CORRELATES OF GAIN IN KNOWLEDGE BY THE VISITORS OF KRISHI MELA

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INTRODUCTION

There are many communication media used for transferring agricultural innovations, among them, krishi mela has been important resources to disseminate the new technology. At first hand, Krishi mela is to provide useful information to farmers about availability of agricultural, animal husbandry, poultry, saline-alkaline soil reclamation, modern agricultural equipments, new improved/hybrid seed, tissue culture technology etc. Secondly it is to inform farmers about the on going research activities on various farming problems. The Gujarat Agricultural University is organizing krushi mela at their main or off campuses for the benefit of farmers, development and research workers. Farmers discuss the problems with scientists during their visit of various stalls.

At present, there has been increasing demand for organizing such krishi mela at various places, but it is appropriate to determine the effectiveness of such meets in terms of gain in knowledge. Gupta (1985) emphasized to evaluate such fair to derive the maximum benefit in terms of changing the attitude of the people toward functionally relevant technology. The present study was confined with following objectives.

1. To measure the gain in knowledge about agricultural technology by the farmers during visiting the krushi mela.
2. To find out the relationship between selected characteristics of the respondents and their gain in knowledge about agricultural technology during visiting the krushi mela.
3. To determine the direct and indirect effect of selected variables on gain in knowledge of the visited farmers.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out at krishi mela in Amreli district of Savarkundla taluka during 19th to 25th February-2002. Farmers who had taken complete visit of krishi mela were considered as population of the study. From the visitor farmers, 150 were randomly contacted and interviewed with the help of a structured schedule specially designed for this purpose. The data were collected by personal interview technique from the farmers.

Table 1 Distribution of visitor according to their gain in knowledge during visiting the krishi mela. **N = 150**

Gain in Knowledge level	Number	Per cent
Low	38	25.33
Medium	79	52.67
High	33	22.00

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Table 2 Relationship of independent variables with gain in knowledge through krishi mela by the farmers

Sr.No.	Independent Variable	" r ' Value
1.	Age	0.607 **
2.	Education	0.650 **
3.	Land holding	0.075 NS
4.	Social participation	0.526 **
5.	Cropping intensity	0.196 *
6.	Extension participation	0.509 *

* Significant at 0.05 per cent ** Significant at 0.01 per cent NS = Non significant

A suitable teacher made test was developed and used to measure gain in knowledge of the visited farmers. After discussion with experts and scientists, 19 items covering improved varieties of different crops and their management, efficient use of fertilizers, mix and inter cropping, bio-fertilizer, critical stages of irrigation, plant protection, weed management, horticulture, nursery management, B.T. cotton, equipments & machineries and agricultural literature etc. were considered to measure gain in knowledge. One score was given to the item for which, the farmers considered as he gained some knowledge and zero for no gain in knowledge. The final score obtained by the farmer is known as gain in knowledge score.

The data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, percentage, coefficient of correlation and path analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gain in knowledge

It is visible from the data presented in Table 1 that more than half of the visitors of krishi mela (52.67 per cent) had medium level of gain in knowledge. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Ram Kumar and Pushkaran (1990), Joshi (1993) and Hingu and Patel (1997 & 1998).

Relationship of independent variables with gain in knowledge

Co-efficient of correlation was applied to study the association between selected seven independent variables of the respondents with gain in knowledge. The results are presented in Table 2.

It is apparent from the Table 2 that the age, education, social participation and extension participation were positively and highly significantly correlated with the gain in knowledge of farmers. The cropping intensity was positively and significantly correlated with gain in knowledge of the respondents. The land holding was found non-significantly correlated with gain in knowledge of farmers. This might be due to that farmers were more curious to gain knowledge of latest agricultural technology from the krishi mela. This findings were in conformity with the results of Joshi (1993) and Hingu and Patel (1997 and 1998).

Path Analysis

The result of path analysis is presented in Table 3.

Direct Effect: It was observed from Table 3 that the age exerted the highest direct positive effect on gain in knowledge as the path co-efficient was 0.428 followed by education (0.357).

Table 3 Path co-efficient of the independent variables with gain in knowledge of farmers of krishi mela

Variables	Direct effect	Total indirect effect	Substantial indirect effect 1	2
X1 Age	0.428	0.179	0.118 (X2)	0.057 (X4)
X2 Education	0.357	0.294	0.142 (X1)	0.109 (X4)
X3 Land holding	- 0.139	0.214	- 0.139 (X3)	0.069 (X4)
X4 Social participation	0.194	0.332	0.199 (X2)	0.126 (X1)
X5 Cropping intensity	0.065	0.131	0.050 (X1)	0.045 (X2)
X6 Extension participation	0.107	0.402	0.214 (X2)	0.124 (X1)

Total Indirect Effect: So far as the total indirect effect is concerned, extension participation has the highest positive total indirect effect (0.402) on gain in knowledge followed by opinion of farmers (0.341).

Substantial Indirect Effect: Extension participation exerted highest positive first order substantial indirect effect (0.214) on gain in knowledge through education followed by social participation (0.199) through education. The second order largest positive substantial indirect effect was exerted by social participation (0.126) through age followed opinion of farmers (0.120) through age.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that majority of the visitor farmers of krishi mela had medium level of gain in knowledge. The variable age, education, social participation and extension participation were positively correlated with gain in knowledge. Among all the variables age and education were exerted the highest direct effect on gain in knowledge.

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