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Constraints faced by farmer friends during role performance under revitalized extension system (RES) in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

In Revitalized Extension System (RES) Farmer Friends (Krishak Mitra and Krishak Didi) are authorized personnel, who help the farmers by technology dissemination from research station to them. But during technology dissemination, they have faced a lot of problems. Therefore, the present study was carried out in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh to enumerate the constraints faced by the Farmer Friends and also tried to pool out the probable suggestions as opined by the respondents themselves. Personal interview method was used to collect the data from 196 Farmer Friends and appropriate statistical measures like frequency, percentage were applied to analyse the data. The study listed out the constraints enumerated by the Farmer Friends such as 'insufficient honorarium as compared to workload' is major constraints faced by Farmer Friends followed by 'absence of farmers on the day of meeting or discussion'. The main suggestions given by them to improving their role performance were 'honorarium amount should be increased', followed by 'more training required for knowledge updating'. Therefore, the concerned departments and organizations need to pay attention to their problems in order to solve these and make the Farmer Friends more efficient.

Keywords: Farmer friends, constraints, suggestions, technology dissemination, RES, ATMA

Introduction

In order to address the key constraints faced by extension system in the country with respect to reducing capacity of public extension services, its lack of decentralized and demand-driven focus, the Innovations in Technology Dissemination component of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) was implemented in seven States in the country namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Maharashtra and Punjab through four project districts in each State. Extension Reforms in India were pilot tested in 28 Districts in 7 States from 1998 to 2005. This successful experiment served as a basis to launch the Scheme "Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms" in the year 2005-06. It was revamped, expanded and strengthened comprehensively in the year 2010. Coverage of the scheme was increased in a phased manner. It is currently operational in 639 districts and the remaining rural districts are also proposed to be covered. The ATMA at district level would be increasingly responsible for all technology dissemination activities at the district level. It would have linkage with all the line departments, research organization, non-governmental organizations and agencies associated with agricultural development in the district. Research and Extension units within the project district such as ZRS or substations, KVK and the key line departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture and Fisheries, Forestry etc. would become constituent members of ATMA.

Farmer Friends are intermediaries between research and farmers. They operate as facilitators and communicators, helping farmers in their decision-making and ensuring that appropriate knowledge is implemented to obtain the best results. Farmer Friends need to communicate to farmers agricultural information on natural resources, animals, crops, on how best to utilize the farmland, how to construct proper irrigation schemes, economic use and storage of water, how to combat animal disease and save on the cost of farming equipment and procedures. They need to ensure that farmers understand this information and use it on their farms in order to obtain the best production.

Materials and Methods

The collected multiple responses with respect to constraints and suggestions were tabulated

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And descriptive statistical measures like frequency and percentage were taken to analyse the data. Percentage was calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of response obtained}}{\text{total number of respondents}} \times 100$$

Result and discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Farmer Friends according to the problem faced by them in performing their responsibilities (N – 196)

S.N.	Problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Insufficient honorarium as compared to the workload	157	80.10	I
2.	Lack of transportation facilities	98	50.00	V
3.	Poor cooperation or participation of farmers in group meetings and training	110	56.12	IV
4.	Lack of training programmes to improve know how	92	46.94	IX
5.	Inadequate cooperation from BTMs and ATMs	79	40.31	XI
6.	Lack of TA and DA	97	49.49	VI
7.	Unavailability of latest technical agricultural literature	95	48.47	VIII
8.	Absence of farmers on the day of meeting or discussion	124	63.27	II
9.	Pressure from higher officers (BTMs and ATMs)	86	43.88	X
10.	Diversified duties and assignments	96	48.98	VII
11.	Family responsibilities/family restrictions	37	18.88	XIV
12.	Lack of proper supervision by senior officials	70	35.71	XIII
13.	Lack of knowledge especially on different methods of pest control and identification of pest in the different crops	76	38.78	XII
14.	Insufficient feedback from farmers about the role performance of FFs	123	62.76	III
15.	Difficulties to go alone in the meeting outside the village	22	11.22	XV

Problems faced by Farmer Friends during their role discharging

From Table 1 it is revealed that ‘insufficient honorarium as compared to workload’ (80.10%) is major constraint which was faced by Farmer Friends during their role performance followed by ‘absence of farmers on the day of meeting or discussion’ (63.27%), ‘lack of feedback from farmers about role performance of Farmer Friends’ (62.76%), ‘poor cooperation or participation of farmers in group meetings and training’ (56.12%) and ‘lack of transportation facilities’ (50.00%). The other problems in role performance were ‘lack of travelling allowance’ (49.49%), ‘diversified duties and

assignments’ (48.98%), ‘unavailability of latest technical agricultural literature’ (48.47%), ‘lack of training programmes to improve know how’ (46.94%), ‘pressure from higher officers (BTMs and ATMs)’ (43.88%), ‘inadequate cooperation from BTMs and ATMs’ (40.31%), ‘lack of knowledge specially on different methods of pest control and identification of pest in the different crops’ (38.78%), ‘lack of proper supervision by senior officials’ (35.71%), ‘family responsibilities/family restrictions’ (18.88%) and ‘difficulties to go alone in the meeting outside the village’ (11.22%) faced by Farmer Friends in role performance under Revitalized Extension System.

Table 2: Distribution of Farmer Friends according to the suggestions provided by them to overcome the problems (N – 196)

S. N.	Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Incentives should be provided to farmer friends to attend training programmes	76	38.78	V
2.	Honorarium amount should be increased	130	66.33	I
3.	Making frequent supervision by seniors	70	35.71	VII
4.	Transport facilities should be provided to Farmer Friends	96	48.98	III
5.	Specific training should be conducted by SMS regarding the diagnostic skills of insect pest	75	38.27	VI
6.	More training required for knowledge updating	120	61.23	II
7.	Farmers should provide feedback to the Farmer Friends about their role performance	90	45.92	IV
8.	Latest agricultural literature should be timely to provide	65	33.16	VIII

Suggestions to overcoming the problems faced by Farmer Friends during the role performance under the revitalized extension system.

The Farmer Friends have come up with the following suggestions for their problems which were ranked according to their magnitude based on frequencies and percentages and were ranked as given in Table 2. The suggestions opined were honorarium amount should be increased (66.33%), more training required for knowledge updating (61.23%), transport facilities should be provided to Farmer Friends (48.98%), farmers should provide feedback to the Farmer Friends about their role performance (45.92), incentives should be provided to farmer friends to attend training programmes (38.78%), specific training should be conducted by SMS regarding diagnostic skills of insect pest (38.27%), making frequent

supervision by seniors (35.71%) and the latest agricultural literature should be timely provide (33.16%).

Conclusion

The findings of the study reveals that Farmer Friends are facing several problems like: ‘insufficient honorarium as compared to workload’ followed by ‘absence of farmers on the day of meeting or discussion’ and ‘lack of feedback from farmers about role performance of Farmer Friends’. The reported constraints are needed to be addressed seriously for better and timely dissemination of agricultural information and technology. Therefore, the present study was carried out to knock the concerned Farmer Friends responsibilities to identify the problems and their probable solutions of the Farmer Friends to make them more efficient.

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