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PERCEPTION OF FIG FARMERS TOWARDS USEFULNESS OF ATMA PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

The ATMA is an autonomous organization registered under the society's registration act of 1860 with considerable operational flexibility. It is registered society of stakeholders involved in agricultural activities for sustainable agricultural development in the district. It is focal point for integrating research and extension activities and decentralized day to day management of the Public Agricultural Technology System (ATS). Farmer is the center of focus for development in the model and through an organized effort; farmers have to say in planning and implementation of the development process. Representation is provided to farmers at the village level through Farmers Interest Groups (FIG), the block level as members of Farmers Advisory Committee (FAC) and at district level as members of ATMA Governing Board (AGB). The concept envisages a paradigm shift from top-down to bottom-up approach in planning and implementation of extension programs. In present study, an attempt was made to know the perception of FIG farmers regarding the ATMA project. With this background the study was conducted with following Objectives.1.To study the profile of FIG farmers 2. To study the perception of FIG farmers towards usefulness of ATMA project. 3. To study the problems faced by FIG farmers in availing advantages of ATMA. And 4.To elicits the suggestions from FIG farmers to get the maximum advantages of ATMA. Result say that Majority of the FIG farmers belonged to middle age group, belonged to secondary school level of education, they had medium (3 to 4) training received, had medium (5 to 8) family members, occupation as farming with allied, they had medium level of annual income, had medium size of land holding, membership of one organization of social participation, belonged to medium extension contact, had medium mass media exposure, were from medium level of risk orientation. Majority of the FIG Farmer belonged to More than half of the farmers had medium level of perception towards usefulness of ATMA Project. Non-availability of production inputs at the farmer's doorstep, technology provided by ATMA is costly, lack of trainings on improve technologies ,exposure visits to research stations of Gujarat are not organized for all members, the knowledge and information gain during the exposure visit to other states are not applicable in local situation, lacks demonstration on farming system research, literature and training are not sufficient to all FIG members, common interested members are not selected in all FIG and no proper planning in input distribution were the major Problems Faced by FIG Farmers in Availing Advantages of ATMA. Make the required inputs available at the farmers convenience, offer trainings on improved technologies ,need more number of exposure visits, focused on need based trainings should be arranged ,action plans for extension activities should be prepared involving active members of ATMA for making plan more effective , the number of training programs should be increased ,inputs for the demonstration should be more with increased size of unit area and more information should be provided about integrated farming and organic farming were the major suggestions given by to solve the problems o of FIG Farmers in Availing Advantages of ATMA.

Keywords : *perception, ATMA, fig farmers*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture in India has a significant history and it is still lifeline of Indian economy. Agricultural sector accounted for 17.32 per cent of the GDP in 2019 and its economic contribution to India's GDP is steadily declining with the country's broad- based economic growth. Still, agriculture is demographically the broadest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic fabric of India. In India different models of transfer of technology are being adopted like diffusion of innovation model, farming system research/extension, integrated pest management FFS model, decentralized extension (ATMA) model, and farmer first farmer last (FFL) model. So that we can adopt these know-how in order to modernize and communicate their agriculture. In spite of our best efforts there is a resistance from a rural masses to accept what all is being conducted to their own progress and development. So the task of changing

outlook of millions of rural families, acquainting them with new knowledge, orienting them towards acceptance and use of innovations and bringing about technological changes in them, is therefore indeed a tremendous task which a few extensions personal can hardly do. In India, the public extension system has gone through many renovations and modifications in order to function as a single line agency by integrating different stakeholders, departments and organizations for improving the livelihood standards of farmers in rural areas. ATMA is one of its kind emerged in delivering the extension services at district level.

"Bottom up approaches refer to processes and mechanism that enable those people who have a direct stake in agriculture resources to be part of decision making in all aspects of the resource management from managing the resources to formulating and implementing institutional framework."The T&V programme adopted a **"top-down approach"** for technology transfer. The top-down approach was successful as long as the technologies were simple and input based like high yielding varieties, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The concept of ATMA envisages paradigm shift from **"top down" to "bottom up"** in planning and implementation of agriculture development programmes.

In the present context of globalization and liberalization a shift is taking place in agriculture from more subsistence to commercial level. The liberalization of Indian economy made farmers to compete at international level. The intensive cultivation of land without conservation of natural resources resulted into unbalancing of economy. This has also resulted into various atmospheric changes, leading to form new farming situations. To meet these emerging issues, problems and challenges in agricultural sector, it is felt necessary to have a strong and efficient extension system. In present study, an attempt was made to know the perception level of farmers regarding usefulness and activities of ATMA project. Accordingly, a study on "Perception of FIG farmers towards usefulness of ATMA project in Saurashtra region" is proposed to undertaken in Navsari District and empirically verify the hypothesis of perception of FIG farmers towards Profitableness of ATMA project. The present study "Perception of FIG farmers towards usefulness of ATMA project in Navsari District" was designed to cover all these dimensions and make it more comprehensive.

OBJECTIVE

To know the perception of fig farmers towards usefulness of ATMA project.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Navsari district of south Gujarat during the year 2018-2019.Navsari district is located in the south eastern part of Gujarat state in the coastal lowland along Purna river, it has 6 Taluka, thus, total 60 respondents were selected randomly in 10 respondents in each Taluka , who were connected with ATMA from since last 3 years. For drawing the sample for the study multistage, purposive and random sampling technique was used. The dependent variable undertaken in this study was perception of FIG farmers towards usefulness of ATMA project. The eleven independent variables undertaken in this study then were measured with the help of suitable scale and procedures with due modifications. The constraints faced by FIG farmers towards usefulness of ATMA project and suggestions to overcome the constraints were also studied. The data were complied, tabulated and statically tools viz. frequency, percentage, ranking and correlation, were used to analyses the data and finding drawn according to objectives of study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the respondents

Majority of the FIG farmers belonged to middle age group, belonged to secondary school level of education, they had medium (3 to 4) training received, had medium (5 to 8) family members, occupation as farming with allied, they had medium level of annual income, had medium size of land holding, membership of one organization of social participation, belonged to medium extension contact, had medium mass media exposure and were from medium level of risk orientation.

Perception of FIG farmers towards usefulness of ATMA Project

Perception is the true beginning of knowledge. It is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information.

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents according to their level of perception (n=60)

Sr. No.	Categories	No.	Percent
1	Low level perception (below 51.62)	12	20
2	Medium level perception (51.62 to 75.14)	37	61.67
3	High level perception (above 75.14)	11	18.33
Mean = 63.38			S.D. = 11.75

A perusal of Table 1 reveals that slightly more than half (61.67 per cent) of the respondents had medium level of perception, while 20 per cent and 18.33 per cent of them had high and low level of perception about usefulness of ATMA project, respectively. More than half of the farmers

had medium level of perception towards usefulness of ATMA Project. This might be due to fact that the majority of the respondents had medium level of education, social participation, extension participation as well as risk orientation. The findings are in line with the findings of Satishkumar (2006) and Gorfad (2012).

The FIG farmers were requested to express the problems faced by them in availing advantages of ATMA. Frequency and percentage for each constraint were calculated and the constraints were ranked and are presented in Table- 2.

Problems faced by fig farmers in availing advantages of ATMA

Table 2 Problems faced by FIG farmers in availing advantages of ATMA (n=60)

Sr. No.	Constraints	No.	Percent	Rank
1	Non-availability of production inputs at the farmer's doorstep	52	86.66	I
2	Technology provided by ATMA is costly	46	76.66	II
3	Lack of trainings on improve technologies	42	70	III
4	Exposure visits to research stations of Gujarat are not organized for all members	38	63.33	IV
5	The knowledge and information gain during the exposure visit to other states are not applicable in local situation	34	56.66	V
6	Lacks demonstration on farming system research	31	51.66	VI
7	Literature and training are not sufficient to all FIG members	28	46.66	VII
8	Common interested members are not selected in all FIG.	26	43.33	VIII
9	No proper planning in input distribution	24	38.33	IX

The different problems faced by FIG farmers in availing the advantages of ATMA project; unavailability of production input at farmers door step was ranked I (86.66 per cent), Technology provided by ATMA is costly ranked II (76.66 per cent), lack of trainings on improved technologies was ranked III (70 per cent), exposure visits to research stations of Gujarat are not organized for all members was ranked IV (63.33 per cent), the knowledge and information gain during the exposure visit to other states are not applicable in local situation was ranked V (56.66 per cent) , lacks demonstration on farming system research was ranked VI (51.66 per cent), literature and training are not sufficient to all FIG members was ranked VII (46.66 per cent), common interested members are not selected in all FIG was ranked VIII (43.33 per cent), no proper planning in input distribution was ranked XI (38.33 per cent).Thus, it can be concluded that unavailability of production input at farmers door step, technology of provide costly, lack of trainings on improved technologies, exposure visits to research stations of Gujarat are not organized for all members, the knowledge and information gain during the exposure visit to other states are not applicable in local situation, affected to farmer of FIG member not to common interested are them. These findings are in line with the findings of Gavale (2008) and Das and Borue (2017).

The suggestions from fig farmers to get the maximum advantages of ATMA

An attempt was also made to ascertain the suggestions from farmers to overcome various problems faced by them in order to get the maximum advantages of ATMA. The farmers were requested to offer their valuable suggestions against difficulties faced by them to get the maximum advantages of ATMA. The data were collected and summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 : Suggestions from FIG farmers to get the maximum advantages of ATMA (n=60)

Sr. No.	Suggestions	No.	Percent	Rank
1	Make the required inputs available at the farmers convenience	50	83.33	I
2	Offer trainings on improved technologies	46	76.66	II
3	Need more number of exposure visits	41	68.33	III
4	Focused on need based trainings should be arranged	38	63.33	IV
5	Action plans for extension activities should be prepared involving active members of ATMA for making plan more effective	35	58.33	V
6	The number of training programs should be increased	32	53.33	VI
7	Inputs for the demonstration should be more with increased size of unit area	29	48.33	VII
8	More information should be provided about integrated farming and organic farming	25	41.66	VIII
9	Information should be provided by mobile	23	38.33	IX

The data in table 3 revealed that the valuable suggestions given by farmers were make the required inputs available at the farmers convenience was ranked I (83.33 per cent), offer trainings on improved technologies was ranked II (76.66 per cent), need more number of exposure visits was ranked III (68.33 per cent), , focused on need based trainings should be arranged was ranked IV (63.33 per cent), action plans for extension activities should be prepared involving active members of ATMA for making plan more effective was ranked V (58.33 per cent), the number of training programs should be increased was ranked VI (53.33 per cent) , inputs for the demonstration should be more with increased size of unit area was ranked VII (48.33 per cent), more information should be provided about integrated farming and organic farming was ranked VIII (41.66 per cent), information should be provided by mobile was ranked IX (38.33 per cent).

Thus, it can be concluded that various suggestions given by farmers like; make the required inputs available at the farmers convenience, offer trainings on improved technologies, need more number of exposure visits, Action plans for extension activities should be prepared involving active members of ATMA for making plan more effective, focused on need based trainings should be arranged were the major suggestions as given by farmers. These findings are in line with findings of Naidu *et al.* (2016) and Das and Borue (2017).

CONCLUSION

Majority of the FIG farmers belonged to middle age group, belonged to secondary school level of education, they had medium (3 to 4) training received, had medium (5 to 8) family members, occupation as farming with allied, they had medium level of annual income, had medium size of land holding, membership of one organization of social participation, belonged to medium extension contact, had medium mass media exposure, were from medium level of risk orientation. Majority of the FIG Farmer belonged to More than half of the farmers had medium level of perception towards usefulness of ATMA Project.

Problems faced by FIG farmers in availing advantages of ATMA

Out of nine problems identified in availing advantages of ATMA the most important constraints faced by the FIG farmers were:

(1) Non-availability of production inputs at the farmer's doorstep

(2) Technology provided by ATMA is costly

(3) Lack of trainings on improve technologies

(4) Exposure visits to research stations of Gujarat are not organized for all members

(5) The knowledge and information gain during the exposure visit to other states are not applicable in local situation

(6) Lacks demonstration on farming system research

(7) Literature and training are not sufficient to all FIG members

(8) Common interested members are not selected in all FIG

(9) No proper planning in input distribution

Suggestions from FIG farmers to get the maximum advantages of ATMA

Out of nine suggestions given by FIG farmers to get the maximum advantages of ATMA. The most important suggestions expressed by respondents were:

(1) Make the required inputs available at the farmers' convenience

(2) Offer trainings on improved technologies

(3) Need more number of exposure visits

(4) Focused on need based trainings should be arranged

(5) Action plans for extension activities should be prepared involving active members of ATMA for making plan more effective

(6) The number of training programs should be increased

(7) Inputs for the demonstration should be more with increased size of unit area

(8) More information should be provided about integrated farming and organic farming

(9) Information should be provided by mobile

IMPLICATION

Based on findings of the study, following implications emerge.

The research of the study in terms of different factors of FIG farmers which affect their perception towards usefulness of ATMA project will be helpful to policy making the bodies of ATMA to find different ways and means for manipulating the components.

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