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Implications of Trainer and Trainee based Dynamics Affecting Farmers Training Meetings

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Abstract

About 60% population resides in rural areas depending on agriculture for getting its livelihoods. As it is the main source of foreign exchange earnings, it accounts for 21 percent of the GDP and absorbs 45% of total labour force. It is direst need to train farmers about farm management and new technologies. This requisite is executed through extension services. It builds the capacity of farming community for advanced agricultural practices. It is unique service in the sense that it provides access to small farmers and rural poor living far from the urban areas in addition to technology transfer. Present study was conducted in district Faisalabad. The data reveal that poor assessment psychological assessment of local talent and observation of resource poor farmer by the trainer are the most deleterious elements affecting the training meetings while farmer less interest and illiteracy are the trainee based serious factors causing training meetings less fruitful. The focus group discussions concluded that reveal that normally the EFS select the resource rich person like feudal, lord or Choudhary as a focal person.

The agriculture department selects a biased focal farmer who is not venerable among the entire village farming community. The biased hub farmer does not call all the farmers for farmers meeting. The relaying of trainees on their previous knowledge reduces the farmer's interest in training meetings. It is indirectly defying of sole purpose of this maneuver. Therefore, it is suggested that agriculture sector should select the focal persons on merit or unbiased bases. The farmer should also join the meeting with perceptive minds so that dream of agricultural prosperity becomes true.

Keywords: Implications; Dynamics; Training Meeting

Abbreviations: BDS: Basic Democracy System; IRDP: Integrated Rural Development Program; T&V: Training and Visit; FA: Field Assistants; SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

Introduction

Agriculture is the most important sector of Pakistan's economy however some diversifications are being along with it over many years. The cultivated cropped area is contributing to GDP at about 21.0% as it covers 22 million hectares. About 45.0% of the employed force of Pakistan is related with agriculture. Rural areas' population about 66.0% is directly or indirectly dependant on agriculture for its livelihood (Govt. of Pak., 2008). Foreign exchange earnings of the country are largely related with agriculture. A large population of Pakistan is dependent on natural resources like forestry, fisheries, agriculture and livestock as an agriculture country [1].

Agricultural extension has always remained a key element in improving the capacity building of farmers. In addition, it is fulfilling its due responsibilities by keeping the marginalized small and poor rural masses aware of latest agricultural technologies through its unique services. As agriculture is mainstay of Pakistan, so, every agricultural extension approach always focused on developing agriculture ultimately up-scaling the living standards of poor farming communities. The initiation of several extension programs like Village-AID Program, Basic Democracy System (BDS), Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) and Training and Visit (T&V) Program clearly indicates that these programs did not achieve their respective objectives and the relative authorities find it feasible to abolish the running program and replace it with another program Ali et al. [2-5].

To combat the short-comes of previous extension modalities the Govt. of Punjab has launched an innovative agricultural extension modalities decentralized extension system, farmer field school and agricultural extension "Hub Program" Ali, et al. 2011 [6-8]. The Government of Punjab introduced a technology transfer program named as Agricultural Extension "Hub Program" in 2008 to overcome all these weaknesses of past programs and to meet the challenges of changing circumstances. In this modality, Field Assistants (FA) were granted more responsibilities including frequently demonstration of agricultural plots, strong connection

with hub farmers, keeping aware the high authorities with farmers' problems and getting feedback from the research institutes with recommended solutions of their problems [9].

Methodology

Study Area: Punjab province was selected as the study area because it was the most populous and the most literate province of the country. It consisted of 36 districts. Faisalabad was selected as study area because it was 2nd populous district of the province and 3rd of country. It consisted of 6 tehsils: Faisalabad City, Faisalabad Sadar, ChakJhumra, Samundri, Jaranwala, and Tandlianwala. Purposively Faisalabad sadar and Jaranwala were selected because of having more farming communities.

Sampling Procedure and Selection of Study Respondents: Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Time and resources were limited. Therefore, total 120 women (60 from each tehsil) were selected as respondents.

Research Instrument for Data Collection: Interview schedule and focus group discussions were used as research tool. Personal observation was also used to evaluate the collected data. The interview schedule was pre-tested before final data collection. The reliability and validity of research instrument was also checked. Further, respondents were personally interviewed for the accurate acquisition of data. Five point likert scales was used for the extent assessment.

Data Analysis: Collected data were analyzed through computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for tabulating results and drawing conclusions and recommendations. Average mean and standard deviation were also computed for the better understanding.

Results and Discussion

The data given in Table 1 depict that poor psychological assessment of local talent was the most significant trainer based element which impedes the harvest of time and money investment by the state to train the farmer. The qualitative data reveal that normally the EFS select the resource rich person like feudal, lord or Choudhary as a focal person. The agriculture department selects a biased focal farmer who is not venerable among the entire village farming community. The biased hub farmer does not call all the farmers for farmers meeting. The respondents argued about inspection of small farmer's and negligence of small farmers between low and medium category with tendency towards low. The poor extension services and lacking in technical skills of EFS ranged between low to very low category and hence ranked 5th and 6th respectively (Table 2).

The data in Table 2 show that the Farmers less interest/ Depending upon conventional knowledge was the main reason affects the training meetings. Illiteracy and poor local information system of focal person with rest of community hence fell between medium and high category tending towards high and ranked 2ndand 3rd serious elements affecting the success story of farmer training meeting. Non-Technicality of farmer as the 4th deleterious element with mean value of 2.68 followed by communication gap between resource rich and resource poor farmer and farmers personal conflicts. The rest of three factors castism, farmers' poor attendance in meetings as well as lack of resources to purchase the said technology were ranged between low to very low with inclination towards very low. Qualitative data illustrate that multidimensional classification of rural society i.e. on the basis of cast, landholding and political belongings etc.are the major reasons behind the poor participation of farmers in training meetings. It is direst need to integrate the rural society not only for the welfare of state but also for them.

Table 1: Ranking of factors related to trainer affecting farmers training meetings.

Factors to the trainer	Rank Order	Weighted Score	Mean	S. D
Poor psychological assessment of local talent	1	313	2.61	0.61
Inspection of small farmers fields	2	285	2.38	0.67
Negligence of small farmers	3	284	2.37	0.67
Non punctuality of EFS	4	263	2.19	0.61
Poor extension services	5	232	1.97	0.71
Lack of technical knowledge	6	221	1.89	0.79

Responses: 1= very Low, 2= Low, 3= Medium, 4= High, 5= very High, X= No Response

Table 2: Ranking of factors related to trainee affecting farmers training meetings.

Factors related to trainee	Rank Order	Weighted Score	Mean Value	S. Deviation
Farmers less interest/Depending upon conventional knowledge	1	456	3.80	0.64
Illiteracy	2	424	3.53	0.66
Poor local information system of focal person with rest of community	3	322	2.68	0.75
Non-Technicality of farmer	4	307	2.56	0.62
Communication gap between resource rich and resource poor farmer	5	293	2.44	0.64
Farmers personal conflicts	6	241	2.00	0.59
Castism	7	176	1.52	0.63
Farmers poor attendance in meetings	8	174	1.45	0.64
Lack of resources to purchase the said technology	9	171	1.45	0.67

Responses: 1= very Low, 2= Low, 3= Medium, 4= High, 5= very High, X= No Response.

Conclusion

Above discussion reveal that trainer and trainee both are affecting the training meetings. The poor assessment of local talent is the most significant trainer based factor. It is a syndrome which not only inflicts but also triggers the rest of factors. The relaying of trainees on their previous knowledge reduces the farmer's interest in training meetings. It is indirectly defying of sole purpose of this maneuver. Therefore, it is suggested that agriculture sector should select the focal persons on merit or unbiased bases. The farmer should also join the meeting with perceptive minds so that dream of agricultural prosperity becomes true.

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