

Impact of farm school: A study of Khowai district of Tripura

■ Dipak Nath* and Dipankar Dey

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, KHOWAI (TRIPURA) INDIA

(Email: spd020@yahoo.co.in)

ARTICLE INFO :

Received : 07.11.2014
Accepted : 30.11.2014

KEY WORDS :

Farm School, IPM

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE :

Nath, Dipak and Dey, Dipankar (2014). Impact of farm school: A study of Khowai district of Tripura. *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 5 (2) : 261-262.

*Author for correspondence

ABSTRACT

Farm School (FS) on IPM in vegetables was conducted in Kamalnagar village of Khowai district of Khowai with 30 progressive farmers of the village. The study was conducted just after completion of the FS with 60 respondents (30 participants and 30 non participant farmers) to find the knowledge level on IPM technology. The socio personal characteristics like age, educational level and mass media exposure of the respondents were also studied. The study revealed that majority (70.00 %) of the participant farmer had medium level of knowledge followed by 26.67 per cent and 3.33 per cent had high and low level of knowledge on IPM technology, respectively, while in case of non participant farmer majority (86.67 %) of the respondents had low level of knowledge followed by 13.33 per cent medium and no one had high level of knowledge.

Transfer of technology is really a challenging job in present day's context. Although the need for transfer of technology has long been felt with inception of community development programme in 1942, but still today the scenario of technology transfer is not satisfactory (Deka *et al.*, 2014).

There are numerous agricultural 'bright spots' covering crops, fruit trees, farm animals and fisheries in the country. These bright spots are the results of the work of innovative and hard working farm women and men. Farm Schools (FS) are established in the fields of such innovative farmers or farmer achievers who are actually enhancing productivity and profitability in their farms through scientific and sustainable agriculture. Farm School is powerful instrument for participatory research and knowledge management. It is an alternative extension tool and facilitate farmer-to-farmer learning. It also reduces the widening gap between scientific know-how and farmers practices (Nath *et al.*, 2010). KVK, West Tripura has been conducting several Farm School in Khowai and West Tripura district of Tripura under ATMA since 2009- 2010. To find out the success of any programme, a periodic appraisal and evaluation of what is being done is essential, so that suitable changes can be made to make the programme more effective. Keeping this idea, the present study was conducted

with the objective of finding out the impact of FS on enhancing the knowledge level of the respondents.

Farm School on IPM in vegetables was conducted in Kamalnagar village of Khowai district of Khowai under the sponsorship of ATMA, West Tripura where 33 farmers of the locality were participated during April to June, 2013. The study was conducted just after completion of the FS with 30 participants and 30 non - participant farmers. For measuring the knowledge level of the farmers (participant and non - participant) on IPM technology, a knowledge questionnaire on various aspects of IPM were prepared; while preparing the questionnaire, the topics covered in the FS were taken into consideration. In order to find the knowledge level of participant and non - participant farmer knowledge test was conducted with both the groups just after completion of the FS. The knowledge of the participants was measured by assigning score "1" for correct answer and "0" for incorrect answer. The respondents were further categorized into three categories, *viz.*, low, medium and high based on the total score obtained by each of the respondents and percentage were calculated for each group. The socio personal characteristics like age, educational level and mass media exposure of the respondents were also studied.

Characteristics	Category	Frequency		Percentage	
		PF	Non-PF	PF	Non-PF
Age	25- 30 years	5	6	16.67	20.00
	31- 35 years	9	8	30.00	26.67
	36 years and above	17	15	56.67	50.00
Educational level	Illiterate	0	0	0	0
	Up to primary school	4	2	13.33	6.67
	Up to class X	18	19	60.00	63.33
	Up to class XII	7	9	23.33	30.00
	Up to class degree and above	1	0	3.33	0
Mass media exposure	Low	8	8	26.67	26.67
	Medium	19	20	63.33	66.67
	High	3	2	10.00	6.67

Knowledge category	Participant farmer		Non-participant farmer	
	F	%	F	%
Low (1- 10)	1	3.33	26	86.67
Medium (11- 20)	21	70.00	4	13.33
High (above 20)	8	26.67	0	0

The socio personal characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1 which reveals that majority of the participant farmer (56.67 %) and non - participant farmer (50.00 %) falls under the age group of 36 years and above with up to class X educational qualification, viz., 60.00 per cent and 63.33 per cent, respectively whereas both the group has medium level of mass media exposure with 63.33 per cent and 66.67 per cent, respectively. Data presented in Table 2 reveals that majority (70.00 %) of the participant farmer having medium level of knowledge followed by 26.67 per cent and 3.33 per cent having high and low level of knowledge on IPM, respectively. It also reveals that in case of non - participant farmer majority (86.67 %) of the respondents having low level of knowledge followed by 13.33 per cent medium and no one is having high level of knowledge.

Conclusion :

One of the main activities of Farm Schools is to operationalize Front Line Demonstrations in one or more crops and/or allied sector activities. FS provide season long technical backstopping/ training to target farmers. In addition to technical

support through FS, knowledge and skill of “students” may also be upgraded through training at district/ state level and exposure visits, etc. (Nath *et al.*, 2008).

It is clear from the study that there was a significant gain in knowledge among the participants after FS. The FS conducted by KVK, West Tripura under ATMA was able to create positive impact in improving knowledge of the participant farmer. The intervention through FS really helped in transfer of knowledge to the farmers.

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