



Research Article

Impact of on-campus trainings conducted by the KVK Sriganganagar on the knowledge level of farmers friends (Krishak Mitras)

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SUMMARY : Farmers friends work as the village level extension worker under ATMA in each and every district of Rajasthan. They face various problems related to the different aspects agriculture, hence government of Rajasthan decided to train the farmers friends through Krishi Vigyan Kendra of the district. The study was conducted on 1000 farmers friends of Sriganganagar district of Rajasthan. The findings of this study highlighted that there was a significant gain in the knowledge about different aspect of agriculture included in the training programme. The correlation between knowledge of agricultural aspects and socio-personnel characteristics of trainees 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.

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Key Words :

Farmers friends,
Extent of knowledge,
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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

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.

There is a need of a person who acts as extension worker in a village, so a farmers friend from the same village is selected under ATMA

scheme for this purposes through the Gram Sabha of Gram Panchayat and locally known as "Krishak Mitras" 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 be paid any cash-compensation. Rs. 4000 per farmer's 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 aspects of agriculture was given to the Krishi Vigyan Kendra of the district.

One of the main tasks of Krishi Vigyan Kendra is to provide and improve the level of

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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 and individuals with a greater knowledge of technical nature of improved practices would lead to high adoption possibly because knowledge is not inert. Once knowledge is acquired and retained, it undergoes and produces changes in the thinking process and mental alchemy. This study was therefore, conducted to ascertain the prevailing level of awareness knowledge of farmers friends training programme.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present study was undertaken in all the nine Blocks of the Sriganaganar district. A farmer's friend was selected from two revenue villages through the Gram Sabha of Gram Panchayat. Selected farmers friends are sent to the Krishi Vigyan Kendra's for getting training on different aspects of agriculture. These 1000 FF are trained on various aspects of agriculture in nine training programmes 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. Suitable statistical tools and techniques were used for analysis of data.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The observations of the present study as well as relevant analysis have been summarized under the following heads:

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 two periods of interval that is pre training, immediately after training. A score of one was given for each correct answer. On the basis of score the respondents was classified as having high (65.5 % and above), medium (35.5 to 65.5%) and low (0 to 35.5 %) level of knowledge as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 reveals that the majority (84.70%) of the respondents had low knowledge level about different aspects of agriculture for livelihood followed by medium (only 13.10%) while 2.20 per cent of the respondents obtained high level of knowledge score related to different aspects of agriculture for

Table 1: Pre-training knowledge score of respondent (n=1000)

Sr. No.	Knowledge level	Number	Percentage
1.	Low level (0 to 35.5 %)	847	84.70
2.	Medium level (35.5 to 65.5%)	131	13.10
3.	High level (65.5 % and above)	22	2.20
	Mean	28.45	
	Range	09-41	

livelihood, before participating the farmers friends training.

It is clear from Table 2 that after training on different aspects of agriculture for livelihood, majority of the respondents (71.10 %) had medium level of knowledge score, followed by 22.00 per cent high level of knowledge score, while 6.90 per cent of the respondents obtained lower level of knowledge score related to different aspects of agriculture for livelihood.

Table 2: Post-training knowledge score of respondent (n=1000)

Sr. No.	Knowledge level	Number	Percentage
1.	Low level (0 to 35.5 %)	69	6.90
2.	Medium level (35.5 to 65.5%)	711	71.10
3.	High level (65.5 % and above)	220	22.00
	Mean	56.57	
	Range	32-68	

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 (65.5 % and above), medium (35.5 to 65.5%) and low (0 to 35.5 %).

It is observed from Table 3 that the retention in knowledge was low in respect of 5.40 per cent of the respondents, medium in 72.30 per cent while 22.30 per cent of respondent retained high level of knowledge.

Table 3: Knowledge gained by respondents after training (n=1000)

Sr. No.	Knowledge level	Number	Percentage
1.	Low level (0 to 35.5 %)	54	5.40
2.	Medium level (35.5 to 65.5%)	723	72.30
3.	High level (65.5 % and above)	223	22.30
	Mean	52.30	
	Range	21-64	

Knowledge gained by farmers friends about various aspect of agriculture in trainings:

It indicates that before exposure of training, majority of respondents had low level of knowledge related to various

aspects of agriculture practices. Some of the respondents obtained medium level of knowledge while few of the respondents obtained 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 scores of all the aspects of agriculture training. Significant difference between pre-training and post-training mean score *i.e.* before and after the training confirms 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

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

Sr. No.	Name of technology	Class	Pre-training knowledge	Post- training knowledge
1.	General duties of Krishak Mitras	Low (0-2)	547	68
		Medium(3-4)	436	852
		High(5-6)	17	80
2.	Collection of soil and water samples	Low (0-1)	519	44
		Medium(2-3)	335	746
		High(4)	146	210
3.	Cultivation of seed of spices and cash crops	Low (0-3)	483	52
		Medium(4-6)	517	811
		High(7-9)	00	137
4.	Cultivation of <i>Kharif</i> crops	Low (0-3)	358	41
		Medium(4-6)	531	797
		High(7-9)	111	138
5.	Cultivation of <i>Rabi</i> crops	Low (0-3)	314	67
		Medium(4-6)	517	702
		High(7-9)	169	231
6.	Cultivation of arid fruits	Low (0-3)	882	94
		Medium(4-6)	108	726
		High(7-9)	10	180
7.	Cultivation of vegetables	Low (0-3)	655	93
		Medium(4-6)	278	781
		High(7-9)	67	126
8.	Plant protection measures	Low (0-1)	813	213
		Medium(2-3)	141	772
		High(4-5)	46	15
9.	Live stock management	Low (0-1)	403	51
		Medium(2-3)	576	809
		High(4-5)	21	140
10.	Post harvest management	Low (0-1)	819	227
		Medium(2-3)	181	663
		High(4-5)	00	110
11.	Schemes of Agriculture and Horticulture Departments	Low (0-3)	582	75
		Medium(4-6)	416	597
		High(7-9)	002	328
12.	Group approach-FIG/SHG	Low (0-1)	627	74
		Medium(2-3)	335	911
		High(4-5)	38	15

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

Sr. No.	Various aspect of agriculture for farmers friends training	Pre-training (Mean)	Post-training (Mean)	Difference	t- value
1.	General duties of krishak Metras	1.78	4.29	2.51	36.11**
2.	Collection of soil and water samples	1.04	2.85	1.81	31.13**
3.	Cultivation of seed spices and cash crops	4.16	6.62	2.46	25.05**
4.	Cultivation of <i>Kharif</i> crops	3.87	6.58	2.71	32.22**
5.	Cultivation of <i>Rabi</i> crops	3.83	6.17	2.34	34.09**
6.	Cultivation of arid fruits	2.92	5.91	2.99	32.92**
7.	Cultivation of vegetables	4.10	6.17	2.07	29.86**
8.	Plant protection measure	1.85	3.44	1.59	33.92**
9.	Live stock management	2.03	3.80	1.77	33.02**
10.	Post harvest management	2.62	3.90	1.28	23.14**
11.	Schemes of Agriculture and Horticulture Departments	3.36	5.81	2.45	35.00**
12.	Group approach-FIG/SHG	1.61	3.34	1.73	29.13**

** indicate significance of value at P=0.01

(1998) and Maya Kumari *et al.* (2010).

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

The data depicted in Table 6 show the correlation between knowledge of agricultural aspects and socio-personnel characteristics of trainees. The attributes like caste, education, occupation, mass media exposure, contact with extension agent and annual income had positive and highly significant correlation with knowledge of respondents. Whereas age, type of family and size of holding were observed negatively correlated with knowledge gain about agricultural aspects.

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

Sr. No.	Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)
1.	Age	-0.9813**
2.	Caste	0.9516**
3.	Education	0.9337**
4.	Family type	-0.9874**
5.	Size of holding	-0.8492**
6.	Occupation	0.8966**
7.	Mass media exposure	0.9355**
8.	Contact with extension agent	0.9931**
9.	Annual income	0.8642**

** indicates significance of value at P=0.01

Conclusion:

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 in actual field situation. Because after this training programme, farmer friends will work as extension worker in the two villages, they will solve farmers problems at village level more efficiently.

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