

Research Article

Impact of farmers' Field School of United Phosphorus Limited : A study in Nagaon district of Assam

■ CHANDAN KUMAR DEKA AND PRASANTA KUMAR MISRA

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SUMMARY : The investigation was an attempt to study the impact of Farmers Field School (FFS) of United Phosphorous Limited (UPL) on enhancing the knowledge level of the participant farmers. The study was conducted during the period of Sept., 2012 to Dec., 2012. It was found from the study that before FFS, 85.0 per cent and 15.0 per cent of the farmers were in low and medium category of knowledge. Nobody was found in the high knowledge category. But after FFS, 15.0 per cent, 67.5 per cent and 17.5 per cent were found in low, medium and high category of knowledge, respectively. It shows that after FFS, knowledge level of many farmers having low level of knowledge before FFS had improved significantly to medium and high category of knowledge. It was found that after FFS, increase in knowledge level of farmers was found to be 44.2 per cent. The study clearly indicates the positive impact of the programme in improving knowledge of the participant farmers.

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KEY WORDS :

Farmers Field School,
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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

UPL started as a small scale unit for the manufacturing of red phosphorus 43 years ago. By acquisition, backward and forward integration, UPL has now become a leading global producer of crop protection products, intermediates, speciality chemicals, industrial chemical and seeds. UPL operates in every continent and has customer base in 123 countries. Advanta is seed arm of UPL. Advanta is the first Indian multinational seed company with global footprints. Advanta is having strong presence both in the domestic and international markets. Across the globe, Advanta enjoys leadership position in sorghum, sunflower and tropical corn. In India, its strength also lies in hybrid rice, cotton, pearl millet and mustard.

UPL-Advanta group have been conducting farmers educational programme (Kissan Pathsala) in different states of India since 1999

as a part of its CSR activities. So far, over 25000 farmers of different parts of the country have been educated in better methods of agriculture as well as safe and judicious use of agro-inputs in states of West Bengal, Tripura, Bihar, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujrat, Punjab, Rajasthan and Assam through 25 farmers school.

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 1952, but till today the scenario of technology transfer is not satisfactory. Many research findings have shown that only a part of the innovations generated has reached the actual users.

The UPL-Advanta group has been trying to transfer the technology to the farmers through its farmers educational programme like Farmers

Author for correspondence :

CHANDAN KUMAR DEKA

Krishi Vigyan Kendra,
NAGAON (ASSAM) INDIA
Email: ckdeka@rediffmail.com

See end of the article for authors' affiliations

Field School (FFS) since 1999. In Assam for the first time UPL group of companies started its Farmers Field School (FFS) at Extension Training Centre (ETC), Naltoli of Nagaon district. It started from March, 2012 and ended in the month of July, 2012 covering 48 lectures along with hands on training in the field of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and fishery. 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 in view, the present study was conducted with the objective of finding out the impact of FFS on enhancing the knowledge level of the participant farmers.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

A group of 40 participating farmers (out of 100 farmers) who participated in Farmers Field School (FFS) of United Phosphorous Limited (UPL) were the respondents for the present study. The study was conducted during the period of Sep., 2012 to Dec., 2012. For measuring the knowledge level of the participant farmers, a knowledge questionnaire on various aspects of agriculture (30 marks), animal husbandry and veterinary (10 marks) and fishery (10 marks) covering 50 marks in total were prepared. In preparing the questionnaire, the topics covered in the FFS were taken into consideration. In order to find out the impact of the programme on the participants knowledge, two knowledge test one before FFS and one just after completion of FFS were conducted. The knowledge of the participants was measured by assigning score "1" for correct knowledge and "0" for incorrect knowledge. The participants were further categorised

into three categories of knowledge *viz.*, low, medium and high based on the total score obtained by each of the participant farmers of FFS in each field separately and then the overall knowledge of the participants were also categorised into three level.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results of the present study as well as relevant discussions have been presented under following sub heads:

Knowledge level of the participant farmers:

Knowledge level of the participant farmers in the field of agriculture:

It is evident from the Table 1 that a significant increase in knowledge was observed in case of participant farmers after FFS. According to pre-test data, before FFS, as much as 82.5 per cent of the farmers had low level of knowledge, while 17.5 per cent had medium level of knowledge. Nobody was found in the high category of knowledge. The post FFS test revealed that as a result of training intervention through FFS, 12.5 per cent belonged to low, 77.5 per cent medium and 10.0 per cent in the high category of knowledge. Similar results were also reported by Joseph and Padaria (2007), Khurana *et al.* (2007).

Knowledge level of the participant farmers in the field of animal husbandry:

The Table 2 shows that before FFS, 67.5 per cent and 32.5 per cent of the farmers were in low and medium category of knowledge. Nobody was found in the high knowledge category. But after FFS, 15.0 per cent, 60.0 per cent and 25.0

Table 1 : Frequency distribution of farmers according to their changes in knowledge in the field of agriculture (n=40)

Knowledge category	Before FFS		After FFS	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Low (1 to 10)	33	82.5	5	12.5
Medium (11 to 20)	7	17.5	31	77.5
High (above 20)	0	0.0	4	10.0

Table 2: Frequency distribution of farmers according to their changes in knowledge in the field of animal husbandry (n=40)

Knowledge category	Before FFS		After FFS	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Low (1 to 3.33)	27	67.5	6	15.0
Medium (3.34 to 6.66)	13	32.5	24	60.0
High (6.67 to 10.00)	0	0.0	10	25.0

Table 3 : Frequency distribution of farmers according to their changes in knowledge in the field of fishery (n=40)

Knowledge category	Before FFS		After FFS	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Low (1 to 3.33)	31	77.5	4	10.0
Medium (3.34 to 6.66)	9	22.5	29	72.5
High (6.67 to 10.00)	0	0.0	7	17.5

Table 4 : Frequency distribution of farmers according to their changes in knowledge in agriculture, animal husbandry and fishery (n=40)

Knowledge category	Before FFS		After FFS	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Low (1 to 16.66)	34	85.00	6	15.0
Medium (16.67 to 33.32)	6	15.00	27	67.5
High (33.33 to 50.00)	0	0	7	17.5

Table 5 : Percentage (%) increase in knowledge among the participants due to FFS

Knowledge score	Before FFS	After FFS	% increase in knowledge
Mean knowledge score	12.63	34.73	44.2

per cent were found in low, medium and high category of knowledge, respectively. So, it shows that a considerable increase in knowledge was observed in case of participant farmers after FFS.

Knowledge level of the participant farmers in the field of fishery:

The Table 3 shows that before FFS, 77.5 per cent and 22.5 per cent of the farmers were in low and medium category of knowledge. Nobody was found in the high knowledge category. But after FFS, 10.0 per cent, 72.5 per cent and 17.5 per cent were found in low, medium and high category of knowledge, respectively. It shows that after FFS, knowledge level of many farmers having low level of knowledge before FFS converted to medium and high category of knowledge. This clearly indicates the positive impact of the programme in improving knowledge of the participant farmers. Similar results were also reported by Manjappa *et al.* (2008).

Overall knowledge level of the participant farmers:

It is evident from Table 4 that before FFS, 85.0 per cent and 15.0 per cent of the farmers were in low and medium category of knowledge. Nobody was found in the high knowledge category. But after FFS, 15.0 per cent, 67.5 per cent and 17.5 per cent were found in low, medium and high category of knowledge, respectively. It shows that after FFS, knowledge level of many farmers having low level of knowledge before FFS had improved significantly to medium and high category of knowledge.

Per cent increase in knowledge due to programme intervention:

From the Table 5 it is clear that after FFS, increase in knowledge level of farmers was found to be 44.2 per cent. The study clearly indicates the positive impact of the programme in improving knowledge of the participant farmers

Conclusion:

It is clear from the study that there was a significant gain in knowledge among the participants after FFS. The FFS of UPL was able to create positive impact in improving knowledge of the participant farmers. The training intervention through FFS really helped in transfer of knowledge to the farmers.

Authors' affiliations :

PRASANTA KUMAR MISRA, Department of Extension Education, Assam Agricultural University, JORHAT (ASSAM) INDIA
Email: pmishra1969@sify.com

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