	0.89	22.71**
11	Schemes of Agriculture & Horticulture departments	2.88	4.69	1.81	34.18**
12	Group approach-FIG/SHG	0.86	2.08	1.22	28.39**

** Significant at 1 percent level probability

Knowledge gained by Farmers Friends about various aspect of agriculture in trainings

It was indicated that before exposure of training majority of respondents had low level of knowledge about various aspects of agriculture practices. Some of the respondents obtained medium level of knowledge while few of the respondents obtain high level of knowledge. It is also clear from table 4 that after exposure of farmers friends training on various aspects of training programme, majority of the respondents had medium level of knowledge followed by high and low level of knowledge score.

In order to ascertain the impact of training programme on gain in the knowledge paired 't' test was employed. The pre and post mean knowledge scores of the recipients of the training was calculated and paired 't' value are presented in table 5. Statistically significant differences were found among pre and post training mean score of all aspects of agriculture training. Significant difference between pre training and post training mean score i.e. before and after the training confirmed the fact that the respondents were able to gain sufficient knowledge at post training programme. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Singh and Verma (1998) and Maya Kumari, et. al (2010).

Relationship between socio-personnel characteristics and knowledge gain on agricultural aspects

The data depicted in table 6 showed the correlation between knowledge of agricultural aspect and Socio-personnel characteristics of trainees. The attributes Caste, Education, Occupation, Mass media exposure, contact with extension agent and annual income were positively and significantly correlated

Table 6: Correlation coefficient between knowledge of agricultural aspect and Socio-personnel characteristics

S.No.	Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)
1	Age	-0.9891**
2	Caste	0.9476**
3	Education	0.9651**
4	Family type	-1.0000**
5	Size of holding	-0.8549**
6	Occupation	0.8915**
7	Mass media exposure	0.9240**
8	Contact with extension agent	0.9959**
9	Annual Income	0.8561**

** Significant at 1 percent level probability

with knowledge of respondents at/percent level of probability Whereas the characteristics Age, Type of family and Size of holding were observed negatively correlated with knowledge gain about agricultural aspect.

CONCLUSION

Results of the study highlighted that there was significant difference in the knowledge of Krishi Mitras between pre & post training phases. The Socio personal variables are playing vital role in gaining the knowledge about various aspects of agriculture by the respondents The significant increase in the knowledge of the farmers' friends may be due to the intensive educational training effort made by the trainers and also due to the realization of importance of these practices are in actual field situation. Since after this training programme, farmer friends will work as extension worker in two villages, Therefore, they could be able to solve farmers problems at village level more efficiently.

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